

# INCREASING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN SPACE DESIGN WITH UTILIZING THE PLACE CHECK TECHNIQUE (CASE STUDY: TEHRAN'S MONIRIEH NEIGHBORHOOD)

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## ABSTRACT:

The undeniable role in solving the problems of urban society, the necessity participation of people in the formulation of urban design techniques that comfortably be used by anyone to become a professional concerned in this field. Urban Design created good urban places and improve the quality of existing places, always is needed action to assess the quality of public spaces. Place check Technique is one of the new techniques of urban design is to people participation and ordinary citizens in urban environmental assessment has been developed. The purpose of this research process, methods and tools of place check in the creation of citizen participation in urban design. The case study of this research is Monirieh neighborhood located on region 11 of Tehran Municipality. In this study, we collected observational data, questionnaires and field studies with data analysis software environment and preparing tables and graphs to analyze the issue has been dealt. Statistical deduced of the data revealed that, use of these techniques can be effective factors in creating and increasing citizen participation is in Tehran public spaces and using this method, effect on measures to enhance the quality of urban public spaces.

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## KEYWORDS:

Citizens Participation, Place check, Tehran, Monirieh neighborhood

## INTRODUCTION

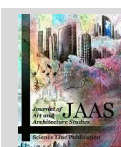
### Expression issue

In the new era of progress increased community involvement means participation in all spheres of society based on individual decisions consciously and voluntarily done [1]. Population growth and urbanization as a pervasive phenomenon especially in metropolises in many developed countries and developing countries such as Iran and its related problems, has led many urban theorists, attention to participation of citizens in municipal affairs to the particular urban design. Urban Design for the creation of good urban places and quality of existing places, public spaces are always in need of quality measurement [2]. Assessing the quality of urban places, according to Christopher Alexander is considered one of the two main components of urban design, if done correctly, leading to the creation of a comprehensive manner and places of the various aspects of sustainable economic, environmental and especially social causes; because in recent decades urban planners and managers are on the agenda, social sustainability of public spaces requires people participation, at various stages of the

design process of urban and particularly in the assessment of phase, hence, using that method, through the quality of places measurement provide with local and ordinary people partnership.

### The importance and necessity of research

During past three decades, in an increasingly urban design literature, topic will participation and consumer demand for spaces in decision making, design and implementation of programs related to build environment has been raised [2]. It could be stated that today least in the developed world, particularly in North America and Scandinavia, the necessity of the presence and intervention of citizens in shaping the urban environment has been recognized. Thus it can be seen that urban design and construction of built environment cannot be sole concern is small number of specialists. Limited to, all activities associated with manufacturing environment in a world increasingly associated with ethnic - racial, big and small, large and small problems will be a small group, experts as the denial of the right of self-expression by the rest of humanity.



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## METHODOLOGY

In this study, Monirieh neighborhood located in region 11 of Tehran has been used as study area. The neighborhood of the central parts of Tehran metropolis and residential tissue formation history in its first revival in Tehran in late 1231 AH returns toward those years, and traditional configurations of Tehran are concerned. But this neighborhood, the most upstream projects as an important part of core of Tehran is presented. Important centers of political governance, trans-regional and trans-performance specialty markets and cultural centers of the city, alongside a wide range of different body tissues residential properties due to the considerable various dimensions are importance [3].

Nevertheless, Due to the quality of urban space in the neighborhood, in terms of what residents, what are the in terms of people passing through of these neighborhood is very essential. In this study, due to the nature of the "place check" was used that guarantee a collection of information by observation, questionnaires and field studies with data analysis software environment and preparing tables and graphs to analyze the subject has been paid. The first review of research and related theories will be discussed and will illustrate the place survey. Finally, the result of a practical study will be conducted in the Monirieh neighborhood in region 11 of Tehran municipality.

### Theoretical Foundations

**Background of the study:** Historical review shows the citizens of participation returns to city - state Greece ancient, that from since onwards the influence of governments and ideologies of society has undergone profound transformation [4]. But history of citizen participation in Iranian cities has a long history. In Iran, beginning of formation of word town and government (except in the Seleucids period), until the end of the second Pahlavi, Management of the imperial government, in other words, the government from the top to down. Although the constitutional revolution and consequently, Laws, including Baladieh starting point for citizen participation in contemporary Iran. However, due to the authoritarian style of governing and lack of preparation cultural conditions – social people, acceptance of democratic patterns of management and partnership has been failed. However, in Iran society, self-help groups have been crystallized mainly in rural and urban communities, Including dredging aqueduct, streams, closing dams on rivers, ponds maintenance and dredging, digging irrigation supplies, maintenance and construction of public buildings such as mosques, baths, hiring workers, the maintenance and protection, and so on.(2. Farhadi,1995:75-76) But in context of civic participation after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 was provided, So citizen participation in governance

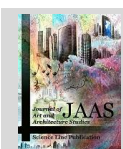
council Councils Act (December 1982) to take institutional form.

**Definition of participation:** Numerous definitions of people partnership have been proposed that are each of influence different levels of citizens in planning process and decision-making. Cunningham defines citizen participation are process which in those patients in decisions relating to the exercise of power. Sanoff [5] believes that community participation means people's cooperation in pursuing its own goals that have been defined. In his view, social participation is involvement of people in the creation and management of natural and artificial environments and value of community involvement in boundaries of traditional teachings and character passes. Community Action Partnership is based on this principle that if citizens are active, rather than passive consumers behave as they should be creation and management of natural and artificial environments involved, then would be a better practice environment.

From another viewpoint, people partnership and it affects all individuals, groups, organizations and communities in the planning process has been defined, interact in such a way that the possible outcomes of that process should be. The definition of indirect participation of elected representatives, or people who have task of interacting with official bodies for transfer of community needs and goals are different. People partnership means of direct interactions in development, review and provide programs and proposals between planners and authorities on one hand, and individuals and groups affected by other programs.

However, although the basic elements of effective communication between the community and the decision makers in the partnership are considered, Participation is defined as anything more than a communication process. People partnership process involving community members, in activities related to planning, decision-making and policy organizations have described officer. By this definition, that general definition of people partnership, in comparison with other definitions, there are fewer opponents. It can be defined as well, distinguish between participation and exclusion from participation, that traditional model of governance is concerned, that elected policy makers, generally, with help of self-appointed experts task of the policy are showing responsible, without interfering.

This definition is wide participation, different interpretations can be harvested, because people may have different ways and at different levels in decision-making and planning processes are involved. In some cases, people just act as a passive participant, and only receiving information, that government bodies and officials are considering. In some cases, the participation of people to get their



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views through questionnaires is limited. In circumstances may the real participation of the people through their representatives in decision-making process must be achieved. From a rational view, there are important differences among the conditions that may be like the concept of public participation or public involvement or other concepts may not well represent all the conditions. Best practices, the employment of different concepts to highlight this distinction, as in the past relying on public participation and information flow; it was used among the participants and planners. These concepts are:

**Popular connected:** Flow of information to the public without receiving feedback from the public authorities.

**Consult with people:** Information flows from the people to the government. In this process of informal dialogue between people and government does not exist.

**Public Participation:** Exchange of information between people and government. Talking to some degree (usually in groups) in the process occurs that representatives of both groups are included in different proportions.

**Place Check:** Place check method in order to adaptation and approaches recommended in the book by design, that jointly by the ministry of environment of England and the commission for Architecture and the artificial environment as it spread, has been developed. In the context of the book, urban design as a collaborative process and interdisciplinary places to live in cities, towns and villages shape is defined. Place check technique editing, based on the recommendations presented in the city book has been associated [6].

Based on the above definition, and also need for public participation in urban planning processes, codification techniques that can easily be used by everyone, as a way to evaluate quality of location determination and provision of necessary reforms should be developed with local people, has become one of the discipline concerns and profession in that order. In this subject, place check techniques are trying to provide a comprehensive set of questions (check list) to process of change and potential opportunities that can be applied to improve physical environment, a new point to the previous techniques add urban design. The technique attempts to limit possibility of abstract discussions that are difficult to be measured, specialized vocabulary and terminology, usually preclude participation of non-specialist groups will be able to avoid. The technique, with aim increasing the possibility of presence different groups, possible to start measurement, with a small group of people, for example, presence of five or six people or a small group of people, who have come together to provide a street corner, also in terms of scale, as well as, place check techniques, flexibility, and can be on a

street, neighborhood or city or an entire region to be used. So far, various analytical techniques have been proposed to assess the location, that for example, analysis techniques can be an objective perspective. Gordon Cullen, the subjective perspective of Kevin Lynch, Carl Kruf morphological analysis, Space Analysis by Bill Hillier and Julian Henson, John Froin analysis of pedestrian ways, Oscar Newman's defensible space analysis, analysis of environmental sustainability and Randall Thomas and Brian Edwards noted. All of these techniques classification based on Henry Sanoff [5], urban design techniques into two groups: professional techniques and techniques common to classify, is a professional technique. Place check techniques, one of the new techniques of urban design, by Robert Cowan, organized by Urban Design Alliance, for participation of people and ordinary citizens in urban environmental assessment has been developed. Now, increasingly places check techniques, In order to develop such a framework and agenda for design guidance documents designed by professionals and the communities are welcome [2].

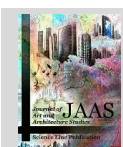
## PLANNING TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH AREA

As mentioned, in this study, Monirieh neighborhood in district 11 of Tehran Municipality has been studied as a study area. Continue to increase citizen level of participation in process of drafting study area is described.

### Program objectives

Neglect of social values, culture and identity lies in urban areas, neglect of environmental quality in urban areas, and effective quality connectivity and mobility in urban and exclusive emphasis on the subjective perception of urban planners or architects, urban structure has resulted in the formation of misanthrope's spaces, that capabilities would not be expected, until the environment is responsive and flexible in the face of citizen action. Increase citizens' quality of life and social life in urban spaces, one of the challenges of professional urban design, and many theories have been proposed based on different situations and experiences [7].

Due to strategic position of district 11 of Tehran and Monirieh neighborhood and its role in politics, economy, culture and population of Tehran in Iran, design a program, In order to improve quality of urban public spaces, in this neighborhood, especially through process of urban design framework is essential. Accordingly, main approach in this study was "Assess the situation and formulate vision for the neighborhood with the help of local residents".



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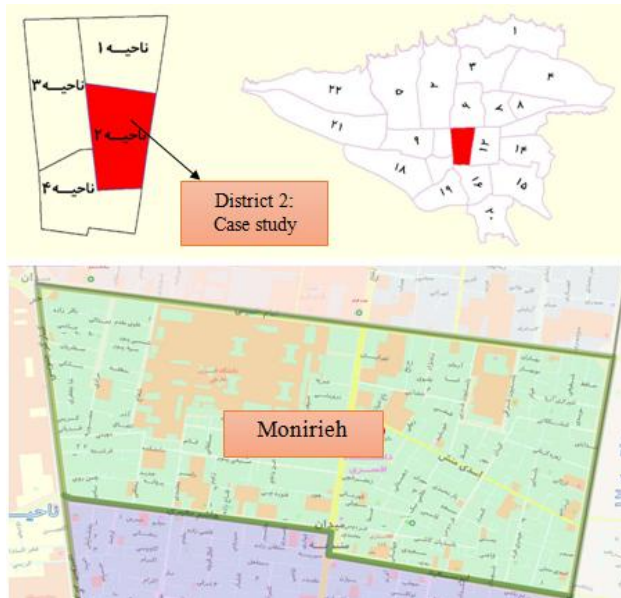
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## Recognizing characteristics of the neighborhoods in District 11 of Tehran Monirieh

Monirieh neighborhood in District 2 of region 11 Tehran municipality is located. From the north, to Imam Khomeini street, from the East; to Islamic Unity Street, from the West, Kargar Street, from the south Abu Saeed streets and Shahid is limited and Moayeri (Fig.1 and Fig.2).



**Figure 1:** Geographical location Monirieh neighborhood in Tehran (7. region11.tehran.ir)

This neighborhood is an area of 992.480 square meters, of which approximately 0.6% of total areas of region 11 are included. Population of Monirieh neighborhood is composed of approximately 24,202 thousand. Special features of region 11, there are important centers of political and military. Also embassies of Italy, France, Lebanon, Armenia as well as several military garrisons that are located in this region, that's always the place that is welcoming foreign guests and movement, area has a strategic position. There are important economic centers and specialized markets, with the trans-regional and trans-urban areas such as production and sales of accessories and sports apparel types of bolts and tools, permanent location chandelier and decorative lighting, other universities such as the Epaulet University Imam Ali (AS), there are several mosques and the religious site and center of Muharram mourning ceremonies, and so on these center is unique in that neighborhood. Located in the immediate area of three train stations (Monirieh, Imam Ali, Hassan Abad) and major thoroughfares (Vali Asr) and squares of (Monirieh and rail) are important in particular the railway station, which is the confluence of all the tracks. Caused by extremely high volume of passengers into and out of this place, and also two million passengers daily movement in the region 11, that often, to reach other areas or its

administration, of streets in this area are used. However, the ancient fabric and old, among the variety of the old garages and other buildings dating back 50 years, construction and renovation of the necessity of doing something in the neighborhood is very essential.

### The feasibility study area

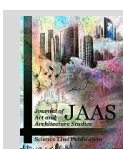
Research, with utilizes place check techniques, it follows that, in the book of Genesis places, Professor Golkar [2 and 6] listed occurred. Accordingly, the spatial scale of place check, to be at the neighborhood level. Participant groups, according to the local population (24,202 people), Based on sampling Cochran, 94 persons, the samples were selected.

Respondents included different range are as follows:

- Unions and businessmen.
- Local dignitaries and elders.
- Religious institutions.
- Employees of local authorities.
- Neighbourhood Council.
- The local mass media.
- Residents and tenants.
- Schools.
- Free schools.
- Cooperative.
- Private companies professionalism.

It is explained, the style and scale of the research, acts as a preliminary stage to perform site surveys, and conducted extensive surveys and more accurate location possible, may require extensive resources. The variety of options, there are places to do surveys, in this study, after visiting the local area, in order to detect and recognize things are done by polling place, in conjunction with the above-mentioned groups was performed using a questionnaire. Feasibility study check list includes a series of questions, they can plan and find the answer a district is required to assess the situation, Nevertheless, the final decision on about being, which question is a proper assessment of a particular area, as the case may be Place check shall be made by the organizers. In determining the appropriate questions as to what extent the study area, the places and the extent of survey participants were familiar with the concepts and topics contained in the list be consider [2]. In this case, the purpose of the place check, given that, this study continues the research process are the authors developed an urban design guide to organizing street theaters, to improve the vitality of the region 11, are being carried out in Tehran, discuss the location of place check, in urban public spaces, street view is proposed to erect a suitable building. As a result, the contents Czech list of survey sites, also includes questions were designed to achieve this goal.

In general, there were two aspects of the questions involved, people and places; the



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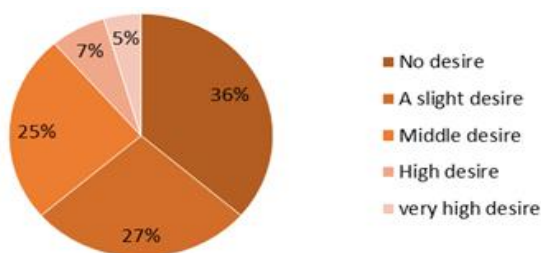
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hypotheses made, on the following hypotheses were included:

- People of neighborhood Monirieh tend to participate and engage themselves in their neighborhoods.
  - Neighborhood Monirieh has potential for innovative projects (such as making sidewalks or road bike).
  - Holding festivals and street theater are way to improve vision and neighborhood residents of view point
- The hypotheses associated with the location included:
- Forms, materials and local construction practices, which should be inspiration for modern constructions, exist in this area.
  - Holding Muharram mourning ceremonies in broad categories, Led to the formation of collective memory and identity in this place.
  - This place is in need of upgrading and construction of green spaces.
  - Streets and other public spaces for pedestrians will be safer and more pleasant.
  - Public spaces need to remediation and serious management in the neighborhood.
  - This neighborhood needs to create and enhance the legibility and increased calls for people's ability to it makes navigating easier.
  - With remediation measures, at the neighborhood level, can take place be adaptable to accept changes in the future.
  - The public transport system is located at desirable neighborhood.
  - Connecting and interconnectedness neighborhood Passages, are at a low level.

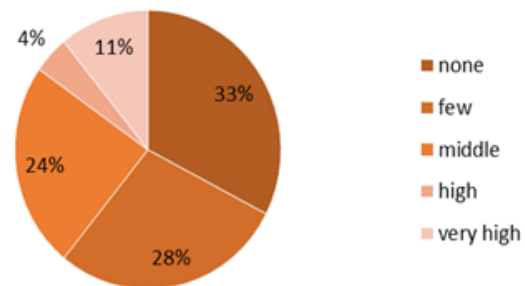
Is necessary to explain, four basic types of questions are asked to create positive change in the environment, it is essential to whom and how to participate. Not any more questions on how people use the site and how the experience has been focused at this neighborhood. The process of place check can be implemented in various practices, in this study, the organizers of place check in the first, check list in compliance with the building features a convenient location, and the question itself, the content in the survey were consistent with the target location, and then distributed among the participants during a meeting. The answer participants' questions, specific results by the authors, through field visits, as listed on the map and images mentioned and taking notes. Results indicate a slight tendency to involve neighborhood people, and are engage in neighborhood affairs (Figure 2).



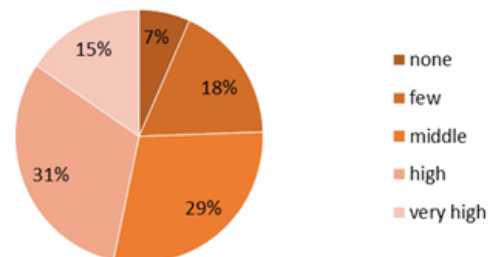
**Figure 2:** Willingness of neighbourhood people to participate and involve themselves in the affairs of their neighbourhood (Source: Authors).

At this context, Attention of officials and planners, in order to increase citizen participation in the affairs of their neighborhood contexts can lead to an increase in neighborhood air quality and its further development.

Due to strategic location of region, office spaces and large-scale system in itself, Relatively high density in the neighborhood, Substrate reduction necessary to create such a spaces for sidewalk or a bike path with this kind of projects, give priority were seen to human essence of inhabitants (Figure 3). Neighborhood residents, Belief in role of festivals and street views are on the horizon, perspective and vision neighborhood residents (Figure 4). Also, According to neighborhood residents, Mourning a category and massive ceremony held at the month of Muharram, The Monirieh neighborhood is main centers, Leads to the formation of collective memory and identity have been at this location (Figure 5). This topic Can be identified, optimal location of the well, Favorable consideration of the subject based on the specific characteristics of neighborhood, leading to a lively urban space of Monirieh neighborhood.



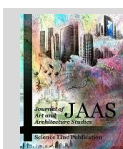
**Figure 3:** Potential for innovative community projects (such as sidewalk or bike path) (Source: authors)



**Figure 4:** The role of holding festivals and street plays in enhancing the landscape and vision of people. (Source: authors)

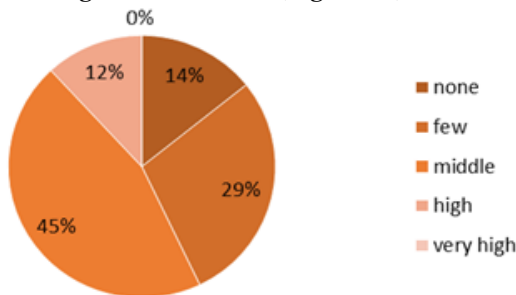
Due to the fact that, Monirieh neighborhood formation in the core of Tehran, based on the research hypotheses can be the local patterns could be used at future construction, but due to the lack of understanding of this structures and or demolition of buildings eligible residents of the neighborhood's identity did not confirm this hypothesis (Figure 4).

Due to the fact that, Monirieh neighborhood in central Tehran is taking shape, based on the research hypotheses that can be the local patterns

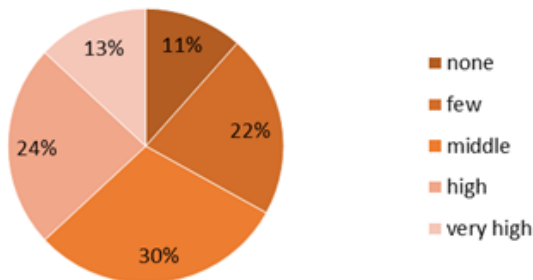


could be used in future construction, but due to lack of understanding of the demolition of buildings or structures possessing identity neighborhood residents did not support this hypothesis (Figure 5). The results show this site requires Remediation and construction of green areas (Figure 7). The results of the research, residents of the security objective and subjective satisfaction streets and other public spaces in the neighborhood, the opportunity to develop and enhance the cultural program at the neighborhood level increases (Figure 8). According to this fact, immense satisfaction to residents of public transport systems, Increases opportunities for social planning (Figure 9).

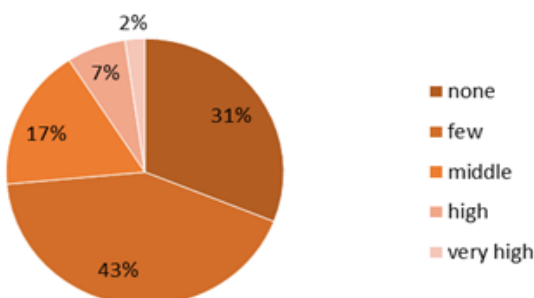
The results suggest needing for public spaces; improvement and management are serious at neighborhood level (Figure 10). Also this district, Need to develop and enhance effect of increasing readability are invited of people, It was easier to navigate (Figure 11). Improvement measures, at neighborhood level, this place can be adaptable to accept changes in the future (Figure 12).



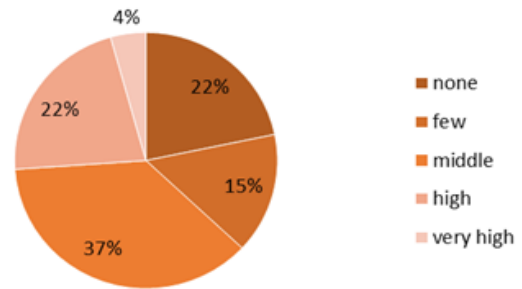
**Figure 5:** The amount of local construction practices, that have been inspiration for modern construction (Source: Authors).



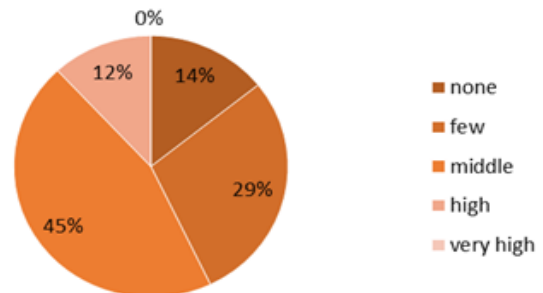
**Figure 6:** Role of holding a category of at mourning month of Muharram in the formation of collective memory and identity in this neighbourhood (Source: authors)



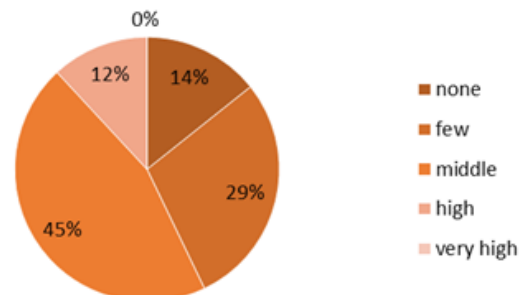
**Figure 7:** Desire of people from green space in neighbourhood. (Source: authors)



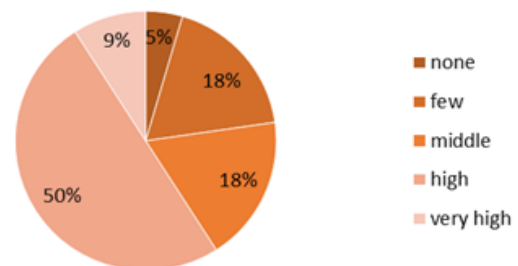
**Figure 8:** Safe rate of streets and other public spaces in the neighborhood (Source: authors).



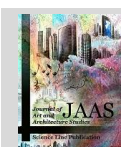
**Figure 9:** Need to create and enhance the ability to invite people for neighbourhoods and increase legibility (Source: authors).

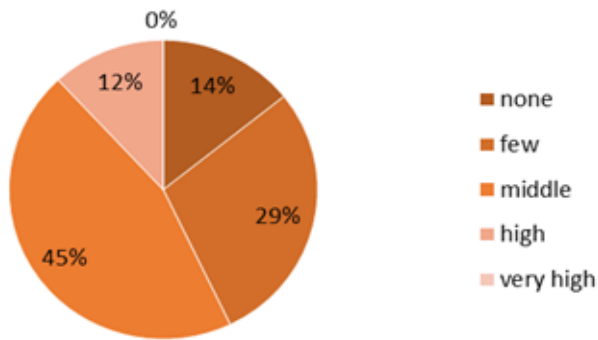


**Figure 10:** Need to create and enhance the ability to invite people for neighbourhoods and increase legibility. (Source: authors)



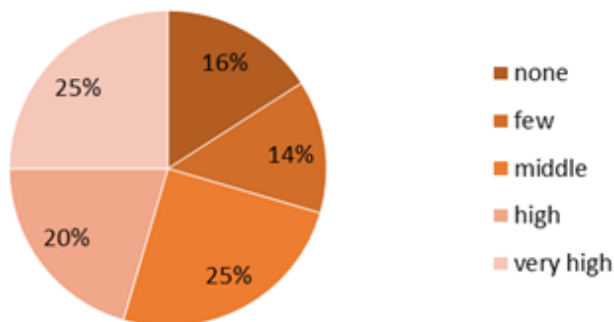
**Figure 11:** Role remediation measures at the neighbourhood level for acceptance of future changes. (Source: authors)





**Figure 12:** Satisfaction of the local public transport system. (Source: authors)

Indicates results of research, in some places, neighborhoods, connection and interconnectedness of passages, located in a poor neighborhood, little attention in design of urban space, consent can be brought to desired level and creation of new public spaces, increased social interactions that take place (Figure 13).



**Figure 13:** Connectivity and interconnectedness neighborhood streets. (Source: authors)

## CONCLUSION

Considering results of present study suggests that, Place check techniques, could be of ways to increase citizen participation in urban public spaces, is to enhance quality, and increasing social participation, increased sense of security. Therefore, for promoting social participation, and consequently increases sense of social security, city managers and planners and urban designers, ground to increase participation among citizens, and use of public assistance and to drag people to the scene, for public works and public can take a step in this regard.

Hypothesis associated with the people and that, to create positive change in the neighborhood, it is necessary, what are those and how to participate, showed that local people Monirieh neighborhood, have few desire to participate and involve themselves in affairs of their neighborhood, In this case, Serious attention to improving this situation, it is essential to manage desirable neighborhood. Also residents of the neighborhood, are belief few

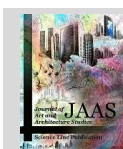
potential in the areas to increase public participation in local urban spaces. That subject entails serious attention of authorities towards urban spaces in the neighborhood. And also, people of neighborhood, holding festivals and street theater, know take as a way to enhance perspective and vision of their neighborhood residents that can be used with better planning of this potential. In particular, the Hypotheses related to where and how people use, from where and how it is experienced, results showed that in this neighborhood, the forms, materials and local construction practices, that should be inspiration for modern constructions, in this neighborhood, for people not at high levels, that, it according to old neighborhood could be considered as a serious warning; However, this could, lack of information from residents, of buildings and places; If identity of their neighborhood, that also, need to schedule to be overcome, including tours and street theater organize in places, with identity of neighborhood, also residents of the neighborhood were introduced effects impact on those holding the mourning month of Muharram, in other regions of citizens towards Monirieh neighborhood that this subject Suggests a potential religious ceremony–dramatic, in order to increase level of neighborhood identity. That, with appropriate urban space, and better management, the ceremony is concluded. In this study, it was determined given that, satisfaction of people from objective and subjective security, and also access to public transport is at a high level, but satisfactory levels of quality and quantity of green space and public space and urban space, are in low levels. The subject, using positioning and suitable spaces at the neighborhood level, In order to create a green space at the same time to play the role of public space and organizing festivals and street views or weekly markets, can be solved.

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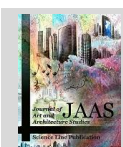


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