

## **Women's Challenges in Access to Urban Spaces and Infrastructures: A Comparative Study of the Urban Infrastructures Conforming to Women's Needs in Tehran and Istanbul**

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**Abstract :** Over the past 80 years, in compliance with the advent of modernity in Iran and Turkey, the presence of women in economic and social arenas has created serious challenges in the capacity of urban spaces to respond to their presence and transport because urban spaces up until then were based on masculine criteria and therefore, women could use such spaces in the company of their fathers or husbands. However, as modernity expanded by Reza Shah and Ataturk, women found the opportunity to work and be present in urban spaces alongside men and their presence in economic and social domains resulted in their presence in these spaces in the early and late hours of the day. Therefore, the city had to be transformed in structural, social, and environmental terms to accommodate women's activities and presence in various urban arenas, which was a huge step in transition from a masculine man-based culture to an all-inclusive human-based culture in these two countries. However, the optimization of urban space was subject to political changes in the two countries, leading to significant differences in designing urban spaces in Tehran and Istanbul. What shows the importance and novelty of the present study lie in the differences in urban planning and optimization in the two capital cities, which gave rise to different outcomes in desirability and quality of living in these two capital cities. Due to the importance of the topic, one of the most significant factors in desirability and acceptability of urban space for women was examined using a descriptive-analytic method based on qualitative methodology in Tehran and Istanbul. The results showed that the infrastructural factors in Istanbul, including safety of access, variety, and number of public transport modes, transparency, and supervision over public spaces have provided women with a safer and more constant presence compared to Tehran. It seems that challenges involved in providing access to urban spaces in Tehran in terms of infrastructure and function have made Tehran unable to respond to the most basic needs of its female citizens.

**Keywords :** gender differences, urban space security, access to transportation systems, women's challenges

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