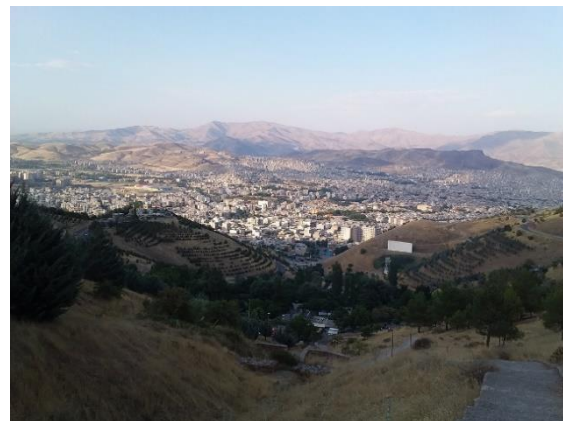
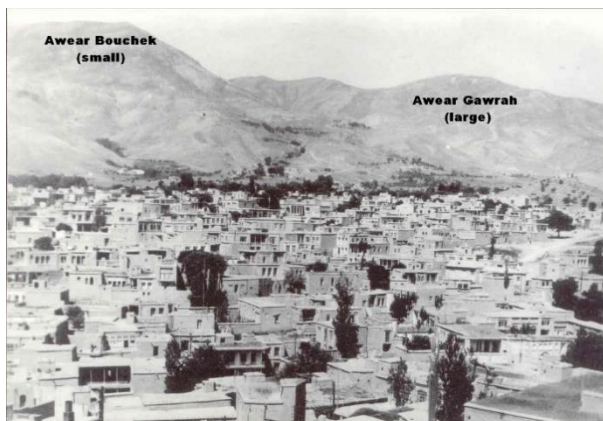


The modes and outcomes of interaction of (im)mobile Kurdish women in public space: a cross-cultural comparative study of different urban contexts

Case studies

The selection of the case study cities is partly based on the researcher's personal interest and knowledge of these cities. Apart from their long socio-cultural relationships in the course of history, the two cities of **Sulaymaniyah** and **Sanandaj** are the principal Kurdish cities in the region, and each represents a capital of one province in Iraqi Kurdistan and in Iran respectively. For these reasons, they are suitable examples of Kurdish cities that correspond to the main aim of my research.

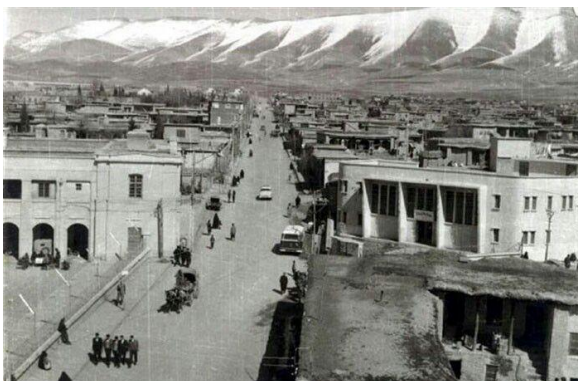
Sanandaj, or "Senna/Kursan" in Kurdish, is a mountainous city located in the western part of Iran within the majestic mountain range of the Zagros. It was founded by Sulaiman Khan Ardalan (1639–1656) in 1639 following the Treaty of Zahab (17 May 1639), which defined new boundaries between the rival Safavid and Ottoman empires. The city has a semi-arid Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. As the capital of Kurdistan province and second largest Kurdish city in Iran, it had 412,767 inhabitants according to the national census in 2016.



Left: Old photo of Sanandaj taken in the early nineteenth century showing the traditional character of the old city bordered by the Abidar mountain rim in the western part (from the collection of Mr. Gazarani). **Right:** A new photo showing a view from the Abidar Mountains towards the northern part of the city. This photo to some extent shows the bowl-like shape of the city due to its location in the inter-mountain basin of Zagros (Alizadeh, 2019, p. 243).

Sulaimani, or "Sulaymaniyah", is a relatively mountainous city located in the east of the Kurdistan Region, Iraq, not far from the Iran-Iraq border. It was founded by prince Ibrahim from the Baban Emirate, known locally as Ibrahim Pasha Baban (1783–1803), on November 14, 1784. Due

to the long tradition of city building in Iran, the closest neighbouring country to the region of Sulaymaniyah, the city was mainly founded as a reference to the most sophisticated cities of the Persian Empire, particularly her counterpart, the city of Senna/Sanandaj, ruled by the rival emirate, the Ardalan dynasty (1169–1867). The city has a semi-arid climate with very hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. As the capital of Sulaymaniyah Governorate and the second largest Kurdish city in Kurdistan Region (KRI), it had 676,500 inhabitants according to the latest estimates and calculations in 2018.



Left: An old photo of Sulaymaniyah taken in the early 1930s showing an avenue crossing the old city towards the Azmar mountains in the northeast (<https://zheen.org/>). **Right:** A new photo shows a general view of Sulaymaniyah's bazaar in November 14, 2010 (Photo by Aram Karim/Metrography)

For the European cities, the selection was mainly based on the gender mainstreaming approach, the location of the host institution, the multicultural status of the cities, and the number of Kurdish immigrants there.

The city of **Vienna** has employed a gender mainstreaming focus since the early 1990s in order to ensure “fair shares in the city”. This was done by continuously developing innovative planning approaches that account for gender equality in public policy to create positive socio-political change for all its citizens. The city has since then conducted about 60 gender-sensitive pilot projects. One of the main projects of this approach is the neighbourhood of Aspern, which is due to be completed according to gender mainstreaming planning principles in 2028. Displaying a high quality of urban public spaces, Aspern was planned to highlight women’s identity: all streets and public spaces are named after women. Apart from this and the location of the host institution, the city of Vienna has been chosen as the world's most liveable city by the renowned British news magazine “The Economist” using the “Global Liveability Index” for the second consecutive time in 2019. More importantly, Vienna’s population has grown rapidly in the past few years from 1,571,123 to 1,897,491 between 2002 and early 2019, mostly due to immigration from abroad, which is also clearly reflected in the

diversity of the Viennese population. In early 2019, about 40.7 percent or 773,176 residents of Vienna had a foreign origin.¹



Good quality of public spaces, family-oriented design and gender mainstreaming planning form the main character of Aspern Seestadt in Vienna. (Photographs from <https://www.aspern-seestadt.at/> and Daniel Hawelka for Seestadt)

The German city of **Cologne** is one of the oldest large German cities spanning the Rhine River in western Germany and is the historic, cultural, and economic capital of this region. According to local statistics (Stadt Köln 2012), 35% of the population has a migration background.² That is why the city was historically shaped by immigration and its official image was recognised as that of "a socially integrated, multicultural European city".³ This multicultural character is showcased in the famous carnival celebration, where ethnic minorities participate to display their capacity to act and, thus, become a symbol of solidarity. Considering this character, it is also the second largest city in Germany in terms of its Kurdish population – after Berlin. There are many Kurdish families from both Sulaymaniyah and Sanandaj who have long been living there. They have also created local communities for different socio-cultural purposes of their own, particularly concerning women human rights (Rekxrawi Xanda⁴ and Centeri Jnan⁵).



The multicultural character of Cologne (Photos taken in summer 2018)

¹ <https://www.wien.gv.at/english/social/integration/facts-figures/population-migration.html>

² Salzbrunn, M. (2014). How diverse is Cologne carnival? How migrants appropriate popular art spaces. *Identities*, 21(1), 92-106.

³ Martiniello, M. (Ed.). (2015). *Multiculturalism and the Arts in European Cities*. Routledge, p. 95.

⁴ <https://www.messenger.com/t/RekxrawiXanda>

⁵ <http://centerijnan.blogspot.com>