Equity and the struggle against social exclusion in urban transport: on certain aspects in the city of batna (Algeria)

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Abstract
The proposed paper presents the results of a research project completed in 2010, financed by the CREAD, on the theme of urban transport and sustainable development in the City of Batna (Algeria). A large part of this research was devoted to the study of the exclusion from the public transportation network by bus. The results show that a certain part of the population (mainly peri-urban) suffers, firstly, from the lack of spatial and temporal coverage. Secondly, there is a certain form of exclusion caused by the cost when this population tries to find alternatives as when using informal transport [(1)].

Key words: Social equity, exclusion, urban transport, Batna, Algeria.

Équité et lutte contre l'exclusion sociale dans les transports urbains: sur certains aspects dans la ville de Batna (Algerie)

Résumé
Cet article présente les résultats d'un projet de recherche finalisé en 2010, financé par le CREAD, et portant sur le thème du transport urbain et du développement durable dans la ville de Batna (Algérie). Une grande partie de ce travail de recherche s'est intéressée à l'étude de l'exclusion du réseau de transport public par bus. Les résultats montrent, d'abord, qu'une partie de la population (notamment les préurbains) souffre d'un manque de couverture spatiale et temporelle, et qu'ensuite, il existe une certaine forme d'exclusion causée par le coût puisque la population concernée essaye de trouver des alternatives pour se transporter en faisant appel aux transporteurs informels (taxis clandestins), ce qui leur revient cher.

Mots-clés: Equité sociale, exclusion, transport urbain, Batna, Algérie.

العدالة الاجتماعية والصراع ضد التهميش في النقل الحضري: دراسة بعض الجوانب في مدينة باتنة (الجزائر)

ملخص
تقدم هذه المقالة نتائج مشروع بحث أُنجز سنة 2010- بتمويل من"CREAD"- حول موضوع النقل الحضري والتنمية المستدامة في مدينة باتنة- الجزائر. ويتمحور جزء كبير من هذه الدراسة حول التهميش الذي تمارسه شبكة النقل الحضري بالحافلات. أظهرت النتائج أن نسبة كبيرة من السكان، وبالأخص القاطنين في المناطق شبه الحضرية، تعاني من عدم توفر تغطية زمانية مكانية لشبكات النقل، ومن التهميش الناتج عن التكاليف بسبب بحث هذه الفئة عن حلول بديلة للتنقل تترجم في النقل غير الرسمي، الذي تعدّ تكاليف هذا الأخير كبيرة جدا مقارنة بالنقل الرسمي.

الكلمات المفاتيح: عدالة اجتماعية، تهميش، نقل حضري، باتنة، الجزائر.

1- Introduction:

The public transport (for cities) in developing countries maintains a primordial importance when certain categories of the population are considered. Indeed, the decision makers have to provide transport with reasonable prices and better accessibility. In fact, providing adequate transport services constitutes a struggle against poverty since it aims to help people to find jobs or to preserve the existing ones– even if they come with low wages; to send children to school, to give access to all economic and social activities …etc. Easy access to public transport is a key to the openness of the different parts of the city to each other. Sometimes, such an easy access to the city is particularly important for young people, who are generally unemployed. Generally, a consolidated social cohesion may not be attainable without an efficient and equitable transport system.

The present research focuses on the difficulties facing the urban transport in the city of Batna. To achieve this, In terms of methodology, the researchers used official data relating to the available supply of transportation services .Data about the exclusion aspects of the study were collected by means of (one hundred) 100 semi-structured interviews conducted in the suburban areas. The aim of those interviews was to highlight the difficulties encountered by users in terms of mobility. Two aspects were analyzed: i) spatial and temporal coverage of the bus network and ii) transport costs.

Several observations of bus transit system were scheduled during 3 weeks. The purpose of these observations was to understand the main characteristics of this mode of transportation.

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to analyse the collected data from observations.

2. Transport and mobilty inequity: review of the literature:

Transport is considered to be a vital element in the modern life. The development pace of today's communities has led to an expansion of the living range, which caused a considerable urban sprawl leading to an explosion in urban centers; small cities became grand centers in just few years. Affording acceptable transport services to the new neighborhoods constitutes a big challenge to any government.

Mobility is in the heart of societies' issues .It is considered as a condition to the social integration[(2)] where any reduced access to mobility results in a social exclusion[(3)]. Exclusion in transport is far from being a new theme in the related literature. Indeed, the French researchers were the pioneers in dealing with this subject matter in the 60s of the last century [(4)] but the links between transport and social exclusion were first made in the early 1970s [(5)]. Washes and Kumagai[(6)] identified physical mobility as*"a major contributor to social and economic inequality"*. Preston *et col* confirmed the idea of mobility and accessibility being used to investigate how social exclusion is affected by transport[(7)].

There were several attempts to relate social exclusion to transport. Researchers used different methods to investigate inequity in mobility. Just after the 1990s, a renewable interest of the social issues of accessing mobility has been set[(8)]; a best illustration of this may be the well-known report made by Social Exclusion Unit[(9)] where connections between transport and almost all the economic and social activities were made.

The UK Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)[(10)] defined the transport exclusion as:

"*…the lack or denial, of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole*."

In the same respect, Kenyon *et col* [(11)] defined it as:

"[It is] *The process by which people are prevented from participating in the economic, political and social life of the community because of reduced accessibility to opportunities, services and social networks, due in whole or part to insufficient mobility in a society and environment built around the assumption of high mobility*".

Hence, a limited mobility affects, negatively, the accessibility to daily activities (*to work, to house, to studying, to leisure and to health*)[12]. Urry[13] stated that governments must enhance mobility to reduce the social exclusion and that we have to «*move to get out of it* ». Both mobility and accessibility are essential indicators to be used in the development of an insight into social inclusion and transport[14]. Access to Private cars and/or accepted public transport services (affordable prices, spatial and temporal coverage and integrating specific categories[15] constitutes a fight against poverty[16]; persons with limited incomes will have the opportunity to look for jobs in an easier way or to send their children to schools without bearing high costs. An equitable accessibility in poor neighborhoods forms an open neighborhood environment, which has an important role in integrating young people, especially unemployed.

Some people, especially those with low revenues, restrict their daily activities to their neighborhoods in order to minimize the costs of mobility[17].The average expenses of centers' residents in their daily transports are between 6 and 7% whereas it's between 20 and 30% of suburbs' residents[18]. D. Caubel[19], using an indicator of accessibility to analyze neighborhoods, found that the access time between rich neighborhoods and poor neighborhoods vary from 1 to 4 times which have a negative impact on the mobility of persons living in these places.

Hence, mobility is a crucial element in dealing with distances, enabling access to essential goods and services, and to participate in daily activities[20]. However, on the one hand, mobility has a positive impact in the generation of more resources, but on the other hand, the high levels of mobility within the society may reduce the accessibility leading to a social exclusion situation caused by transport networks[21].

Church *et col*[22] listed seven specific factors constraining mobility:

- **Physical exclusion:** whereby accessibility is inhibited and certain groups of people are excluded from using the transport system because of the physical barriers related to the nature of the transport system or/and the built environment;
- **Geographical exclusion:** bad provision of transport services results in an exclusion of persons, especially those living in suburban areas. The site where a person lives can prevent him from accessing transport services;
- **Exclusion from facilities:** since the cities are in a constant growing, land use trends are making the good shopping, financial, leisure, health and education facilities (that are often located in the centre of the cities) more inaccessible for the residents of the sub-urban areas. Oppositely, the new trends of delocalization of Giant Supermarkets from city centres to the far periphery have created hardships for individuals who don't have access to private cars or adequate public transport[23];
- **Economy exclusion**: job distance and monetary costs of traveling are two critical factors in job research [24]. In a research concerning Job Finders Grant by Dickinson and Broome[25] it was found that from all those who received a grant, nearly 30% used it to pay their traveling costs;
- **Time-based exclusion**: notion of time poverty, some others refer to time poverty as temporal dimension of accessibility[26],affects both high and low income groups in different ways; Caubel[27]found that people spend between 10 and 40 minutes, depending on the site of living, in means of transport to reach a set of services. In average, people spend one hour of their lives in means of transport every day, and this number is exposed to rise once their income is increased [28].
- **Fear-based exclusion:** the fear of personnel safety inhibit individuals from using transport services, according to DfT[29], in 1996, 39% of women stated that they don't fear from using public transport systems, it increased to 43% in 2002. In contrast, for men the rate decreased from 56% in 1996 to 47% in 2002;

• **Space exclusion:** security and space management strategies are important elements in the inclusion/exclusion of people towards public transport.

Nowadays, societies are built around the car use where essential services (work, schools, hospitals, shopping and leisure) are often located in places based on the assumption that the majority of people have access to them using cars. Politicians are facing a paradox regarding the use of private cars, on the one hand, they diminish the barriers of accessing services, and on the other hand, the development of the use of private cars is against the principles of sustainable mobility[(30)]. In other words, the introduction of the word paradox here refers to the consideration of the private car as both a necessary and undesirable element at the same time. Barry[(31)] denoted that *"There is no doubt that the private car is the enemy of social solidarity in as much as public transport is its friend. The private car isolates people and puts them in competition with other road users. "*Conversely, Caubel[(32)] have found that the private car is 3 times more efficient in accessing services within the city.

The results of an FIA Foundation study entitled 'Transport & Social Exclusion: A survey of the Group of Seven nations'[(33)],hold that the public transport fares, in the last few decades, have been increasing whereas the costs of owning and running a car are in constant declining that makes the car a more affordable and attractive option for individuals, even for low income categories.

The differential access to mobility contributes in creating new gaps between individuals and social groups[(34)]. To deal with this problem, governments made their first interventions under what is called the *mobility support policies* that emerged in the 1990s; they have been addressing the urban poor individuals residing in poor neighbourhoods to help their daily movements and residential mobility[(35)].

In order to illustrate some specific aspects, we will try to provide a general overview on the state of social exclusion caused by the transport systems in France and the United Kingdom with an emphasis on the United Kingdom's experience because of the following reasons:

- First of all, the links between transport and social exclusion are better made in United Kingdom compared to France[(36)]. According to Lucas[(37)], *both policy and research analysis,* in United Kingdom*, is some way in advance of Germany, Italy, Japan and Canada* (G7 countries) *in making evident the links between transport and social exclusion and there is a more comprehensive national policy agenda to address the problem*; especially after the creation of a national Social Exclusion Unit in 1997.

-Secondly, the reason of our selection of France lies behind the similarities, in certain cases, which trace the public transport policies of the Algerian and the French governments in dealing with the social exclusion.

As early 1982, the French government laid down the principles of a right to Transport (Law of Orientation of Domestic Transport, known in France as LOTI), which states that each citizen has the right to transport access; it was then progressively targeted to people on low incomes and poor neighbourhoods [(38)].

The offer of public passenger transport was in a situation of monopoly; only the public authorities had the right of defining its provision. The government has made several attempts (all are mentioned in the LOTI) to provide a better service in order to improve the provision, e.g. fostering competition, decentralizing the management of public transport services (through the creation of organizing authorities of transport in every region) and encouraging the modal shift (especially to the sustainable modes). Regardless the set of incentive politics taken by the French government to enhance the use of public transport, it used the policy of the development of railways as a major tool to minimise the use of private cars[(39)].

The major trends and determinants of mobility needs are well known in the large cities through comprehensive surveys of transport and household travel surveys in the provinces [(40)].They highlight the changes in these needs over the long term. Since 1996, these surveys, which are conducted every ten years, were used in the design of Urban Transport Plans, (Called PDU in France) for all the cities that exceeds 100000 inhabitants, which

constitute the main principles of transport organization of people and cargo, traffic and parking[41].

To summarize, one may say that the operating specifications (between the operators and the organizing authorities) identify the broad outlines of the activities of transport responsible for the minimization of the exclusion phenomena from the public transport system.

The case of the United Kingdom is some way different from the French one. UK has deregulated its local public transport market in 1986, and since then services that couldn't sustain commercially has been cut[42]. Buses use in the U.K (excluding London) has been declining steadily (35 billion passenger-kilometres in 1980 compared to 22.5 billion in 2004)[43], this can be explained in terms of the increase of bus fares to a greater rate than motoring costs[44]; Bus fares rose by a third since 1985 whereas motoring costs have been declining[45].

Poor transport provision and weak accessibility among low-income and socially excluded population have negative impacts, not only, on the affected individuals and their local living sites, but also on the economy and the state as a whole[46]. There were many attempts in the United Kingdom to link transport provision, mobility and exclusion; one of the most recognized studies was that of Mersey travel[47], it analysed transport provision and availability (physical provision) using the following indicators:

- "Proportion of households within 400 m of a bus stop;
- Proportion of households within 800 m of a rail station;
- Proportion of major facilities/services within 400 m of a bus stop or;
- 800 m of a rail station (Facilities include hospitals, retail parks, multiplex cinemas, city parks, recreation areas and major centres of employment.);
- Proportion of rail stations which are fully accessible to wheel chair users;
- Proportion of buses which are fully accessible to less able members of society;
- Proportion of concessionary passes issued to and used annually by those eligible."

Though Mersey travel model is covering the main items of accessibility, another tool has been created for measuring the temporal aspect of accessibility. CAPITAL is a tool used in the city of London to analyse travel time. It combines two different methods; calculating access time to means of transport (using Planning and Development Geographical Information System PDGIS) and the journey time through public transport network (called RAILPLAN)[48].

3. Urban transport in batna: mutation of a sector:

Before presenting the results of the study, we prefer to make a quick overview on the Algerian transport system, and more specifically in the city of Batna.

It is important to mention that the social aspects, in all the business sectors, were always supported by the Algerian state in the context of the collectivist economy of the 1970-80s. Everything, or almost, was subsidized including transport.

Concerning urban transport, all major cities of the country had their own urban public transport company. However, following the structural adjustment program of the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and the liberalization policy, things have changed more or less quickly in almost all sectors of activity. Let us see what happened through the example of the city of Batna.

3.1. The disappearance of the incumbent operator: the fundamental reasons:

Regarding the city of Batna, its Municipal Company of Public Transport (called ECTUB[49]) was created in March 1979. It was placed under the authority of the City Council but managed by an Executive Director. It started the activity with 03 buses that served the districts of *Bouakal* and *Kechida*. The potential of the company has grown quickly to reach 30 buses on average, and 133 employees .The Company was in a situation of a quasi-monopoly for a long time. The coverage of Batna's urban transport was, more or less, assured by the company but with a rather poor quality of service in terms of regularity, respect of schedules, etc. The ECTUB also assured the university transport of students.

Since 1990, just as the other companies even outside the transport sector, ECTUB could no longer manage the financial problems that were becoming increasingly difficult. This was mainly due to the mode of the economic and social developments, which constituted (and still constitutes) the subject matter of a long debate. However, it is still possible to advance some specific explanations:

- Basically, it is due to the symbolic prices which have no relationship with the real cost;
- The free transport access for certain categories[(50)];
- Beyond the obligations of public service that the few meagre subsidies could not always cover the costs, the company was straight into social issues without financial consideration;
- The costs' skyrocketing that shaped the period from 1990 to 1995 which accompanied the devaluation of the national currency (Algerian Dinar).

In brief, and according to a study we conducted on Freight Transport Companies[(51)],the results remain easily applicable in companies of urban transport. It is clear that the companies of the sector, through the prices' mechanism (the delivery prices but also on the occasion of the purchase of production factors), drew from their own resources (amortization) to finance not only the chronic productivity losses but also the stagnation of their tariffs, conjugated to the increase in costs and non-recovery of their debts. Ultimately, companies were no longer viable.

ECTUB tried to create a certain balance in the financial issues of its urban transportation branch by diversifying its activity, through:

- The creation of a travel agency that organizes mainly excursions and visits ;
- The opening of a driving school: for two categories (small vehicles and heavy vehicles);
- The acquisition of an examination circuit of driving license (for all the Wilaya[(52)]);
- The opening of a suburban transport line (Merouana line) and an interurban one (Sétif and Biskra).

Despite these efforts, the company accumulated financial deficits and bankrupted, as well as many companies in the other different sectors. In September 1997, the decision was taken to liquidate the ECTUB. The 135 employees, at the date of liquidation, were asked to choose either to become shareholders or to take their severance pay. Nineteen employees preferred to buy all the actions. The company, which costed 120 million DZD payable over 20 years, remained hypothecated. After it became a joint-stock company, and was named *El-Houria* Urban Transport Company, before disappearing shortly later.

3.2. Current situation and (re) appearance of the public operator (ETUB):

After the opening of the market for privates, the supply has increased significantly. From 1988 (year of the liberalization) to 2000, the national park showed an increase of 254% in terms of supply (excluding taxis), from 12,600 to 44,700 vehicles of all types. Regarding urban transport, and after the disappearance of traditional operators in all Algerian cities (except for the city of Algiers, where the company ETUSA remained in the market), the number of operators by city increased in a stunning way. Their number counts now in hundreds per single city! Following this metamorphosis, the company's type has been reduced to smaller companies (generally family companies) with an average of one to two buses. This increase of transport supply has solved in a very satisfactory way the mobility problems of citizens everywhere in Algeria with an availability of transportation means never observed before (compared with the former lack of capacity). Indeed, the buses became quite available for frequent travels. The role of the vans (famous J9) and mini buses proved crucial since both have revolutionized the mobility of the limited income citizens, especially in suburban and rural zones; an exclusive key point of the Algerian market's liberalization we jugged necessary to underline.

Despite that, many analysts agree that the opening of the transport market has taken place with little regard for rules of entry to the market and access to the profession of transporter (professionalism and financial capacity issues, etc. …). The whole was combined with a lack

of an explicit book of specifications, which can be respected by operators. This gave birth to a rather peculiar configuration of an urban transport market reigned by profusion and a supply dispersal. The operators (companies) are counted in thousands in the capital (Algiers) and by hundreds in other cities. This situation generated big dysfunctions and significant infringements of the public service.

More recently, and within the framework of the public transport promotion of quality and the improvement of the service, the Algerian State made a strong comeback in urban transports through massive investments. It decided to create modern public companies for the urban transport by bus. This was an attempt to seek for competition in order to force private operators to consolidate in the form of companies of a minimum size. Initially, public authorities launched this type of companies first in the larger cities, to become recently generalized to all the administrative centres of Wilayas (the 48 big cities). It is true that these companies have established new ways-to-do, and they have shown a relatively innovative offering of a good level of service with brand new buses**(53)** and with consistent means of support. As a result, they have had an important success among users (the famous blue buses)**(54)**. So far, private enterprises still represent the bulk of the supply of urban transport and no grouping of private operators has been observed yet. On one hand, we believe the grouping operation presents some difficulties **(55)** and it is not easy to concretize it, and on the other, we believe operators are still observing the evolution of the market in particular with the launching of tramway projects in the major cities of the country, including Batna.

4. Transport and exclusion: some aspects in the city of batna:

In this section we will illustrate the case study.

4.1 Methodology:

In 2008, we conducted a work within the context of a research project funded by the CREAD. The project studied, on one part, the difficulties faced by users in the field of urban transport in Batna. We conducted semi-structured interviews on these aspects in peri urban areas with 100 persons who regularly took the bus.

The undertaken observations, interviews and administered questionnaire (which constitute the related part to the problematic of exclusion) were designed as an attempt to essentially bring out two points:

- First, we wanted to examine (in terms of collective urban transport) the possibility of the existence of any form of exclusion regarding space, time coverage and costs;
- Second, we sought to identify how the category of persons with reduced mobility is transported, and whether there are specific modes for them?

4.2. Defining the sample study:

The sample was comprised of:

- 52 males, 48 females;
- 90% are between 16 and 65years old;
- 65% are either inactive or have less than 10,000 DZA income per month (126$ per month);
- 40% of the sample lives in peri urban areas.

When considering the reasons for travelling, we found 64% for commuting movements (home, work / school), 30% for shopping and 6% for entertainments / visits. For the regularity of using the bus, we found 55% who are using the bus daily. The others use it occasionally; they walk, use private car or collective cars/ illegal taxis.

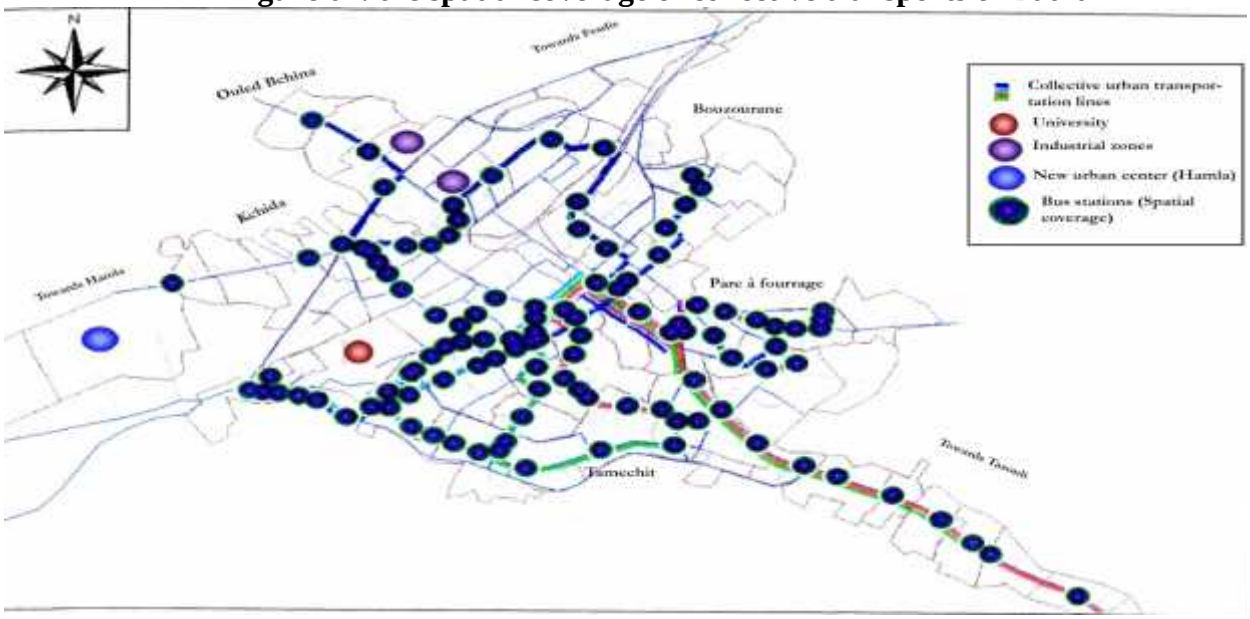
4.3. The spatial and temporal coverage of collective transports:

Interviews revealed that despite the fact that globally there is a good connection of the city of Batna (see figure 01), some disadvantaged areas remain disconnected and have a bad (or sometimes a non-existent) coverage because the operators of urban transport don't respect the route that has been assigned by the competent authorities. 40% of respondents who are living in the suburban areas: *Douar Laatech*, *Kechida* and *Douar El Hemous*, affirm that the buses do not reach the end of the line. Therefore, to attain the nearest station of their homes, users

walk for about 20 minutes or more. They also frequently report falling in the obligation to take an illegal taxi which usually "*costs too much*".In addition to the failure observed in terms of spatial coverage, a deficiency was found in the temporal perspective and time range. Thirty-nine percent of respondents reported taking illegal taxies occasionally because of that fact.

In this regard, the participants again reported another difficulty relating to the lack of supply in the evening, which is seen as a big problem by users. In fact, transport by the end of the afternoon constitutes, sometimes, a problem for certain destinations. By evening, we notice an almost total absence of buses except for ETUB buses (a new public transport company, Batna) that work from 6 am to 8pm. Actually, these latters cover only few lines, the major corridors of the city. For the rest of areas (especially suburban ones), the remaining solution for people to get back home is illegal taxis. Twelve percent reported to be sometimes obliged to take an illegal taxi back home at night (between 80 and 100 DZA/ travel).

Figure 01: the spatial coverage of collective transports of Batna



Source: Ministry of Transportation: Study of transportation and traffic plan of Batna's city, 2009

4.4. Tariffs and transport costs:

Generally, transport fares in Algeria are not really high compared with many other countries; including countries with very low incomes (as for those of sub-Saharan Africa,). In terms of parity of the purchasing power, it is much more expensive for a user to take the bus in Dakar or Ouagadougou than in Algiers [(56)].

Our results showed that 60% believe that the price of the bus is not expensive, (10 DZA/ travel). However, for those who operate intermediate stops (continuation), the cost actually rises rapidly. Over our sample, 40% reported making intermediate stops where they spend between 40 to 50 DZD per day. On another level, for our sample, we had 25% of married people for whom we found that their transport expenditure (only by bus) is multiplied by a coefficient of 1.2 or 1.5 (between 50 DZA and 75 DZA as an average). Now, assuming they have children in school (including secondary school which is generally more or less far from home), transportation-spending will significantly encumber the family budget. In our survey, we estimated the average expenditure of transport per month between 1200DZA and 1800 DZA for people reporting earning less than 10.000 DZ monthly. Hence, when approximately 20% of their income is being spent only on the transport, what remains to meet their needs till the end of month?

4.5. Individuals with reduced mobility:

People with reduced mobility have not been included in this sample. However, observations and interviews that we held with some social organizations have concluded that most of these individuals have their own motorized wheelchair or tricycle to move. Oppositely, the quasi-inexistence of adequate facilities for this category to move independently around the city should be emphasized. Even if they exist, these facilities are not adapted. Basically, it is the family that carries out mobility issues of its disabled members. In fact, most disabled people travel with their relatives in their particular car. Public transport (bus) is not adapted (some buses do not have low chassis to facilitate access) and sidewalks are not standardized. Currently, there is no exclusive transport to cope with the demand for this category.

5. Conclusion:

The survey showed that despite the fact that there is a good access throughout the city, there are still some disadvantaged areas with bad coverage or sometimes no coverage at all. The problem is that the urban transport operators do not use the route assigned by authorities. So users walk over 20 minutes, or more in some cases, per journey. They often have to take an informal taxi which is relatively more expensive. In addition to the inadequacy in terms of spatial coverage, a deficiency in terms of time and schedule has been observed.

To conclude with all this, we can say that the problem of exclusion and inequality in what concerns public transport remain more or less manageable in rich countries because of the easy access to the private car and the existence of a real urban transport policy. For developing countries, the situation is much more complex. Indeed, although in some cases, the access to the private car could solve some mobility problems, it contributes ultimately to create problems behind which the unsustainable development may find way. In addition to this, problems of urban mobility and transport in particular still arise in the field of public transport since the system is not yet fully and really mastered. That is to say, we should also see those experiences in developing countries as the stages of evolution of the system of transportation which is necessary built gradually.

For a consolidated social cohesion, it is important to establish an efficient and equitable transportation system dedicated to the citizens' service. Additionally, the transport system must preserve the environment, to be truly sustainable, taking into account the concerns of the most deprived categories. The system of urban public transportin Batna (and, in fact, in all Algerian cities) should be further well organized, meet the objectives of public service obligation and have the desire to care for the most disadvantaged categories in terms of access and tariffs.

To achieve this, it seems necessary to establish an organizing authority to define a book of specifications to ensure the respect of the rules by operators e.g: the line, schedules, time range (night), coverage of unprofitable lines, etc. This organizing authority may find a solution for the implementation of an integrated price system since it oversees all urban public transport operators (public and private operators). The organizing authority should develop a differential tariff system to support the disadvantaged groups or even provide free transport for the extreme social cases. In order to ensure operating balance, enable viability of transport companies and more generally ensure sustainability of the system, the organizing authority may make some sort of subsidization that can ensure the financial stability and sell the profitable lines with less profitable lines to operators. And in order not to encounter the same problems of the 1980's, the organizing authority should find funds, the grants must be directly from the state or benefit from certain taxes (the example of the French transportation tax is fairly interesting). Industrial and commercial companies could pay a tax on their turnover or benefit and will be donated to the organizing authority. A new tax on fuel is also an interesting solution. Indeed, in Algeria, fuel prices are very low. Fuel prices are less than 20% comparing to international rates.

Finally, to conclude the paper, it seems important to emphasize on the point we think of imminent importance in Algeria. Car ownership is growing rapidly; a corollary of the

significant improvement in the living standards of Algerians. There is a fear that all the problems of the Algerians' mobility are determined by the development of access and use of the private car. The situation is quite complex because, due to cultural reasons, sociological and economic (that we cannot develop here), at the first occasion an Algerian improves even a little his income he/she thinks immediately to buy a car. This heavy trend is not, of course, sustainable and the solution is therefore to propose credible alternatives in terms of high quality public transport systems with attractive prices, and discourage the use and development of the private car. It is also true that Algeria is investing heavily in high quality urban transport(17 tram projects in major cities and a metro in Algiers), but might this be sufficient to make a modal shift and encourage the use of public transport, especially with the existent stagnation (even the decline in some cases) of the use of this type of transportin the northern countries.

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15- Specific categories have been defined by Ascher (2009) (quoted in Féré, 2011: 86) as: «Poor people, disabled persons, kids, elderly persons and persons who don't know how to drive ».

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48- Ibidem.
49- ECTUB= Entreprise Communale de Transport Urbain de Batna (Batna's Municipal Company of Public Transport).
50- Fighters of the revolution, martyrs' family of the revolution, and the other categories, benefited from an exemption.
51- Boubakour, F., overcapacity and underutilization in road freight transport. Case of Algeria, PhD Thesis, 1990.CRET, University of Aix-Marseille 2, France.
52- Wilaya is an administrative division, usually translated as province.
53- In which cost price exceeds 25 million DZD for each unit (about 315,726$) (changes are based on www.xe.com).
54- Despite what have just been said, the first results of a study that we have conducted on these companies show some shortness of breath and loss of momentum.
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