

SUMMARY

Casablanca and Tunis obtained an urban public transport (UPT) system at a very early date. The systems operated in a colonial context by means of concessionary companies. On independence, they were nationalized and state monopoly companies were set up. From this common starting point, differences began to appear from the end of the 1980s. Deregulation and opening up to the private sector, which occurred in different ways and at different paces according to the city, altered the travel practices of city-dwellers, a phenomenon which was accentuated by considerable urban growth and spatial sprawl. Travel conditions deteriorated, new forms of illegal or barely legal travel came into being. This study describes the shortcomings of the UPT system run by public and private sector institutions and analyzes the new emerging and/or alternative modes. A survey has been conducted to study "white taxis", which are the small taxis and carts that operate in Casablanca. The results are most instructive: these modes, which operate partly illegally, account for 37.4% of all trips (horse-drawn transport accounts for about 1%). The scheduled winding up of the state owned transport company, the RATC, and the poor performance

of privately operated public transport means that institutionally run transport accounts for relatively few trips in Casablanca.

In Tunis, transportation activities are more structured and are mainly operated by the public sector. Difficulties nevertheless exist, in spite of public authority funding. The study stresses the role of private taxis, an increasingly important, but insufficiently studied, transport mode. Our survey shows that taxis now carry almost as many passengers as the metro. We were unable to deal with Algiers as we had planned. This city has not been covered directly but would deserve more attention in view of its special features and the severe crisis affecting its urban transportation. The study indicates that there are significant situational differences between the cities and warns against a minimization of these and generalizations. Nevertheless, the absence of an organizing authority is a common denominator which makes one suspect problems as regards the development of institutions. The development of major projects to improve UPT in the metropolises of the Maghreb will require new organizational models for transportation and travel.