

# Investigation of Procedures Related to Compilation, Review, and Enactment of Approvals in Islamic City Councils; Case Study: “Nightlife” Approval in Tehran City

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## ABSTRACT

The performance of city councils in reviewing and enacting approvals is one of the important fields in urban management. The significance of this field originates from the nature of these approvals that affect the various life aspects of citizens. Also, an investigation of this topic is necessary regarding the paradigm of public participation of stakeholders and influential groups in the decision-making process, because city council members perform as elected agents of people and make decisions on various urban subjects and challenges in the urban planning system of Iran. Thus, this study aims to examine a real experience of decision-making in the Islamic City Council of Tehran by adopting a pragmatic approach to discuss the compilation, review, and enactment of an idea in the city council through a practical process. To do so, content analyses, documentary, and narrative studies have been used to review the theoretical texts in this field, analyze the available documents and antecedents, and the practical procedures and margins done to compile, review, and enact the considered approval. The results of this study confirm that the pragmatist approach must receive greater attention in the process of revising the plans, projects, and approvals in the field of city and urban planning. Adoption of this approach and attention to the real experiences of the action field (in the field of decision making) draws the attention of theorists to the point that stakeholders (even those who are unrelated to the topic) have hidden powers in the cities, and can disturb an urban project or improve its performance. Moreover, regardless of all of its aspects influencing the cities, processes respective to urban management have raised many worries for power authorities, so the interaction with them requires specific capabilities for urban planners. These capabilities appear through the assessment of experiences in the field of action or practice and existing realities of society.

**Keywords:** Theory and Practice Fields, Approval, City Council, Nightlife, Tehran.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Creating a coherent and purposive relationship between theory and practice fields is among the worries of managers and planners, academic scientists, and professionals in the urban planning community of Iran. A short review indicates that the relationship between theory and practice is one of the discussions under consideration in world documents, and many papers have been published about it in recent years (Jaberi Moghadam and Mirzadeh 2016). The challenge between these two fields is indeed a topic considered in specialized texts of various majors so this is a topic with a wide domain in urban planning and urban studies (Edward 2007; Fernandez-Esquinas and Pinto 2013). It can be stated, however, that the significance of this issue is highlighted in urban planning more than in other sciences because urban studies and results of theoretical and professional activities of urban planning would influence a major part of the lives of people. In this case, Hoch believes that the movement towards “practice and experience field-based planning theories” has been accelerated with the advent of a pragmatic tendency for planning studies (Hoch 1996).

Another point is that despite numerous theoretical projects and studies on “planning theories based on the action and experience field” carried out in recent decades, the effects are still in the process of analysis and investigation within a systematic method (Lauriak and Wagner 2006). In this regard, referring to the viewpoints of Forester and Innes, Healey assumes that in any form of knowledge generation in the urban planning field, the dialogue between planners and theorists on the one hand and between theorists and other stakeholders and influential groups (use of practice field’s experiences) are necessary and play a vital role. Thus, urban actors and activists gather around a table and affect urban development decisions and programs (Nejadbahram and Jalili 2021). The paper “A Planners Day” by Healey is one of the valuable studies conducted in this field. Quoted from Foster, defines these components resulting from dialogues as atoms that generate a material (knowledge).

On the other hand, another important subject in urban management and planning systems that must be considered is how to make policy, formulate regulations, and enact the approvals by city councils. The reason is that the increasing value and significance of people’s role in the management of communities and the development of democratic systems (e.g., city councils) have led to the participation of citizens in urban affairs (Duggan 2017). Therefore, social theories and movements supporting democracy and techniques for the management of communities based on democratic methods are growing in almost all countries, and the people’s right to rule over their destinies is widely accepted (Ebrahimzadeh

et al. 2019). Therefore, the idea of people’s right to participate in the affairs related to their lives has been considered by the theorists. In the meantime, Islamic city councils are some of the civic institutes in the governance system of Iran that are responsible for realizing citizenship rights at national and local levels (Salari 2018). City councils are indeed one of the most important pillars of the urban management system. This is an institute derived from public opinions that is responsible for deciding daily and even strategic issues of the city. According to the constitution and law of Islamic councils in the city and village (approved in 1996), the main purpose of the formation of Islamic councils of city and village is the rapid advancement of urban development programs through real participation and cooperation of people. Therefore, the council is defined as the main director of urban activities for the actualization of urban unit management (Beheshti 2000).

According to the necessities mentioned above and greater attention to this topic, the extant study has been done on these questions question: how one can use the experiences of action or practice field to theorize policymaking and enact urban rules and projects? How is the hierarchy of power relations in the process of policymaking and enacting urban approvals in the field of action experiences, and how these relationships are regulated between stakeholders and influential groups? This paper indeed aims to document the experiences of the action field in policymaking and enactment of urban rules by reviewing various aspects of compilation, review, and enactment of approval (e.g., individual skills, expertise necessities, actions, and communication between stakeholders and influential groups, etc.). It is asked how a primitive project, after passing through various steps, becomes a city council approval for action measures for the municipality and other serving organizations. This way can help to take even a minor step to theorize this topic in the urban planning system of Iran and draw the attention of authorities and officials to problems and issues existing in this field. In this lieu, the present study aims to investigate a part of unwritten and unknown subjects respective to decision-making processes in the urban management of Iran. The reason is that such studies have been also done in theoretical texts of worldwide urban planning, and some studies have been published about the real experiences in the field of practice and paying attention to some undiscovered aspects of processes related to urban management and planning.

## 2. Method

In the first step, documentary study and content analysis are used to achieve an overview of theoretical texts in this field. content analysis is one of the approaches to qualitative studies (Kawulich 2006) used by many researchers to achieve an accurate understanding

(Lyles and Stevens 2014). Some researchers define content analysis as a research technique for adopting authenticated and replicable results of data extracted from the text (Newman 2014). This study is indeed fundamental in terms of objective and qualitative research in terms of nature. This study employs the telling method in the next step to express and extract

different aspects related to the compilation, review, and enactment of approval in the Islamic Council of Tehran, as well as the important points in the main body and margin of the study. Research steps and connections between the mentioned methods are depicted in the diagram below.

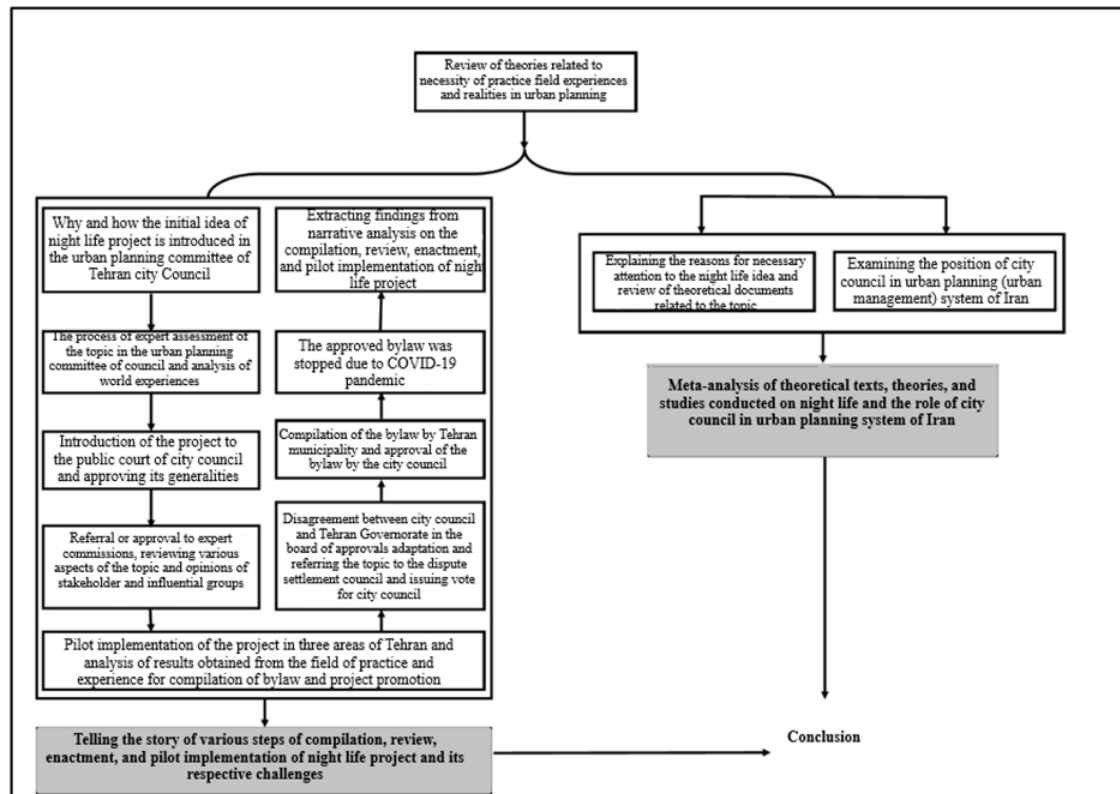


Fig. 1. Research Method and Steps

This study used content analysis to review theoretical texts related to the necessity of examining experiences of the practice field to make a theory about urban planning, and theories of theorists about the axial topic of the case study (nightlife), as well as the theoretical documents about the position and role of the city council in Iran's urban planning system. The story-telling method is also considered to investigate, explain, and analyze the incidents that occurred during the process of compilation, review, enactment, and pilot implementation of the approval under the question and various aspects respective to this project. Thus, this study has used two methods parallelly and simultaneously to examine the considered topic and extract the desired findings and results.

### 3. PRAGMATISM AND THE NECESSITY OF PAYING ATTENTION TO EXPERIENCES OF PRACTICE FIELD OF URBAN PLANNING

Studies conducted by Innes have confirmed the increasing influence of a new group of urban planning theorists. She believes that the pragmatism movement must be considered as a new paradigm in the world's urban planning, and is personally one of the famous persons who has used the practical profession and activity as the raw materials for search and study (Innes 1995). In her opinion, pragmatist theorists use the analysis of current planning procedures and experiences obtained from the practice field

as a base for the formulation of theories (Lauriak and Wagner 2006), because some of them believe that rational methods are no longer responsive in the contemporary cities that are always changing, providing sophistication as the main characteristic (Hoch 2019). However, Feinstein better explains why the theory field is influenced by the practice field. She believes that the distinction between urban theories and planning theories is unsustainable, explaining that effective planning depends on its executive context. It means that the practice of planning and urban development must originate from an understanding of the executive field realized in it (Feinstein 2005). It can be stated that Feinstein emphasizes the necessity of the connection between theorists and the field of action and realities available in this context for planning theories, and subsequently for executive measures in the urban planning process.

However, planning theories started paying attention to the practice field of urban planning in the early 1980s, when studies were subjected to the experiences of the US and UK (Luria and Wagner 2006). These studies were gradually wider geographically since the 1990s, and some studies were done on experience-based urban planning theory in the Middle East, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. Although fewer studies were done on planning theories in the US, there was an increase in the number of comparative studies between the US and the UK, the US, and Europe, etc., and this trend focused on non-American experiences more than before since the early years of this century (Luria and Wagner 2006).

In the case of how attention to practice field experiences of urban planning contribute to theorizing, “we have professional skilled, intellect, and creative activists that can learn from them if we listen to them, less look for theory and more search to find how they have dealt with the challenges that we also face. The most important point in pragmatist analysis is making a coherent connection between knowledge and experience. This goal can be achieved in the real world by examining the activities related to this world, which include changing the attitude from content cognition to acquiring knowledge about the procedure, improving cooperation, and promoting the ability to use concepts,” Schon believes (Schon 1983, 1987). In this case, urban planners ought to concentrate on the communicational actions to have an interactive approach (Schon 1983). If planners tend to contribute to democratic social changes (Friedmann 1987; Forester 1989), they must avoid stressful procedures. Also, Healey considers the pragmatism in contemporary urban planning under the influence of its challenges while rereading the pragmatist thoughts in urban planning (Healey 2008). She believes that urban planning and projects must be effectively and deeply mixed with the concept of governance and governance and governing procedures, which this combination indicates complicated difficulties

occurring in urban interventions within the space and time (Jaberi Moghadam and Farjam Talab 2020).

Unlike the research processes pursued in the past, these theorists of the urban planning field do theorization tasks based on the rich interpretive study of professional activities to know the professional activities of city builders and achieve a critical evaluation of these activities. Therefore, they believe that the profession can direct the theory (Forester 2012). It can be stated that most pragmatists believe that absolute emphasis on philosophical reflections would not express the reality of human activities. By criticizing the dominant approach of rational analysis in urban planning, they also considered the substitution of pragmatic reasoning instead of such reflections, assuming that the most underlying category in “context” and serious attention to it within all planning steps. Thus, pragmatists are against giving any single prescription for urban issues in different cities<sup>1</sup> and begin their task by asking this question: “What we should know to overcome urban fabric issues and problems and overcome them” (Hoch 2016).

#### 4. NIGHTLIFE APPROVAL IN TEHRAN CITY COUNCIL

##### First step: why the nightlife idea?

Urban nightlife is not only considered a spatial-temporal phenomenon in ethics-based economic activities but also has emerged as a key strategy in recreating urban centers in many postmodern cities (Shaw 2015). In this case, some principles such as “improving the diversity of uses” and or “ensuring the balance between activities” are introduced by theorists or activists of urban recreation practice to create vibrant urban centers in which people can be present during the day, and especially nights for various reasons (Paumier 2004). The reason is that urban centers must provide activity and demographic potential during the day and night for citizens’ presence to prevent some problems such as urban defenseless spaces, social delinquencies, identity-less public spaces, migration of authentic citizens from central areas of cities, insecurity, and so on. One of the urban management strategies is the necessity of recreating urban centers and problematic textures of cities, and one of the most significant components of such necessity is to encourage citizens to have healthy night activities (Qadimi and Keramati 2017).

On the other hand, some concepts including “24-hour cities” and or “leisure cities” indicate the significance of nightlife in many postmodern cities. The 24-hour cities have been welcomed by urban planners and policymakers since 1990 until now. Many cities, especially in Europe have created nightlife neighborhoods to revive the city, develop tourism, increase tax incomes, and develop a cultural economy (Chew 2009 quoted from Niazkhani et al. 2021).

Nowadays, some cities such as “London,” “New York,” “Amsterdam,” and “Barcelona” have many experiences in the field of nightlife development, and it seems that many cities in Iran also have such potential. The reason is that in a study conducted in 2020 by Niazkhani, Nadalipour, and Ghorab, interviewees are optimistic regarding the nightlife of cities despite its pros and cons (Niazkhani et al. 2021). Papizadeh (2016) carried out a study and concluded that individuals can use recreational and leisure activities, shopping, and urban services by creating appropriate urban spaces at night. Moreover, security in night spaces would increase the presence of people in these centers, and create vitality and liveliness for many people.

In the book “The 24-hour Society,” Kreitzman introduces a range of known and acceptable factors, such as social changes, variation in labor patterns, increase in the number of employed mothers, the tendency to exit daily life and doing more diverse affairs, increase in income (public wealth), etc. that make people demand more services during more hours of the day (at evenings and nights). This author believes that these demands are increasing day by day (Kreitzman 1999).

In another study, Ghadimi and Keramati (2017) emphasized that nightlife creates a cohesive scheduling structure for separating work and activity times, increases safety and security and access to public transportation, provides development for the urban night economy, creates branding and night landscape, gives identity to the environment, and creates a proper image and landscape by using appropriate lighting and available furniture. Thus, nightlife not only provides a serving and vibrant space throughout the day and night but also makes an urban space at night with no difference from the day. As a life-giving factor in the cities, nightlife must be defined by concerning various walks of society that use urban space, and generate creativity regarding the potential available in the area while paying attention to temporal differences based on the functional, physical, and semantic components. Therefore, the nightlife project that is adopted from the shared knowledge between Iranian and foreign scholars, urban managers, relevant urban management organizations, and respective expects, was among the demands of the citizens and tended to meet some urban needs. Thus, this important point was considered within the frame of the pragmatism approach’s connection (the connection between experiences of the practice field and theorizing sphere) as a project in the agenda of the urban planning committee of Tehran City Council to be introduced as an approval in the council and implemented by the municipality.

### **Second step: councils in the urban management system of Iran**

Saeed Amanpour et al. (2015) believe that good urban governance must be at the center of attention

to implement urban programs and achieve sustainable development because such governance contributes to achieving inverted top-down planning and allows people to be involved in determining their destinies more than before (Amanpour 2015). Finally, this process prevents providing common solutions for different settlements and adopts them based on the characteristics of the “context.” In this process, urban management is defined as a procedure of liabilities and measures respective to policymaking, planning, organizing, implementing, monitoring, and controlling, which are considered action criteria for achieving operational goals in urban communities. Formation of this process and realization of its operational goals require an appropriate and efficient structure for management actions, and urban management must adopt a holistic viewpoint on the details and elements of the urban system (Mcgill 1998), and have a comprehensive approach towards the city-building process (Van Digk 2006). This approach needs a strong direction to obtain essential coordination, and the most optimal directive force is surely a powerful local governance.

City councils in the governance structure of Iran are defined as the main guidance of activities for actualizing an urban unit management, and many affairs of the city are coordinated in this local parliament, which undoubtedly can lead to better management of the city (Madani 1998). In a direct relationship with citizens and local organizations, councils can be the intermediate ring between this level of social layer and the urban management system at higher levels. According to the traditional dual fundamental theory of “politics/administration” with around one century background, the elected urban authorities (councils) are indeed responsible for compiling and enacting the urban policies, rules, and regulations, and urban managers should implement these policies and regulations. Although some scholars have created doubt on the simple distinction between politics and administration in urban governance over recent decades, this dual model with considerable changes and modifications is still the basis for defining tasks of city councils and dividing them among city managers (Asadi et al. 2020). In this viewpoint, the presence of people’s representatives in urban management would shape a field for believing in the role of citizens in the planning and decision-making process of the urban system. Also, the analyses carried out on the effect rate of democratic decentralization on performances and poverty eradication over two past decades (Toole and Burdess 2004) imply that democratic decentralization provides a platform in which, most citizens especially the poor can more effectively demand political system for their wishes. Now, this significant objective has been somehow realized in the management structure due to the formation of councils, but its bases are not powerful enough to create a connection between public

demands, plans, and executive management. This weakness and multiple legal and executive structures in the city that consist of various organizations have led to the necessity of coordination and persuasion in the executive center of the city. However, some urban management researchers believe that the administration of city affairs in Iran is highly far from good urban governance, and even the presence of people's representatives (members of parliament) cannot actualize comprehensive urban management (Azizi et al. 2011). In the meantime, the experiences obtained from measures done for achieving "nightlife" projects may pave the way for more reflection among researchers and planners on the one hand and those who are interested in being people's representatives on the other hand. A considerable point is that institutionalization of this topic in the "third development plan of Tehran" offered a function for this project beyond ordinary approval, defining it as a strategy in the midterm plan within the planning and management system of Tehran. This viewpoint of councils in the urban governance structure enables them to define another image of planning matched with the urban needs through policymaking and surveillance. This important point in creating a background for achieving urban development goals can direct the implementation process from short-term to mid- and long-term ranges. Therefore, nightlife in Tehran is a theme that could not be out of the city council's function. The council must pay attention to this important point for using all urban capacities to improve vitality and quality of life, develop economy and security, and remove defenseless urban spaces. Thus, this is a significant project.

### **Third step: starting the nightlife project process in the council**

This project was started by the urban planning committee of Tehran City Council regarding the economic, cultural, and social situation of the city and the importance of developing remote fabrics without any activity, as well as the urban economy development based on work and leisure time. As mentioned before and research reviews in this field indicated, other countries had many experiences in this field and there were objective samples of this important case in the indigenous and religious culture of Iran, particularly in the spaces and times, such as locations around Imam Reza Shrine, nights of Ramadan Month, nights of early decade of Muharram, Yalda Night, Chaharshanbe Soori, and so on. All of the mentioned points made experts think that Tehran has the potential for implementing such a project regarding its capacities. Also, studies on nightlife (with dual social-physical aspect) conducted in the Center of Studies and Planning of Tehran City could create a sufficient theoretical and conceptual basis for this project and approval. However, cultural-social issues needed to be examined more than anything else; hence, the Urban Planning Committee held

many meetings with experts in different fields and the outcome of these meetings was a project presented in the city council arena.

Accordingly, this approval was introduced based on a project offered by the Urban Planning Committee of the fifth period of the Tehran City Council. This Project was under the title of "Binding Tehran Municipality for planning and doing measures required for creating a field for and reviving the nightlife" which was introduced in 2018 with an urgency in the council arena. This project was passed on 1 September 2018 with its urgency and generalities in the council after being signed by other members of the city council<sup>2</sup>.

After the urgency of this project was approved, this subject was submitted to specialized commissions of the council to examine its all aspects. Thus, the nightlife idea could be an approved project, but there was a long trajectory of specialized studies in addition to negotiation with stakeholders and influential groups to pave the way for the final enactment and implementation of this project. In this case, challenges occurring in the enactment process of this project must be considered in three scales: 1) specialized (internal) topics, 2) colleagues of the city council and municipality, and 3) institutions and organizations associated with city affairs.

### **- Challenge 1: specialized (internal) topics**

After the project was submitted to the Urban Planning and Architecture Commission as the main one, it was required to consider other relevant aspects of this approval due to the importance of this subject and possible worries among other city council members on the one hand, and concerns among organizations associated with city affairs on the other hand. Therefore, some meetings were held with the police force regarding the main goals of this project particularly in urban economic fields, attention to the situation of peddlers, meeting citizens' needs who cannot live their lives due to busy life, reduction in daily terrific, etc. The considerable point is that the social deputy of the police force also paid attention to such issues, so they had some investigations in this case. Despite the existing worries and empathies, the issue of citizens' security during night hours was a substantial case that must be considered by other organizations. For this purpose, some meetings were held with other associated organizations<sup>3</sup> but there were still some concerns and worries.

On the other hand, constant determination of the projects and goals mentioned in previous sections required institutionalization of its relevant concepts. To do so, specialized meetings were held with the Tehran Governorate. The creation of a capacity for the city to use 24-hour times resulted in a kind of cultural-social worry for some security-supervisory organizations, and many discussions began, including making it similar to the projects pursued in European countries. However, the localization of the project came up by the colleagues working in the Urban

Planning Committee of the Tehran City Council, which ought to be explained. The important point of connecting this project to the pragmatist approach, which is significant in the opinion of some theorists is about accepting the role of stakeholders and influential groups in urban issues, including economic, cultural, security, and other cases. The nightlife project is a limited experience for joint association among all relevant elements, which requires an approach beyond just writing a project. The significant point is the implementation of projects and their feedback in the city; therefore, belief in the role of elements affecting urban management is a step that must be considered in urban planning. Thus, another important case was responding to the media, because this was a new project and it seemed difficult to approve and implement it, so formal and informal negotiations were required. More negotiations and enrichment of the projects were needed to understand the worries among cultural-religious organizations along with security and economic necessities on the one hand and prepare the urban platform for the incidence of this project on the other hand. Receiving opinions from all sectors, experts tried to scrutinize the project and then submitted the topics and specialized negotiations to the commission. The commission modified the project to improve its implementation by adopting a professional approach to urban economic development based on the city's potential.

#### - Challenge 2: Colleagues of City Council and Municipality

The aspects of the issue ought to be revealed to the colleagues in the council, so many meetings were conducted with other members by the Urban Planning Committee. The urban economy issue and application of city capacity at night regarding the daily traffic were emphasized in these meetings. The agreement of the Cultural Commission with emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of this project was a promising case for its actualization. On the other hand, there was another issue that made it necessary to pay more attention to this project: the necessity of organizing

and managing the peddlers who were among the target groups concerning the better actualization of the nightlife approval. Economic issues led to a large number of peddlers in main passageways especially in shopping centers; hence, consideration of their needs and organization of urban roads on the other hand were among the worries that ought to be removed. Night hours could be used for peddlers to supply their products while allowing people to use urban roads and passageways for more commutation. Furthermore, peddlers could supply their products in a relatively busy space in the city. This project helps to organize the informal economic and financial circulation while creating social pleasure by using the capacity of these peddlers in the city. Since peddlers ask to sell their products in a safe and secure space, the important point is to provide a market platform for both peddlers and citizens enjoying it. Hence, many meetings were held with peddlers and Job Organizing Form officials, their opinions were asked, and previous solutions were reviewed.

While introducing the experiences of other countries in these meetings, the job time of peddlers was determined to keep the economic privacy of the urban salespersons safe and to provide a solution for creating a place for peddlers and setting time on the other hand. Also, it seemed necessary to negotiate with top and middle managers due to resistance against the implementation of this project by Urban Top Management and social security pressures. Many meetings were held with some mayors of districts and other municipality managers to examine various aspects of the problem. In this case, some managers welcomed this approval and got ready to implement it, but the top manager<sup>4</sup> of the municipality had not concluded<sup>5</sup>.

Based on this plan, the municipality should implement it in a pilot case in five urban areas where negotiations were done with their mayors and the required capacity for the project existed in these areas. These areas are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1. Suggested Zones and Axes for Pilot Implementation of the Project**

Row	Zones	Area	Name of Space and Place	Address
1	The Southern Zone of Tehran	20	Area of Abdolazim Hasani Shrine	Modarres Blvd., the distance between Saaie and the west side of the shrine (area verification in the local project)
2	Northern Zone of Tehran	1	Imamzadeh Saleh and the distance between Chamran Highway Crossroads and Tajrish Square	Vali Asr Street, from Shaheed Chamran Highway to Tajrish Square, Imamzadeh Saleh, Tajrish Bazaar (area verification in the local project)
3	Central Zone of Tehran	11 & 12	Hesar Naseri and Bazaar and Roudaki Zone	An area between Karegar Street borders in the west, Emghelab Street in the north, 17-e-Sharivar Street in the east, and Shoush Street in the South (area verification in the local project)

Row	Zones	Area	Name of Space and Place	Address
4	The Western Zone of Tehran	22	Shohadaye Khalij-e-Fars Lake Complex	Area of Shohadaye Khalij-e-Fars Lake Complex and Bamland Complex (area verification in the local project)
5	Eastern Zone of Tehran	8	Nabovat Square (Haft Hoz)	The distance between Bahman Sharghi Street and Mehranpour, Madaen Street, Chaman Gharbi and Sharghi, and Shaheed Sarvan Ali Bakhtiari Street (area verification in the local project)
6	Entrance roads of the city and terminals for out-of-city travels, including West, East, and South Terminals, and Railway Station			

It was also decided to submit the nightlife bylaw over three months based on the experiences in these areas, but this did not occur and submission of the bylaw by the municipality took about one year<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, the pilot project was implemented in three areas then its positive and negative effects were examined by the urban planning experts of the council to submit the bylaw to the council with the help of the urban management department.

### - Challenge 3: Institutions and organizations related to city affairs

After the enactment of a one-urgency nightlife project in the city council, it was necessary to be verified by the adaptation board consisting of a judge, one council member, and Tehran's governor based on the law of city and village councils. This board was responsible based on the law to declare its opinion about the project in comparison with the rule within 10 days, but this organization declared no comment during this duration. According to the procedure taken in the past, non-declaration of opinion by the board of adaptation was taken into account by the admission of the city council's approval. However, the governor of Tehran declared his objection by sending a letter after the deadline for project submission to the municipality by the council had expired. Because the legal time had expired, the legal department of the council did not accept the then-governor's objection to the case. Therefore, the governorate submitted the objection letter on this approval to the Central Dispute Settlement Board in the Ministry of Iran<sup>7</sup>. After sending the mentioned letter, this document was given to the City Council and the head of the Council with the head of the Urban Planning Committee attended the meeting of the Central Dispute Settlement Council to defend this approval and the right position of the city council, and provided their evidence for council's members. After the hearing session, the Central Dispute Settlement Council found the reasons given by the City Council and Governorate as the agent of the Adaptation Board and regarding the expired time and pilot implementation of the project in five areas, the matter was ruled out, so the council's approval was confirmed and the municipality was obliged to submit the bylaw. It is reminded that proposing valid

reasons by the council on the one hand and expressing the content of the project in a pilot frame on the other hand made the members of the Central Dispute Settlement Council issue such a verdict.

In the meantime, viewpoints of the police force as one of the beneficiary and influential groups and hegemonic institutes with municipality-related tasks were among substantial factors. When the debate on the nightlife project started, some negotiations were done in meetings with them due to the policing responsibility of the city. A relative agreement was achieved during the meetings with the authorities of this organization regarding their concerns about providing security for the citizens who are present in the city, especially in the areas where nights are dead. Although it is usual to use smart city technology as one of the most popular and common ideas for providing security in public urban spaces (Hajduk 2016, 35) and despite the global tendency of urban strategies towards smart cities for revival of citizens' quality of life, use of creativity and modern technologies to overcome various urban problems such as lack of security at nights, there were some ambiguities and challenges for police force in case of providing nightlife security for citizens. However, their research activities for urban security and examinations in this field prepared this opportunity for a kind of convergence between their expectations to meet some requirements for the presence of police forces in the implementation of this project and allowed the Urban Planning Committee of the Tehran Islamic City Council to focus on it. The reason can be found in many studies conducted on nightlife in Iran and other countries, indicating that these activities done by citizens are considered a factor for developing urban recreation, improving urban tourism, and subsequently promoting the economic-financial situation of historical areas of cities, and improving the indicators related to the quality of life of citizens, and so forth. However, world experiences in this field and studies conducted on the advantages of nightlife were not sufficient and other hegemonic organizations, such as Basij Organization were responsible for giving their opinions about this project. A meeting was arranged to negotiate with the officials of this organization, and they talked

about some reasons showing their disagreement with this project due to some causes related to the indigenous and religious culture of Iran. Comments given by some members of the Islamic Republic were remarkable<sup>8</sup>.

However, there were some concerns such as worries among guilds and unions that the Urban Planning Committee of the City Council was responsible as the people's representative and the initial core for the formation of this project to pay attention to these concerns. Some meetings were held with the unions, and members of the unions agreed on the project regarding the limited spaces for the project and the optional activities of the guild's members during the nights. The guilds agreed on the project because peddlers were allowed to be active, and this was somewhat interesting for the guild's members. Temporal and spatial limitations for peddlers' activities allowed the unions to have fewer worries about the economic status and financial circulation of their members.

There were other organizations whose opinions about the topic were important: media activists and urban experts, because various aspects of nightlife projects, including necessities, goals, solutions, spaces, and locations for its implementation must be given to mass media explain various aspects of the project for all citizens and associated organizations. This task was done by publishing the notes and contents in some newspapers, interviewing with authorities of responsible organizations in radio and TV, or interviewing with news sites and agencies. It was tried in this case to give relevant information and get the agreement of stakeholders and influential groups<sup>9</sup>.

#### **- Project Enactment**

After the measures mentioned above were done for the nightlife project and the comments were taken from other commissions, the project was approved on February 4, 2018, with some modifications. After this project was enacted, the municipality formed a workgroup based on the potential obtained from the trial implementation to enact the bylaw. Some new problems occurred and some organizations declared their disagreement with the project by sending letters or doing negotiations with the municipality. For instance, the police force declared its disagreement with the project in the interviews. They considered security as the reason for disagreement. In the meetings held with the police force that had declared its agreement with the project in earlier meetings by considering some terms and conditions, other organizations also objected to the project, including some parliament members, and other organizations such as Basij. Numerous programs and debates were done in public media, and in one of these debates, a member of the Cultural Commission of the Islamic Parliament objected to the project and called it anti-religion, while this has been for years next to holy places. However, the attempts made by parliament

members and specialized meetings with the cooperation of the municipality led to the preparation of the bylaw by changing its name. The name of the project changed to "Awake City" in coordination with the council. In February 2020, generalities of the bylaw presented by Tehran Municipality were approved by the city council but it again faced disagreements.

Since the council was busy formulating the third plan for the development of Tehran City at that time, the nightlife topic was incorporated as an approach in the plan. Article 66 of this plan explicitly asserts that the municipality is responsible for finding suitable locations for nightlife until the end of the first year of the plan (2020) for developing public space and improving urban livability.

According to this Article and the bylaw's generalities<sup>10</sup> enacted in the council and due to the coming holy month, it was decided to make three areas in the city ready for this project at that time. However, the COVID-19 outbreak in the winter of 2019 prevented the implementation of the project. The bylaw was enacted after being approved by the Adaptation Board, but the conditions of the country and restrictions on gathering and 2-year quarantine (2 years remained from the fifth council) due to the pandemic postponed it to the beginning of the sixth council. When the sixth council started working, restrictions still existed due to COVID-19 and there were many limitations for gathering together and doing collective activities. However, there were again disagreements with this project, so some members of the council changed this approval to a faithful life and some considered it a non-implantable project. It can be indeed confirmed that this project has not been yet executed.

## **5. RESULTS**

The results of this study indicate that practice experiences of urban planning and realities of the urban society have been the main inspiring sources for the formation and enhancement of planning theories over recent decades. In the meantime, the compilation of rules or urban legislation is among the most important platforms that its practice field's experiences are constructive. The reason is that experiences obtained from the practice field in urban legislation confirm that many stakeholders and influential groups use their power to enact or approve an urban project. On the other hand, decision-makers (planners) in the context of urban management and legislation must pay attention to the expediencies of the city and citizens and choose meeting the diverse needs of citizens for a good life as their priority. However, other activists also influence the urban projects, plans, and rules regarding their value systems, individual and group interests, worries, etc. The experience reviewed in this study indicates that the enactment, review, and approval of the nightlife

project in Tehran was not also an exception. This issue that seemed obvious in the opinion of its producers regarding its global samples and even the domestic experiences was a highly challenging case for many beneficiary and influential organizations and groups. Nevertheless, almost all cities in developing or developed countries have tried to make their economies more vibrant or keep their progress by attracting brokers and investors from the private sector through planning. On the other hand, cities are places for living and feeling comfort. Cities are considered as place for culture and subsequently the unique driver of intellectual and cultural lives for people. Therefore, cities remind the collective memory of a community, country, or region. With its physical environment or human activities done in its spaces, the city is the mirror of cultural traditions, and therefore, the personality of people who live there. When a city is planned and managed then it can provide a sense of security, peace, and comfort for the citizens. In this lieu, nocturnal activities are among the factors that distinguish central cities from the rural or marginal areas. The 24-hour cities and recreational public spaces have been considerably increased particularly during the industrialization and modernization period, so that stores and restaurants are closed at 4:00 am in some cities such as Buffalo, New York, etc. The formation of service spaces and expansion of consumerist activities in the cities has led to the advent of 24-hour cities, which have increased the financial-economic productivity and maximum investment of the private sector. Some specific spaces are indeed considered and planned for the nightlife in megacities due to nocturnal activities done by citizens (generally the young).

Accordingly, the nightlife project was introduced by the Urban Committee of Tehran Islamic City Council, and its name was then changed to The Awake City which experienced many ups and downs. A set of studies conducted in Iran and other countries was chosen as the theoretical background of this project and some of them were mentioned in this research. The Third Development Plan of Tehran was taken as the legal background of the project, but there were increasing worries among different stakeholders and influential groups, including the police force, some

members of the city council, Islamic parliament members, etc. concerning many issues such as providing security for activities at night, cultural worries. The representative of Worker House also disagreed with the project due to unknown aspects of this project. However, many people agreed with this project despite the all worries and disagreements<sup>11</sup>. Economic pressures made it more essential to provide city security at night, particularly in defenseless spaces required to meet livelihood needs and leisure time in a city with 12 million citizens, which encouraged the project's operationalization. Experience of the pilot implementation of the project in three urban areas and citizen's interest in it, and opening a window for vitality and development changed the image of Tehran Metropolis. However, approval of a project always deals with many worries, executors who are not ready for the case, and those who are interested in implementing it, and some problems occurred during three years from introduction to enactment and even after it.

Among remarkable points about different aspects of this project, changes occurred in its content-between the initial version proposed by the Urban Planning Committee of the Council and the approved document of the Council- can be mentioned. These changes that are explained in detail in the table below imply that many changes are created due to comments given by stakeholders and influential groups throughout the process from compilation of the project to their enactment and implementation. Some of these changes may occur against the desire of the early group that proposes the projects, but these changes are accepted to obtain the agreement of more activists. On the other hand, some of these changes may improve various aspects of the project. For instance, the pilot implementation time during the day and night was not considered in the early proposal of the nightlife project, but the duration from 24:00 to 3:00 was chosen for the pilot implementation of the project based on the various opinions given throughout the project assessment process. Also, the pilot implementation time was extended from 2021 to 2023 in the final version, and Tehran City Council decreased the time (3 months) of bylaw presentation by the municipality in the approved document.

**Table 2. Comparison between the Initial Proposed Document and the Approved Project in the Tehran City Council**

Topic	Initial Document (Proposal of Urban Planning Committee of Council)	The Final Document approved by the City Council
The Time Horizon of the Project	2019	2020
Location for Pilot Implementation	At least in five urban axes in Tehran	At least, five busiest axes in the city and 500m distance from these axes
Pilot Implementation Duration	One month after its announcement	3 months and since April 20, 2019
Pilot Implementation Time during Day and Night	-	From 24:00 to 3:00

Topic	Initial Document (Proposal of Urban Planning Committee of Council)	The Final Document approved by the City Council
How to Implement the Project in a Pilot Case	-	All retail, service, and cultural centers in the considered areas are allowed to provide services and mobile and nonlocal jobs must not taken as roadblock job
Finding the Shortcomings of Pilot Implementation and Presenting the Bylaw	The municipality must present the considered bylaw six months after the bylaw announcement.	Municipality should present the considered bylaw three months after the approval announcement.

Another change that occurred in the project was about the pilot implementation of this project, which included retail, service, and cultural centers in the final text of approval, while it was considered not to take mobile jobs as roadblock cases. This point was neglected in the initial proposal despite its importance for the Urban Planning Committee of the council (as the origin of the project proposal).

In addition to the mentioned points, the experience of this project includes the following underlying themes although it has not been implemented yet despite the alleviated COVID-19 constraints and the beginning of the Sixth City Council of Tehran:

- Identify urban capacities to provide developmental solutions.
- Attempt to enact a project matched with these capacities.
- Implement the project in a frame of constraints and capacities.
- Public negotiation to make citizens interested in the project.
- Use research potentials to present the project.
- Accept the effective role of executive organizations, approval providers, and those who confirm urban projects.
- Confirm the comments given by influential institutions, as well as interact with them, make dialogue, and remove their worries about project presentation.
- Operationalization of the project regarding the capacity of executive organizations, such as municipalities, police force, etc.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Pragmatism and attention to experience in the practice field of urban planning make the academic studies and theories more matched with the modern realities of the urban communities, allowing them to provide more pragmatic solutions to overcome urban issues or exploit the resources available in the cities. This subject is also considered for the projects and bylaws reviewed by the city councils. It can be even confirmed that it is more vital to adopt a pragmatic approach to address the actual and practice field experiences of city council members (as decision-makers and top managers of urban management systems). The reason is that their decisions have an undeniable influence over the citizens' lives. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the experience of the practice field in the case of reviewing, approving, and implementing a project in the Tehran City Council. According to the pragmatist approach to the fate of a project, one can confirm that the extent of practice, implementation, and preparation of an urban planning project requires some tools some of which are beyond the available theoretical structures and studies in urban planning context. Stakeholders in urban planning are covert powers that can stop an urban planning project or develop it. This significance needs rereading all aspects of the project, which is confirmed by some theorists, such as John Forester, Patsy Healey, Charles Hoch, and others. The authors of this study believe that urban planning- regardless of its positive and useful effects on the city- may cause numerous worries for different power groups, so the removal of such worries requires negotiation and preparedness to provide the interest of all groups in the city.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

## MORAL APPROVAL

The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

## PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE

The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

## ENDNOTE

1. One example indicating inattention to this topic is that many theories in the field of urban planning have an origin in the northern world (developed) while being used in southern countries (developing) (Nouri & Zebardast 2021, 6).
2. Description of negotiations between city council members to enact one urgency and generalities of the project: "Expressing the reasons for delay in the project presentation in the council arena, head of urban planning committee of Tehran City Council stated: regarding the climate conditions, there are long times at nights that can be planned to be used in the city. "of course, the holy days of Muharram and Safar are also available that can make the nightlife more meaningful by holding its religious rituals," he continued. Nejad Bahram explained the reason for the urgency of this project regarding its completion to implement it during the Muharram days. "The important case does not justify the urgency of a project, but it is about issues though which, time loss is crucial and must be addressed with urgency," Elviri disagreed with the head. He explained the content of the project: the city council had a similar approval with the same topic before, so it can be submitted in the frame of approval without introducing a new project. Nazari, a member of the Cultural and Social Commission of the City Council added that: the nightlife topic can affect two economic and social aspects. "This project can create a nightlife economy under the theme of urban economy and organize the peddlers in the city," he confirmed. "Nightlife is now facing law shortage and a single economic approach is not enough for the case," Masjed Jamei- a member of Tehran City Council- stated while introducing nightlife planning as a valuable process. He emphasized: that this project must be implemented step by step without taking emotional measures and agreed with this project saying that a part of this project is under progress now and the sooner the project is passed, the more organized the topics related to this sphere."
3. A meeting was arranged by the Urban Planning Committee under the responsibility of Tehran Basij, and some negotiations were conducted with the Tehran Chamber of Guilds and Jobs Organizing Firm of Municipality.
4. Worries of the urban top management were cultural and security type; despite the attempts done by the Urban Planning Committee, this important case did not find a necessary platform for being implemented.
5. The debatable point considered by the guilds was about this potential that was against their interests due to the tax paying and the legal approach of guilds. If they were ensured that the work hours of peddlers in nightlife space were not against their interests and they could have more surveillance power, they might accept the project.
6. One serious challenge that prolonged the bylaw preparation was the resistance of a department of municipality management and opposing comments of this project concerning the cultural difference between what exists in Europe and what is considered by the bylaw.
7. The reasons were explained in this way: 1) Adaptation Board had rejected the council's approval after the

legal duration and it was illegal, and 2) we only asked the municipality in this approval to prepare and present a nightlife bylaw to the council; it means that municipality had not yet submitted a bylaw to the council that the governor had opposed.

8. Some considerable concerns in the cultural and social field included comments of one of the parliament members and the member of the Cultural Commission of the Islamic Council Parliament. (<https://www.ion.ir/news/480503/%D8%B7%D8%B1%D8%AD-%D8%B2%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%D8%B4%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%87>)
9. House of Workers is among these stakeholders The secretary General of this organization talked about his worries about the exploitation of night-shift workers, explaining that activation of guild entities may violate the workers' right to work shifts.
10. The bylaw submitted by the municipality was approved in meeting 267 of the Tehran City Council.
11. Public opinions and preferences of people are understandable due to economic circumstances in Iran. It seems in the current situation that any measure that can create an economic boom is welcomed by most citizens. In many public meetings with citizens, they mainly demanded for selection of some spaces for the establishment of peddlers and many of them welcomed the pilot implementation of this project and were satisfied with it in districts 1, 12, and 5.

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