

School Choice and Student Travel Behaviour

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- (1) **Introduction:** School choice can lead to choosing a school beyond neighborhood boundaries, and in turn can result in either longer than necessary walking distance to schools or motorized commutes. In addition to less physical activities and social practices for children, motorized commutes also threaten the safety of daily travel of students. There are numerous studies that examined the disadvantages of school choice on school travel length, modes, and safety.
- (2) **Purpose:** To contribute to the discussion on this important aspect of school choice, this paper examined the extent to which school choice results in students traveling longer distances than necessary to schools in the Northern Iranian city of Rasht. The research also attempted to show how the school choice leads to a variety of transportation

modes for the students and highlights the dangers of the long journey in a case study of four governmental female junior high (GFJH) schools of the studied city.

- (3) **Methodology:** To provide essential data for the research, 1096 questionnaires were distributed to all students attending four sample GFJH schools. Arc/Info was used for mapping and analyzing the results.
- (4) **Conclusion:** The open enrollment policy in the study area is leading majority of the students to schools outside the local areas, also longer than necessary commutes, and increased motorized commutes. Given the serious inconveniences involved in the daily travels the research concluded that Rasht city is in serious need of delineation of school attendance areas.

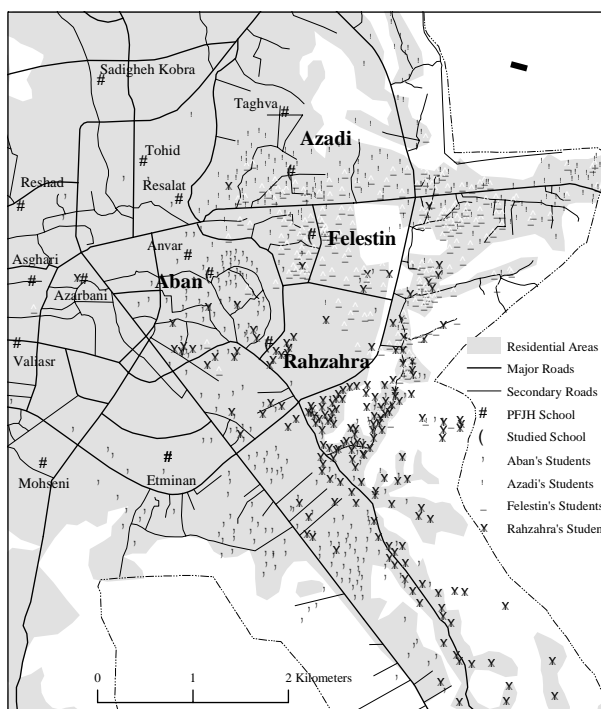


Fig. 1: Students attending the studied GFJH schools with the city residential areas highlighted