



# An Analysis of the Effects of the Aviation Industry in the



## United Arab Emirates

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### Abstract

This research project analyzes the effects that the aviation industry has had on the Middle Eastern country of the United Arab Emirates. The UAE, in particular its largest city Dubai, has seen explosive growth in tourism, travel, and all-around economic status in recent decades. The country's geographic position in the Middle East has offered unique conveniences and challenges on the path to development. Emirati-based airlines such as Emirates and Etihad Airways as well as the airports where they are based have been very financially prosperous in the 21st century. Our research study uses Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reports, travel & tourism contribution studies, and OPEC statistic bulletins of the years 1995 - 2018 to correlate the recent economic success of the United Arab Emirates with the growing aviation sector and analyzes additional cultural impacts of the industry on Emirati culture, such as the decrease on economic reliance of fossil fuels.

### Introduction

The United Arab Emirates is a Middle Eastern country with a population of around 9.5 million. Despite its small size, the United Arab Emirates boasts a nominal GDP 29<sup>th</sup> in the world.<sup>1</sup> The most striking fact about the UAE is that the country is still in its very early stages, having only been established in 1971 in a historically war-torn area. The nation has seen unprecedented growth in recent decades, particularly its largest city Dubai, and has found its place in international markets, consistently reaching growth targets. The country is home to Emirates Airlines, as well as its air freight division Emirates SkyCargo, some of the highest performing airlines in the world, as well as Etihad Airlines, a very promising Abu-Dhabi based premier airline.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1. Dubai International Airport in 1965



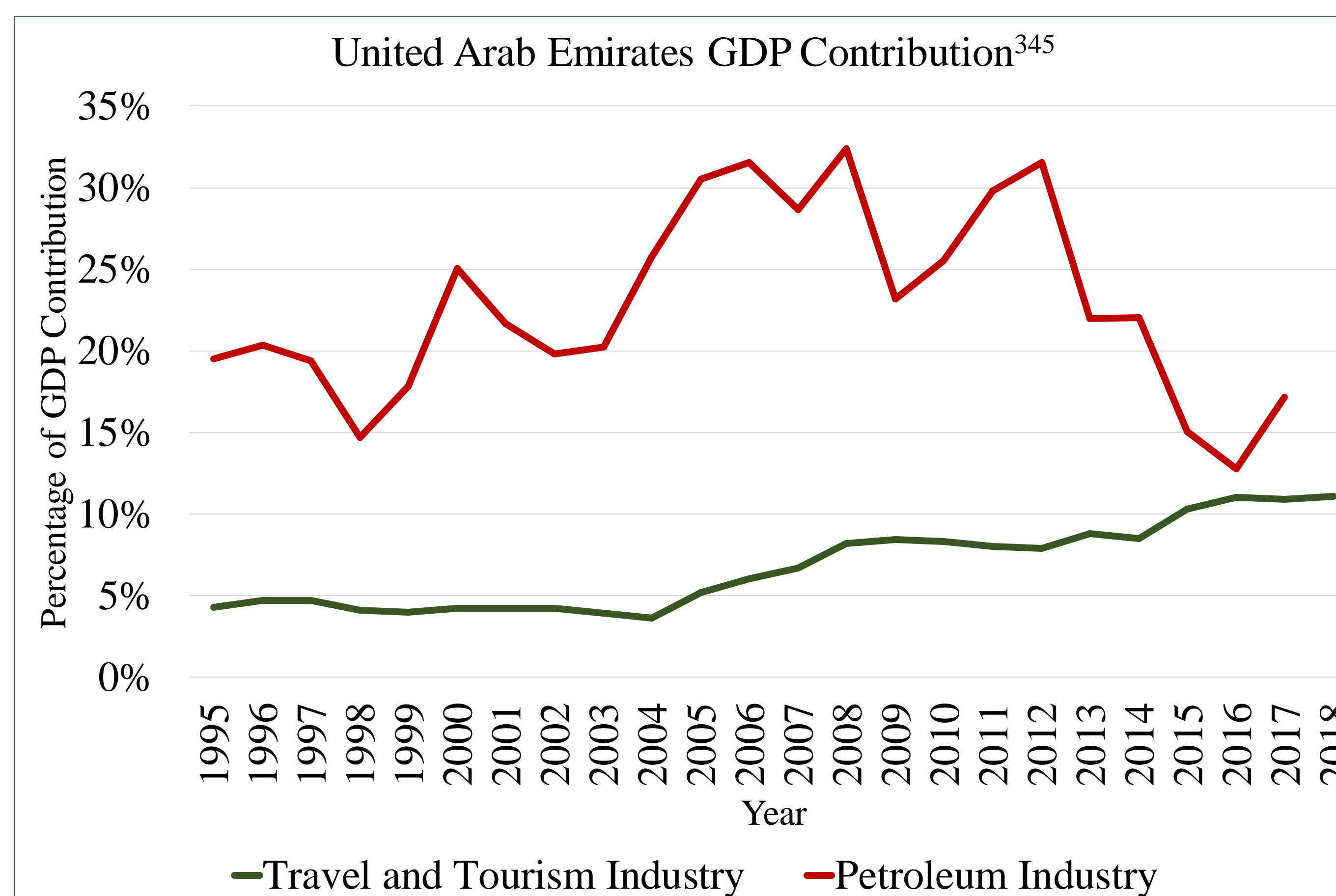
Figure 2. Dubai International Airport in 2016

### Methods and Sources

To calculate the relationship between the aviation industry and the United Arab Emirates, our team used World Bank reports of United Arab Emirates Gross Domestic Report (GDP) figures of the time period 1995 - 2018 in conjunction with travel and tourism GDP contribution analyses from the World Travel and Tourism Council to compare UAE GDP trends with travel industry contributions as well as oil industry figures, the consistently largest source of Emirati GDP, obtained from the Organization of Petroleum Countries (OPEC) annual statistic bulletins.

### Results

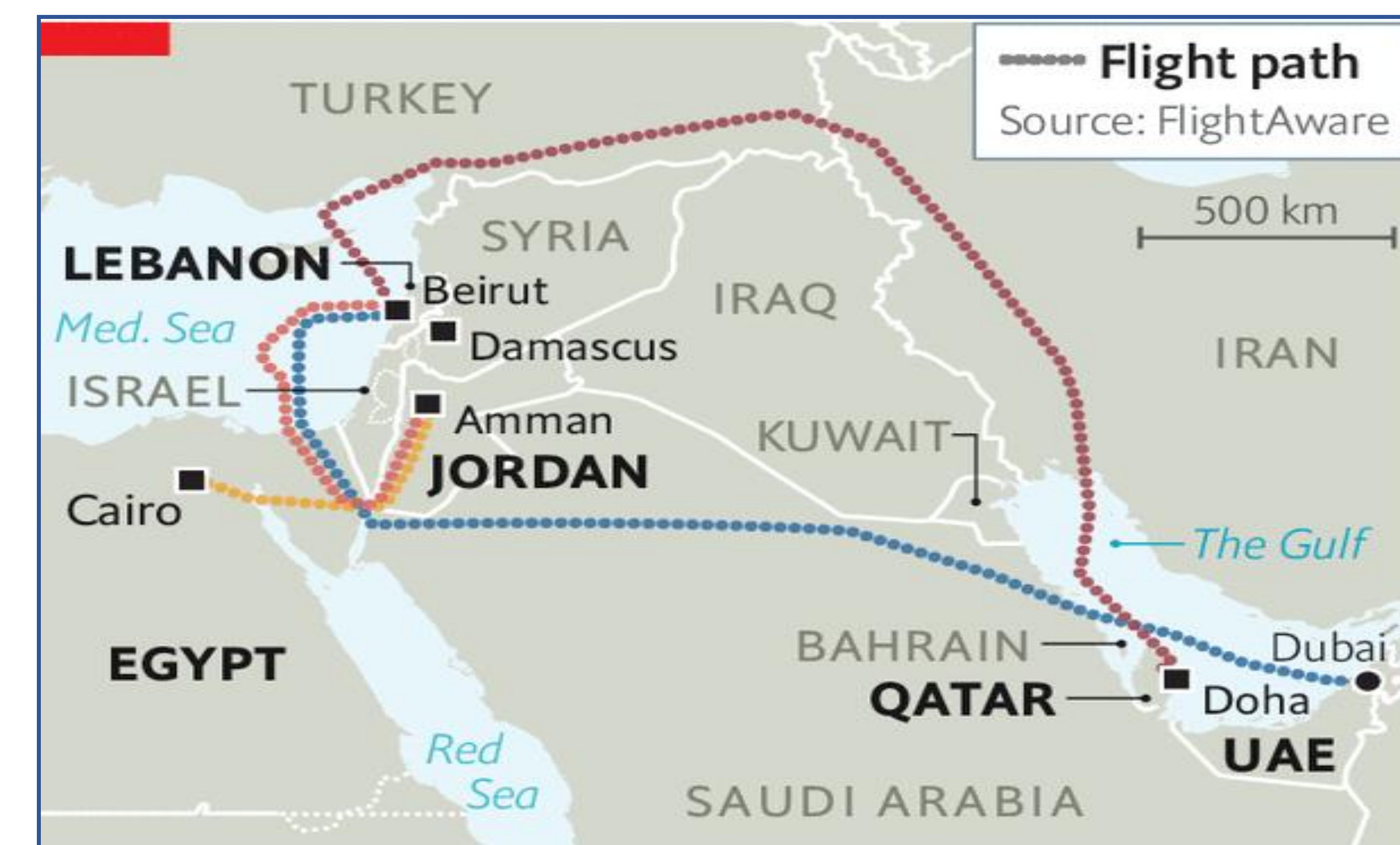
The results of our research showed that from 1995 to 2018, the GDP percentage of the UAE travel and tourism industry has nearly tripled from 4% to over 11%. While petroleum sources still dominate the economies of much of the Middle East, it is clear to see that this majority percentage is on the decline in recent years while the aviation industry is prosperously growing in the area, helping the country economically diversify away from fossil fuels.



| Year | Travel & Tourism Industry | Petroleum Industry | Year | Travel & Tourism Industry | Petroleum Industry |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------|------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1995 | 4.3%                      | 19.5%              | 2007 | 6.7%                      | 28.6%              |
| 1996 | 4.7%                      | 20.4%              | 2008 | 8.2%                      | 32.4%              |
| 1997 | 4.7%                      | 19.4%              | 2009 | 8.4%                      | 23.1%              |
| 1998 | 4.1%                      | 14.7%              | 2010 | 8.3%                      | 25.5%              |
| 1999 | 4.0%                      | 17.8%              | 2011 | 8.0%                      | 29.8%              |
| 2000 | 4.2%                      | 25.1%              | 2012 | 7.9%                      | 31.5%              |
| 2001 | 4.2%                      | 21.7%              | 2013 | 8.8%                      | 22.0%              |
| 2002 | 4.2%                      | 19.8%              | 2014 | 8.5%                      | 22.0%              |
| 2003 | 3.9%                      | 20.2%              | 2015 | 10.3%                     | 15.0%              |
| 2004 | 3.6%                      | 25.8%              | 2016 | 11.0%                     | 12.8%              |
| 2005 | 5.2%                      | 30.5%              | 2017 | 10.9%                     | 17.2%              |
| 2006 | 6.0%                      | 31.6%              |      |                           |                    |

### Cultural Discussion

Many intersecting cultural perspectives have affected the prosperity and popularity of Emirates Airlines, the Dubai International Airport, and the rest of the UAE's aviation industry. The success of the aviation industry has resulted in the increase of tourism to the UAE. In response, a study was conducted in one of the emirates, Abu-Dhabi, to understand the perspective of the residents. Positive impacts included social and cultural exchanges and economic growth. Negative impacts included disregard to the environment and culture of the area. Despite the negative impacts, many still saw the increase in tourism as positive for the region. Another study, conducted by Zayed University and QUT, focused on the perspective of layover travelers, specifically French and Australian. This study found that the perspectives of previous visitors were more positive than first-time visitors. It was also found that visiting the destination improved the perceptions of the travelers. Overall, the perspectives and influences of the UAE's aviation industry's is positive.



### Conclusions

In conclusion both the City of Dubai and Emirates Airline have grown sustainably over the last decade. Even though there is still much to improve on the city of Dubai relies heavily on the aviation business that city put aviation (travel) into their prime category of helping the growth of economy. While the aviation industry continues to grow over the years, Emirates airline is keeping up with new innovative technology making travel in Dubai more successful and allowing more people to visit their glorious city.

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