Identification of Effective Factors Creating Space in Periphery of Cities (Case Study: Urmia City)

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Extended abstract

Introduction

Peripheral urban space is part of the environment formed by living spaces with different characteristics. Peripheral urban space includes built areas, network of connecting routes, headquarters, industrial enterprises, transportation companies, orchards, and places for entertainment and games. This means that it is part of the space that is available for residents of the areas around the cities. Geographical theories state that production of space around the cities, in addition to physical factors, are dependent upon some other factors including perceptions, beliefs, opinions, ideologies, cultural features, level of awareness, way of thinking, and cultural, economic and political systems.

A glance at the history of Urmia City in the Northwest Iran, West Azarbaijan, shows that production of peripheral urban space in Urmia is resulted from some factors such as groups and social, economic and political classes, multiple sources of income, proximity to the city center, land speculation, achieving greater profits and so on. This indicates that creation of residential, industrial, service, and communication spaces not only led to the concentration of capital, activity and population, but also developed speculative activities and bribery culture. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to investigate the process of production of space in the areas around the cities. Using satellite images, we attempt to identify the areas developed within the radius of 15 kilometers from the city of Urmia during the years 2000-2014. Then, we try to identify the factors and mechanisms leading to the production of space in the areas around the cities.

Methodology

The present study is a mixed research using qualitative and quantitative approachs in terms of methodology through continuous explanatory research project. This study is an applied research due to its methods and library and field methods for data collection. In analysis of data in quantitative phase of this research, we examined the generated spaces by satellite images of TM and OLI Landsat Satellite during two time series of years 2000 and 2014. The statistical population is the agencies related to urban and rural affairs including Agriculture Organization, Office of Governor General, Office of Governor, Office of District Governing, etc. Sampling was non-randomly based on snowball sampling. In collecting data, we used in-depth and semi-structured interviews and direct observation.

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Results and discussion

The analysis obtained by classifying spaces indicates that in 2000 and 2014, the area of residential, industrial, green, empty and barren spaces and connecting networks is about 115245.949 hectares. Among the studied spaces, residential (3069.28 hectares), industrial (4736.73 hectares) and connecting (0.1866 hectares) spaces have increased in production. This is resulted from decreases in green spaces (farms, orchards, pasture and forests) and empty and arid spaces. Increase in the area of the producted spaces in the study area had been due to changes occurred in many spaces. After identifying the areas around the city of Urmia, the foundations affecting the production of space in these areas were discussed during the period of the study. In order to achieve the factors influencing the production of space in the areas around the city, we used the method of Grand Theory. As a result of grounded theory method, the factors affecting the production of peripheral urban space include: Suburbanization, economic diversification, inefficient management, Weak laws, modernization policiesand capitalism system such as the Commission on Article 100 of municipalities.

Conclusion

The spaces generated in the study area including the economy, politics, culture, society, and nature.According to the analysis and school of political economy of space, the most important factors affecting space production around the cities are suburbanization, economic diversification, inefficient management, weak legistation, modernization policies and capitalism system. The produced spaces in the areas around the cities are developed to provide basic needs and achieve higher profits. The spaces had some consequences including increased migration from village to city, rising inflation and the government's inability to solve the high inflation, impairment in planning system, overloaded variety of activities in the lands, mass production of varieties of space, capital accumulation and commodification of land, increase in the culture of bribery, destruction of green spaces, exploitation of natural resources, increase in social and economic deseases, components of space caused by capitalism, including speculation in the production of space, and the segregation of space due to it and so on. Today peripheral urban areas are separated and divided with manipulation for sale as a commodity. Results also have revealed speculative and rent-seeking tendencies in the areas around the cities. Unless this trend stops to continue, it will cause irreparable damage to the natural ecosystem of the area. Therefore, it can be concludded that the areas around the cities are considered as the consequences and initiatives of capitalism.

Keywords: space, production of space, political economy of space, peripheral urban areas, Urmia.

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