The Impact of The Tourism Sector Policies in the Ninth and Tenth Boards of Government on Urban Form and Structure of Mashhad Using Discourse Theory

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Abstract

As the pilgrims and tourists have been always present in Mashhad, meeting their needs has been constantly prioritized in urban planning especially the renewal and reconstruction projects carried out in the holy shrine surroundings. However, recent years have seen a change of perspective toward pilgrims. These changes have been induced by both global and national politics. That is why great changes can be observed in the urban form and structure which are faster than ever before. The present research aims to analyze the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government to explore the effect of policies made in the tourism sector and see how tourist attraction has been perceived in urbanistic discussions. It eventually aims to explore the trend of changes made to the form of Mashhad city influenced by those policies the research adopted Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and conducted a content analysis of higher-order documents and the interviews made by the main decision-makers published about religious tourism in Mashhad. It delve in to the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government and how it affected the national tourism sector. It further delved into the effect of this perspective on the revolutions made to the urban form of Mashhad during the target era. The present findings show that there have been traces of changes in how pilgrims and tourists are perceived in Mashhad and how they induced changes to the urban form and structure of the city as well as the urbanism decision making.

1. Introduction and Statement of the Problem

The city of Mashhad has been recognized among the primary tourist destinations in different era especially after the Islamic revolution of Iran. It has always received a great many pilgrims. A large number of pilgrim and tourists entering Mashhad has had both positive and negative consequences which have received special attention in urban plans and policies in different sectors. As an instance, mention can be made of pilgrims' need for the required infrastructure, accommodation, medical services and so on. The significance also lies in the effect they have on the financial turnover in the city and more emphasis on attracting and maintaining more tourists in the urban plans developed to promote Mashhad urbanism. Pilgrimage Tourism has been known as a key type of tourism and Mashhad enjoys this great potential for pilgrimage in Iran. How pilgrims have been perceived and dealt with the changes through years which can be due to the change of governmental perspective in the country as well the global and continental conditions.

According to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory, different phenomena can be discussed from a discourse-based perspective. Among the advantages of this theory is that it makes it possible to consistently analyze more than one phenomenon including the political, social, economic, cultural and so on. Discourse theory views everything within the realm of a unique discourse which can be used as a means of occurrence and persistence of the issue.

From this perspective, we can say that how pilgrims are treated and how tourism is perceived in Mashhad and the effect of this perspective on urbanism and the urban form of Mashhad have all occurred based on revolutions in political discourse. What has manifested itself today in the form of administrative rules and decisions have also been influenced by such discursive issues. In other words, changes in the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government in Iran which caused changes to how pilgrim/tourist is perceived particularly in Mashhad and how their needs are to be met, in turn, affected the urban form and external structure. It is noteworthy here that urban form is a function of a variety of factors. Due to the diversity of such factors, in the present research, only those which have major perceptible structural influences are taken into account. Among them are changed in altitude, in different uses and changes made by the upstream plans made by the urban system which altered the overall form of the city from what had been already conceived of. To proceed, the present research seeks to answer whether changes in the perception of tourism affected the urban form and structure of Mashhad within the target era?

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2. Literature Review

Table 1 includes related literature on how tourism/pilgrimage is perceived in urbanism. It also summarizes the body of research on the form and structure of Mashhad which adopted different perspectives (Table 1).

Table 1
Literature Review (Source: Authors)

Title and Date	Researcher(s)	Descriptions
"Discourse analysis of national managers and elites about tourism industry in Iran" (2015)	-Samiei, S., -Ghiasian, M.S.	The main goal of the present research is to find discursive strategies used by national managers and elites in the tourism domain to legitimate or illegitimate tourism discourse. Here, van Leeuwen's discourse theory is adopted to analyze the discourses made by managers and elites in the government to compare their perceptions of tourism progress. Finally, a number of suggestions are made.
"Tourism industry and urban economy and the role of architecture and urban design" (2015)	-Karbakhsh, H., -Farahbakhsh, H.M., - Motlagh, H.K., -Panjalizadeh, S., -Foroughi, F.	This article investigates the effect of architecture and urbanism on economy and tourism. It finally concludes that architecture and urban design are intrinsically linked with social hierarchy. They are basically human-related issues. For cities that enjoy certain historical, cultural values as much as required, planning for the desired urban view should be done besides meeting the required criteria of satisfying visitors and creating the required touristic infrastructure.
"Tourism geography of Tehran and the role of urban designing and architecture on its development" (2009)	-Rad, A.F., -Seyednasiri, S.J.	The present study aims to find the correlation of Tehran geographic tourism and its architectural and urbanistic features in the tourism industry. It also aims to recognize the facilities and obstacles of tourism in this realm. It concludes that Tehran enjoys true potentials for developing tourism. Yet, little use has been made of these potentials. A significant portion of the factors affecting tourism in Tehran are architectural and urbanistic in nature and are concerned with structural elements in different periods of time.
" The spatial text of visiting Imam Reza (p.b.u.h.)" (2012)	-Saghaei, M., - Nodehi, F., -Ghahfarokhi, Z.J., -Tabatabaei, S.M.B.	In this research, pilgrimage is recognized as a social process in human communities. This research investigates the production of spatial context for visiting Imam Reza. It looks into the production, reading, coordinates, and features of this spatial context. It divides tourists, and pilgrims into three categories: pilgrim, pilgrim/tourist and tourist. Each category enjoys certain behavioral features.
"The role of brand management in the tourism economy of metropolises." (2012)	-Saghaei, M., - Ghahfarokhi, Z.J., - hataminejad, H., - Kooshlinian, M.S.	This study explores the economic effect of tourism and takes into account the particular conditions in Mashhad. It concludes that commercial services are the key to create and manage brands in the metropolis of Mashhad. It introduces a new type of tourism called shopping tourism in Mashhad which makes this city a religious metropolis marked by a significant brand among all other religious metropolises. Creation of a valid brand in this city increases the demand of Iranian and foreign tourists, increases the load of money that comes in which, in turn, contributes to the distribution of tourism income.
"Pilgrimage and tourism in national macro plans and development documents: a focus on visiting Imam Reza (p.b.u.h.)" (2012)	Aghajani, H., Amirfakhrian, M., Biniaz, M. K.	This articles reviews the existing national documents and development plans with an emphasis on pilgrimage and tourism in these documents. It conducts a content analysis of these documents to extract themes related to the given topic.
"Analysis of shopping tourism in religious metropolises: the case of Mashhad" (2011).	-Mafi, E., -Saghaei, M -Ghahfarokhi, Z. J.	It is pinpointed in this research that as shopping centers are developed more than ever before and multi-purpose travel is becoming popular to religious metropolises, shopping is increasingly considered as an important secondary motivation. Besides visiting religious landmarks, shopping has been reckoned to be the second reason why people travel to religious metropolises. This has led to the creation of a new form of tourism known as shopping tourism in religious metropolises. On the other hand, shopping tourism has been viewed as a means of reviving downtown areas and developing global religious metropolises in a new way. This study takes the case of Mashhad and considers the special conditions. It concludes that in Mashhad too, shopping is viewed as the second most important motivation for a visit.
"Analysis of binary oppositions in reading the special text of religious	-Saghaei, M.	The present research first produces the spatial context of Mashhad tourism. It then investigates the different readings of this context based on binary oppositions

tourism in Mashhad metropolis: a focus on proposing intratextual strategies"(2014)		including pilgrimage/tourism, pilgrim's town/resident's town, tourist/pilgrim, tourist/host, source/destination, urban economy/tourism economy, etc. In the end, it maintains that deconstructing the binary oppositions of the spatial context of religious tourism in Mashhad depends on an interactive procedure. On the one hand, there is a need for the recognition of tourism and the existing demands of the market. On the other hand, there is a need to understand and thoroughly evaluate the product of tourism in this metropolis. Organizing tourism in Mashhad acts as a fast catalyzer of these two. It offers practical strategies for them and not only benefits local residents but also raises the quality of experiencing religious tourism.
"Tourism, Urban Governance and Public Space " (2007)	- Mordue, T.	This research deals with the correlation of tourism, urban management, and public spaces. It focuses on the new trend of urban management mediated by the attempts and benefits of consumption and investment flow on the one hand and daily living spaces on the other.
The Role of Religious Tourism in the Development and Growth of Urban Metropolis: (In The Case of Mashhad, Iran) (2014	-Foruzan, I.	This thesis aims to investigate the three dimensions of development including economic, environmental and social/cultural issues induced by the religious tourism occurring in Mashhad. Research findings show that, as perceived by the residents, developing religious tourism provides for more economic cooperation in Mashhad. On the contrary, several negative aspects of religious tourism have been also reported. It is also maintained that the economic benefits of tourism are inevitable but not expected just to be admired. Authorities and decision makers should care more about the welfare and life of the local residents.
The Environmental Impacts Assessment of Tourism Accommodations in Urban Areas (Case: Mashhad City in Iran), (2014)	- Hoseini, ,S. - Saberifa, R. - ZeraatPisheh, M.	This study maintains that tourism is an influential factor involved in urban areas. One of its inevitable aspects is an accommodation which is undeniably affecting the ecosystem. It focuses on hotels and inns in Mashhad and concludes that the majority of hotel owners in Mashhad care the least about the stability issue and sustainable tourism and are mostly unaware of its significance.
Impact of Pilgrimage (Hajj) on the Urban Growth of the Mecca (2013)	- ElsayedAscoura, I.	The present study looks into the changes made to Mecca as a result of the Hajj. It further delves into the city maps within different eras to see the patterns of change in form and certain functions of Mecca especially the area surrounding the Ka'ba. The aim was to explore how the presence of pilgrims affected the emergence of grand, luxurious hotels and eliminated the historical residential texture.

In Table 1, part of the investigations of the target issue was incorporated. These included the case of studies which explored the general role of tourism played in cities and particularly in the features of Mashhad. However, no particular study was found with a direct focus on this issue.

3. Research Methodology

The present research is descriptive-analytic in type and the research data are qualitative in nature. According to Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analytic approach, the present researchers assumed that the discourse form the facts and thus discourse studies is of a great significance in phenomenology. Therefore, what the present researchers seek to achieve is to recognize the government discourse and how it relates to the tourism-related policies and finally their influence on Mashhad urbanism. Accordingly, to do the analysis and explore the topic

within the target time span, document analysis and library research were conducted. To this aim, first, the higher-order documents including the visionary document, the five-year development plan and the relevant plans in Mashhad and the province were studied. Then, to come to know the discourse atmosphere dominant over these policy makings, the interviews and lectures made by the main decision-makers in the target era were analyzed. Document analysis and content analysis are among the most prevalent approaches to discourse analysis

which can help researchers to recognize and analyze the achievements of human thoughts. In this method, rather than the direct observation of the social actors and questioning them through interview or questionnaires, more emphasis is put on the recognition, interpretation, and analysis of the meanings, concepts and thoughts they already produced (Asadi, Bayat, 2017: 6). In fact, to show the conceptual conflicts between discourses, inevitably reference should be made to such texts as the press, books, and lectures (Haji Hosseini, Sam Aram: 2014: 12).

To this aim, more than 30 interviews and lectures made by the key decision makers within this domain published in the press particularly in Khorasan newspaper, a major publication in Mashhad concerning the latest news, were explored and analyzed. In what proceeds, several samples will be provided. Once the key issues and those highlighted more were extracted, they were categorized in a diagram (Figure 2). We continued to systematically and objectively analyze all the sources to make more valid inferences about the target issues. Finally, it was attempted to observe and produce a map of the existing conditions and visualize the main urban changes within eight years (2005-2013). In fact, to do this research, first an exploratory study and content analysis of the higher-order historical documents, statistical sources, maps, lectures and speeches made by the authorities was done and then the current status was compared to the approved maps to act as a practical criterion in that era and to complete the research procedure. Figure 1 indicates the simple schematic representation of the conceptual model in this research.
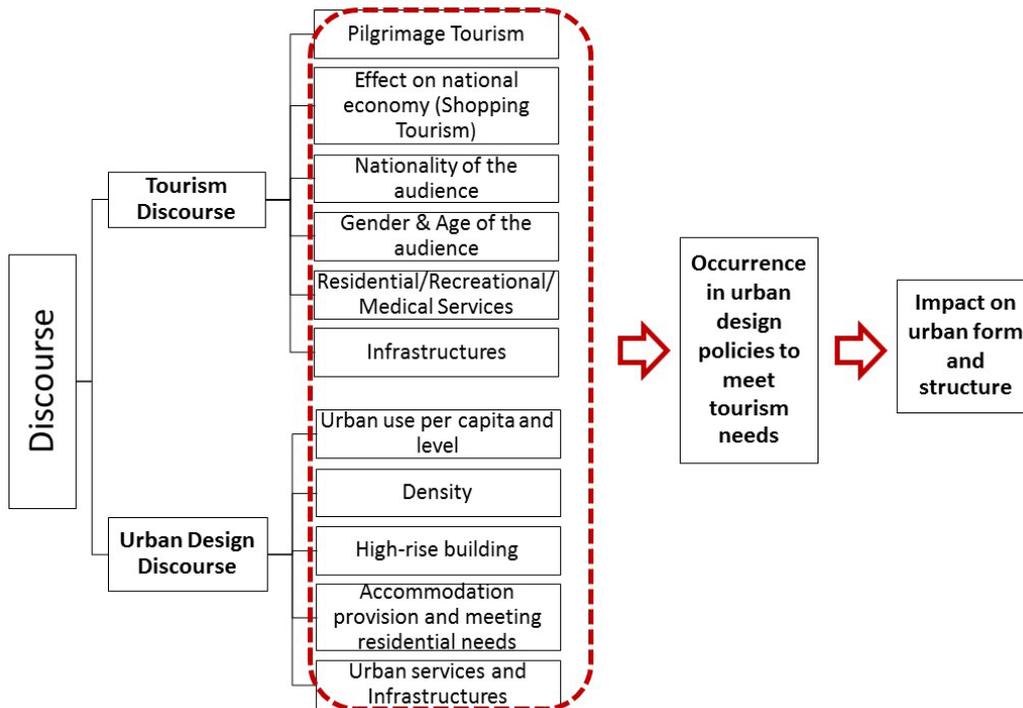
Fig. 1. Theconceptual model (Source: Authors)

4. Theoretical Aspects of the Research

4.1. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's discourse theory

According to this theory, all events in the world happen in the light of a flow of discourse and there exists nothing out of the discourse (Hosseinizadeh, 2004: 182). Discourse analysis aims to show that the existing order in the world results from political trends that emerge in society. In the realm of political philosophy, Laclau and Mouffemixed Foucault's concept of discourse with that of others to present their own discourse theory. They proposed their post-structuralist theory as a mixture of the theories proposed by Saussure, Derrida, Lacan, Gramsci, Althusser, Foucault and others who maintained that all social events were influenced by discursive procedures (Soltani, 2015: 26). The discourse analysis method proposed by Laclau and Mouffe is a descriptive, analytical and critical method that belongs to the realm of postmodern and post-structuralist perspectives (ibid: 97). Since its introduction into theories, the discourse theory has influenced others in linguistics, power relations, politics, and social sciences. Therefore, it can be applied to analyze the underlying mechanisms in power hierarchies in society and how different ideologies are formed, strengthened and eliminated through time in society. It facilitates an understanding of political and social events. From this perspective, discourse and how it comprehensively affects all sectors, we can conclude that how the different boards of government perceive issues in different decision-making processes is not independent of their target discourse. The urban designing and tourism

sectors which are investigated in the present research are thus no exception. Considering the particular case of Mashhad and the high rate of tourism in this city, we can assume that a political discourse has managed to encourage the presence of tourists and motivate them to stay longer. It has managed also to influence the services provided to tourists, urban policy-making and the rest. In the proceeding, a brief overview of the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government will be presented. Then, the state of tourism in Iran and Mashhad will be discussed and finally, the special conditions of Mashhad will be examined in the year span of 2005-2013.

4.2. Discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government (Social justice and principlism discourse)

A look into the comments made by authorities concerning the change of the government discourse indicates that despite the existence of a super-discourse in the Islamic Republic system, each board of government, influenced by national and global issues adopts a different micro-discourse. This would change the way administrative issues are perceived and micro- and macro-decision making is perceived at a national scale.

In the target era studied in this research, social justice discourse was directly concerned with the populace and eliciting massive emotions, especially on religious matters. It managed to present itself as the most accessible discourse. Some other factors led to the emergence of principlism. One such factor was the core of justice in all concepts represented in a simple and comprehensible language (Kasraei&Saeedi, 2016: 155).

As the emphasis of this discourse has been on justice, its semantic system can be called the *justprinciplism*. This discourse is marked by four points: "justice development", "kindness", "materialistic and spiritual development", "service provision". These are all centered on the "wilayat" point. As concerns, the foreign affair policies, the perspective, and discourse of this board of government is strongly affected by a cosmopolitan style

of living. The "economic revolution plan" is at the peak of economic affairs and aims to recognize the roots of national economic disasters and then to promote a relative justice in society (Kazemi, 2009). Table 2 summarizes the different perspectives held by the government under the influence of its discourse which can further affect how tourism and urban design issues are dealt with.

Table 2
A summary of the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government in different sectors(Source: Authors)

The ninth and tenth boards of government (social justice and principlism discourse((2005-2013)		
politics	**Social-cultural**	**economic**
Strong opposition to the west	Attention to Islamic population	Redistribution of properties and elimination of
Increasing feeling of responsibility toward the Islamic world	Special attention to cultural hegemony	Proposing an economic revolution plan (Mehrhousing, subsidies ...)

5. Findings of the Research

5.1. Pilgrimage tourism

Historians of tourism have argued that religious pilgrimages are one of the principal forerunners or historical sources of modern tourism (Cohen, 1992: 48). Religiously motivated tourism is probably as old as religion itself and is consequently the oldest type of tourism. In many Muslim nations, Islam is the foundation of society and order of Islamic law principles supports tourism policy, development objectives, management, and operation of the industry. Therefore, it is evident that religion (Islam) does have an influence on the mode of tourism development and marketing in most Muslim countries. (Zamani-farahani, Eid, 2015:3). Due to the existence of the holy shrine of Imam Reza, the main focus of the present research is on Mashhad as a main tourist and pilgrim attraction. This is known as the pilgrimage tourism.

5.2. Tourism & economy

Tourism is a progressively major part of economies of urban areas (Safari et al., 2018:35) Tribe states the factors affecting tourism and its cycle as follows: economic capital and factors, ideological, political and international factors, social, cultural and religious factors, natural factors, security infrastructures, cultural heritage, historical record, development, education and technology infrastructures. . (Taheri, Khatibi, 2016:71)
As a multiform and multidisciplinary activity, tourism is considered today as a sustainable industry and an effective component of globalization. (Ahmadian, Tabibian, 2016:61) The tourism industry is among the industries that have been the focus of much attention in all countries, particularly developed countries, in recent years, and a great investment has been made for its development. (Taheri, Khatibi, 2016:69)
Tourism can be viewed as a multidimensional activity which touches the lives of many people and affects many different economic activities (Cooper et al., 2008). Research findings show that there is a direct and

significantly strong correlation between the development of religious tourism and economic boom in employment and income increase (Mahmoudi et al., 2015:2). A major part of tourism literature focuses on economic outcomes and the positive role of tourism in creating jobs and new opportunities (ibid: 1). Economic, cultural, environmental and social goals of tourism are the main categories of tourism development. The economic aspect of tourism is the most important criterion and dramatically affects the quality of life and other issues such as employment or tax incomes. It is also significantly influenced by important events and festivals (Foruzan, 2014: 18-19).
 Pilgrimages have powerful political, economic, social, and cultural implications, and can even affect global trade and health. In many parts of the world, pilgrimage forms the nature of economic activities and the design of the public places (Collins-Kreiner, 2012: 153-154). Globalization, economic liberalization, a new ethnicity and religious policy, commodification, commoditizationof culture and values affect and shape many religious sites in the today world .(Štefko et al, 2014: 424). It is interesting to note that religious tourism is less sensitive to economic fluctuations of the market. Since the true believers feel committed to pilgrimage, they prepare themselves for the journey in advance and care less about the economy of the journey (Lickorish& Jenkins, 2013).
Through years, urban economy has formed a particular type of pilgrimage in metropolises and the resultant economic action formed a new type of trade. In fact, the pilgrimage economy in these cities depends on the income gained from the services provided to pilgrims. Meanwhile, shopping centers are developed and multi-purpose travel is formed to religious destinations which makes shopping as a key secondary incentive for traveling to religious metropolises. This has led to the advent of a new type of tourism known as "shopping tourism" in religious journeys. On the other hand, shopping tourism is globally perceived as a means to revive downtown areas and develop new religious metropolises in the world

(Mafi et al., 2011:1). Development of tourism infrastructure plays a key role in changing the form and function of city areas. The view of the city is influenced by different hotels and the secondary services provided (Mafi & Saghaei, 2009: 4).

5.3. Status of tourism in higher-order documents

Policy making and developing macro-strategic plans in each and every country result from the political context, dominant values and ideology and the established national power desire and principles. The tourism industry in Iran is more than anything else influenced by politics and has had many ups and downs corresponding to these political changes. In other words, the flourishment or retardation of international tourism in each country is to a great extent contingent upon the perspective of macro decision makers, development plan and higher-order rules and documents that set the tourism limits in each country. One such case that very well indicates the significance of this industry in Iran is the basic higher-order rules and documents (Veisi, Mehmandoost, 2014: 1-3) the content of which will be analyzed concerning the aim of the present research.

5.3.1. Status of tourism in the visionary plan of Iran 1404 (solar calendar)

Examining the visionary plan of Iran 1404 firstly proved that this plan was the foremost development plan in Iran which was to act as the basis of all further rules. However, this plan lacked any reference to tourism and the relevant concepts. It is noteworthy that in this strategic plan, many economic, social, political and cultural issues were lacking as it sufficed to mention the macro objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1404. However, considering the recurrent motif of the plan, "As a developed country of the first economic, scientific and technological rank in the region, Iran enjoys an Islamic and revolutionary identity to inspire the Islamic world and interact constructively with other nations", we can infer the significance of developing tourism as a key to economic and cultural domains (ibid: 5-6).

5.3.2. Status of tourism in development plans

Development plans formed after the revolution according to the dominant discourse of the government, in fact, reflect the overall policies of the state in different cultural, scientific, technological, social, political and economic domains. They indicate certain symbols in different discourses influenced by different contexts (Haji Hosseini, Sam Aram, 2014: 12). These documents show how the national macro goals are to be pursued in the form of micro-plans and programs. Moreover, tourism and its development are affected by political, economic and cultural decisions made by the government. Therefore, their content can be analyzed to trace the political discourse of each board of government in the policy-making of the different sectors.
After the Islamic revolution, the development of national civil plans was delayed for ten years. Due to the special conditions dominating this era, the tourism industry was

also ignored by planners up until 1988, the outset of the first program. This industry pursued no goal. Neither did it enjoy any policy devised. For the first time in the first five-year program, tourism was attended to and received certain qualitative and quantitative goals (Yousefipour, 1997: 6).
The issue has been touched only in a few paragraphs. In the first the development plan, in the policies section, the third paragraph, mention has been made of the reinforcement and development of national and international tourism in Iran so as to share experiences, knowledge and familiarize others with the Islamic civilizations and culture of Iran. In the second plan, no mention has been made of tourism and the relevant issues. In the third plan, more emphasis has been on maintaining the historical texture of cities, repairing historical buildings and maintaining the ancient texture of Jamaran and converting it to a center providing cultural services to national and international tourists (the law of the third development plan, article 166). In the fourth plan more has been said about cultural legacy and tourism, most importantly the development of specialized, research-based museums affiliated with administrative organizations, creation, and equipment of cultural legacy bases in the main national works, establishment of revival and use of national historical monuments, recognition, and support of cultural legacy in neighbouring countries and foundation of maintenance centres for tribal culture in counties and provinces including touristy villages, museums, and fairs (article 144). According to the fifth law of the five-year development plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2011-2015), it is incumbent on the government to assist city halls to provide for the required infrastructure for pilgrims in Mashhad, Qom and Shiraz and also develop the cultural and pilgrimage services in the pilgrim centres. It is also mentioned in this document that the cultural legacy and tourism organization is allowed to found a centre for monitoring the accommodation and tourism service providing offices, financially supporting the specialized holy defence and martyr museums and building centres to maintain tribal cultural heritage by the private sector (the law of the fifth development plan, articles 11 and 12) (Veisi, Mehmandoost, 2014: 6). It can be concluded that the fifth development the plan is a beginning point for national pilgrimage plans, especially in Mashhad. The 12th article of the Islamic culture chapter of this plan has seen the nature of pilgrimage as a neglected issue in national plans from the beginning to the end of the fourth plan. This article has cut down on many provincial obsessions at the national level concerning pilgrimage (Aghajani et al., 2012: 74).

5.4. Tourism/pilgrimage in the ninth and tenth boards of government

As previously mentioned in the methodology section, a major approach to comprehend discourse-related issues is document analysis as well as the analysis of texts and lectures. Therefore, to better know the government perspective around tourism discourse and policies, a brief

look is cast as part of the content provided by authorities. Among such content is the general perspective of the government toward tourism and pilgrimage.

To this aim, about 30 interviews and lectures made by the head of the government, head of the tourism organization and other decision makers which were already published were analyzed for content to extract the key discussions and main ideas. Several examples will be provided soon and finally, will be summarized in a diagram of the main content.

Ahmadinejad, who was the president of Iran at that time, announced on the global day of tourism: *"...undoubtedly, tourism is a key factor involved in promoting intercultural communications, peace-making, close links between and among different nations. It is accompanied by economic growth of countries and that is why it needs particular attention due to its highly unique potential of making peace among nations. Thus, it should be prioritized in government development plans with the help of those at the private sector of the tourism industry. Therefore, the tenth board of government views tourism as an effective means of creating peace among countries without any political orientation...Thus, the perspective and policies of the government along with the rich culture of Iran known as hospitality have necessitated the conception and development of this industry as a key to economic growth. Accordingly, we are considering the development of tourism at a national level for all the countrymen and tourist attraction at an international level so as to facilitate economic growth, wealth and income distribution and intercommunication of rich cultures..."* (Fars News/Social group, 2010).

Rahim Mashaei, the senior cabinet member of the administration of president, pinpointed the following issues in the opening day of the seventh meeting of tourism ministers in the Islamic conference organization*: "...Islamic countries need to take serious steps to strengthen the interdependence of Islamic countries especially in the field of tourism as tourism plays a key role in uniting people around the world. The potentials of Islamic countries should be used to create global peace..."* (Khorasan newspaper, Social column, 2010).

Manouchehr Jahanian, the deputy of tourism organization then, mentioned the announcement plan of free sacred areas in religious cities (Khorasan Newspaper, social column, 2010). Mousavi, the deputy of tourism, drew attention to the particular case of Mashhad*: "...Following the selection of Mashhad as the spiritual capital of Iran, a religious committee of tourism was formed in the tourism organization as the goal of this board of government is to prioritize religious tourism in Iran prospects"* (Khorasan Newspaper, Social column, 2007). Due to the wide range of issues, not all will be mentioned here and merely the key issues are selectively presented in Figure 2.
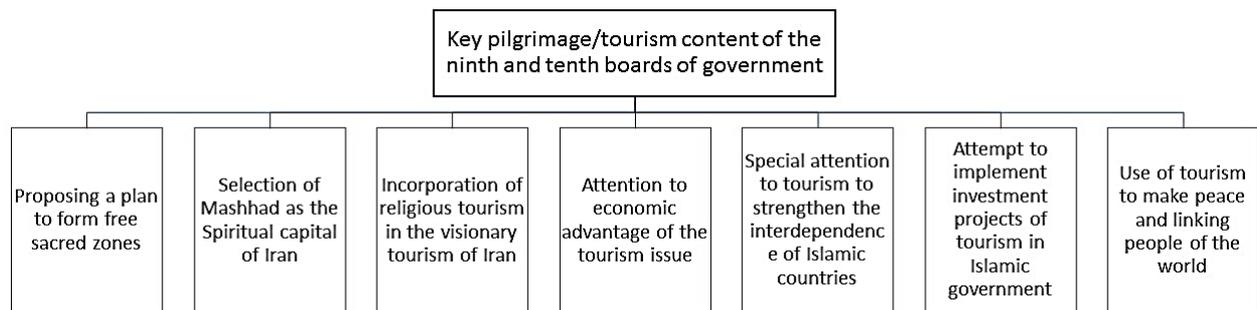

Fig. 2. Key pilgrimage/tourism content of the ninth and tenth boards of government (Source: Authors)

The above-mentioned issues are only part of what was discussed about tourism and pilgrimage in the target board of government. We can conclude that special attention has been paid to the following issues in the tourism plans of the country especially Mashhad: promotion of religious tourism, enrichment of the role of religious cities and tourist attraction from all Islamic countries. The government discourse shows traces of highlighting the role of Islamic Iran in the zone, strengthening links to Islamic countries It has considered their specific religious limitations. The discourse is also marked by the right economic use made of the current conditions of the world and the zone incorporating Iran. Therefore, Mashhad was named the spiritual capital of Iran which will make it as the main tourist destination. It needs to pay special attention to the required construction, meet tourists' basic needs and provide the services they need and try to take economic advantages of urban plans and projects as will be discussed in the following.

5.5. Religious tourism in Mashhad

A key point pinpointed by the ninth and tenth boards of government, as derived from the discourse as well as the particular conditions of the zone and current unsettlements in Iraq, Syria and so on, is favouring the entrance of Muslim tourists to Iran and selecting Mashhad as the spiritual capital of the country and a primary religious/touristy core of the Shia world. Within the given span of time, the special conditions dominating the zone especially the emergence of conflicts in certain Arab countries also contributed greatly to the matter.

Due to the significant role of tourism in Mashhad in this era, we can mention several plans made in this era with this respect either partly or directly developed for this purpose. Among them are: Preparation plan of Khorasan Razavi (2010), Visionary document, a national document of developing Khorasan Razavi approved in 2008 by the cabinet of Iran, Development plan of Mashhad County (2007), tourism and entertainment comprehensive plan in Mashhad metropolis (2002), National body plan (1996), development and construction plan of Mashhad,

comprehensive plans of Mashahd (Khazeni, Mehrazan, Farnahad), reconstruction and renewal plan of the holy shrine surroundings, tourism plan of Torqabeh, Shandiz and so on. Each of these plans, in different types and focus, attended to religious tourism and pilgrimage in Mashhad and paving the way for attracting more tourists and providing them (as well as the local residents) with more facilities. Special attention has been paid to structural spaces and the uses. As an instance, in the following table, part of the issues considered in several documents related to the tourism of Mashhad is presented which can affect the urbanism too.

Table 3
Perspective toward religious tourism in Mashhad urbanism plans and documents

Document	Basic ideas	reference
KhorasanRazavi development document (2008)	1. objective and subjective clarification of the role cultural legacy, artifacts and tourism plan in the stable cultural and political development of the province at local, national, regional and international levels to further social welfare 2. efficient and continuous interaction with other countries especially the Islamic world, the neighboring countries and those of the middle east in the religious tourism sector, cultural legacy and artifacts to make the best use of social capabilities and capacities and representation of culture and religion	The fifth development plan of cultural legacy and tourism in KhorasanRazavi, 2010
Development plan of Mashhad County (2007)	1. promotion of the role Mashhad plays in national and international interactions on cultural and economic terms 2. reinforcement of the superior religious status of Mashhad metropolis and development of other facilities and tourist attractions in the region 3. expansion of cultural-religious communication facilities with neighboring countries using all tourist attractions and various services provided to tourists 4. attraction of foreign investment especially from Islamic countries to solve the problems of Mashhad metropolis speeding up the reconstruction of the old texture of the city and implementing the reconstruction plan of the Holy Shrine periphery.	Development plan of Mashhad County (2007)

Qualitative and quantitative development plan of tourism (2007)	Some of the macro policies:
	  1. realization of a facile and extended pilgrimage
	  2. realization of the true picture of Mashhad as the moral capital of the Islamic world
	   Pilgrimage specialized goals:
	- balanced and stable urban development in the body, safety, welfare, economy and religious tourism domains
	- Islamic architectural models of urbanism and adapting the urban development procedures in Mashhad accordingly
	- formation of a specific pilgrimage territory in Mashhad
	- development of pilgrimage economy characterized by stable income and occupation and investment attraction
	- administrative policies along with the achievement of a stable urban development according to Islamic Iranian urbanism
	- review of higher order documents and urban development plans from a pilgrimage perspective to reinforce urban stable development
	- dominance of the "human values based on the unity perspective" attitude in planning the development of Mashhad as a pilgrim destination
	- identifying the urban spaces of the city especially the urban outlook based on the pilgrimage historical and civilized identity
	prevention of destroying and changing valuable historical and cultural legacies and turning them into residential or commercial areas in Mashhad	

Urban collection plan (2005)	- specification of pilgrimage, cultural and religious orientations based on the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza - Mashhad as the pilgrimage and tourism center development and promotion of the quality of pilgrimage in Mashhad metropolis	Strategic plan of pilgrim managerial, political domain, the qualitative and quantitative development plan of pilgrimage, 2007: 166)
Mashhad comprehensive plans (Khazeni, Mehrazan and Farnahad)	In these plans, attention has been paid to the match between the type and depth of studies into pilgrimage and tourism in Mashhad and provision of the required facilities to pilgrims and residents especially structural spaces and uses. The key point in these plans is the administrative organization of the plan comprised of the province headquarters, ministry of accommodation and the city hall.	Aghajani et al., 2012: 65)

Reconstruction of the Holy shrine periphery Plan	- welfare of Mashhad pilgrims and residents and addition to the efficacy of the region the Holy Shrine periphery as a touristy and religious setting	Strategic plan of pilgrim managerial-political domains, qualitative and quantitative development plan of pilgrimage, 2007: 166)

As it can be observed, the above table contains the major points raised in higher-order documents about what decision makers think about religious tourism. The main points are:

- More interactions with other countries specially Islamic countries
- emphasis on attracting national and international investment
- realization of Mashhad as the moral capital of the Islamic world
- attention to the stable urban development in body, economics, welfare, etc.
- identifying urban spaces in Mashhad based on the historical and civilized concepts
- attention to the provision of welfare facilities to pilgrims

5.5.1. *Religious tourism and economy in Mashhad*

The tourism structure of Mashhad changed in the past century especially after the Islamic revolution, following national systemic revolutions (mental, cultural, economic...) from the pure religious/pilgrimage function[i] to cultural-religious tourism[ii]. These changes in the tourism approach have had considerable economic (employment, income, investment ...) and sociocultural (public culture development) effects on the city and the zone (Momeni et al., 2008:17).

The body of research conducted in the target board of government recognized two perspectives toward tourism in Mashhad. One perspective only attributes the spatial context of pilgrimage to pilgrimage itself and sees no other non-religious attraction. On the contrary, the other perspective narrows down the whole process of pilgrimage to the concept of tourism. From this latter perspective, we should attempt to make the best economic use of pilgrims and tourists which is not applicable unless through lengthening the stay of tourists and adding to the attractions of the special context of pilgrimage. These two perspectives have had management and policy-making consequences for the production of a religious spatial context. They impose many unstable trends on the religious tourism spatial context (Saghaei et al., 2012: 104).

Some other related research in the target by Mafi et al. (2011) revealed that the majority of pilgrims very well know the shopping centers in Mashhad. Other investigations also showed that the highest amount of the pilgrimage/tourism-induced income is related to shopping centers and shopping in general. In fact, 76% of pilgrims and tourists visiting Mashhad not only visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza but also visit shopping malls (Mafi et al., 2011: 7-11). Some other research with this respect (Saghaei et al., 2012) indicated the highest proportion of shopping which is subsumed under the commercial sector (markets) and accounts for about 33.25% of the average expenditure of tourists. The next sector is the residential sector which accounts for 23.52% of the average expenditure of tourist (Saghaei et al. 2012). It is noteworthy that Mashhad has got the highest number of hotels among all cities of Iran (Hosseini et al., 2014:866). Moreover, the existence of markets and the significance of shopping is not new to pilgrims. It has always been addressed in supplying pilgrims with souvenirs as an indispensable part of their journey beside the act of pilgrimage itself. However, in the modern era, the advent of grand shopping centers has revolutionized shopping tourism in the city and turned it into a mutually beneficial trade between the tourist/pilgrim on the one hand and the society on the other.

6. Analysis

6.1. *Structural and formal changes of the city of Mashhad*

Respectively, the occurrence of revolutions, change of the government, regional and national policies, development of urban plans, enactment of urban rules and regulations, implementation of local policies (by the city hall), the efficiency of administrative management in the city affect the formation of cities and their special and structural shape. Among these, metropolises which are highly populated and enjoy many functions are always faced with socioeconomic, structural, special and ecological changes at the local and regional levels. This issue is what the majority of metropolises in the world developing countries including Iran experience (Kheirodin et al. 2013: 18).

A primary look at the construction work in Mashhad within the target year span shows that the majority of construction in this city has pursued residential and commercial purposes. We can be ensured of the positive correlation of some of these changes and how tourist attraction is perceived, how to meet tourists' needs and make the most economic advantage of their stay in the city. As an instance, within 1967-1988 despite relative stability of residential use per capita, its contribution to the urban area was significantly reduced from 38.9% to 22.1% which has been caused by the more contribution of non-urban use (Mafi&Saghaei, 2009: 7-8).

There have been also more focus on increasing the number of tourists in the urban plans and documents as

investigated previously especially the elaboration on the vision such as the attraction of 40 million pilgrims up until 1404 (Saghaei et al., 2012: 108).Therefore, to meet

pilgrims' needs and satisfy them in the vicinity of Imam Reza .the most fundamental tourist attraction of Mashhad

Table 4
Comparison of investment rate and construction work in eight years (2005-2013)
(Source: Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Khorasanrazavi, 2018)

Title	Index	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Approved credits for developing tourism infrastructure	Million rials	4642	12941	28790	107820	25950	27277	40260	52166	40.046
National civil credits	Million rials	0	2500	5390	34600	12850	14800	12060	16100	410.4
Civil projects approved and implemented in tourism	n.	6	23	27	46	36	33	53	77	43
hotel	n.	95	100	106	112	122	132	135	146	163

is a set of services, accommodation provision, agencies, transportation systems, organizations which comprise the secondary constituent elements of the religious, cultural and touristy city of Mashhad. It has created a particular outlook influenced by religious/cultural beliefs, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics of tourists as well as local residents correlated with spatial and environmental factors (Momeni et al., 2008: 17). In this era, certain features drew:
 - Special attention to tourists especially from the Muslim countries who enjoyed a better geographical state to visit Iran.
 - Emphasis on the essentiality of creating friendly links between and among Islamic countries especially the Shia as evident in the discourse,
 - The need to consider Mashhad as the religious capital of the country
 - and heed to tourism as a powerful economic source.
These all drew attention to the tourists especially those from the neighbouring Muslim countries who found an appropriate place in Iran. It further drew attention to creating the infrastructures and services required by tourists, implementing the construction plans of recreation spaces to lengthen tourists' stay in the city[iii].
Awareness-raising of the economic benefits of tourism has motivated the relevant organizations to do their best to win in the competitive market.
The result can be observed, on the one hand, in the per capita level and uses concerning how to meet pilgrims' needs and, on the other hand, in wearing a luxurious face of the city. Examples are grand malls and shopping centers, luxurious hotels and residential towers. The majority of changes in these uses and densities made by the organizations in charge of Mashhad do not follow from detailed upstream comprehensive plans. A survey conducted about deviations from the approved reconstruction plan of the Holy Shrine periphery in 2008-2015revealed that in the vicinity of the holy shrine, 65% of the permissions given entailed building densities more

than authorized. Moreover, the basic levels of the latest permissions made about the approved plan witnessed a 34% of increase. This increase is much more visible in commercial uses than others. A great part of the surrounding areas of the holy shrine look more recreational and commercial than religious (Moshaver Mehrazan, 2016).
To elaborate more on the investment in the tourism sector, table 4 is presented here to make a comparison between the changes in investment and the rate of construction work in Mashhad within different years.
As can be observed in the above table, in the target 8-year span of time, the rate of investment and construction work has followed an increasing trend which must have evidently affected the urbanism in Mashhad.
What is noteworthy concerning tourism and urbanism is that the root of tourism is, in fact, tourist and pilgrim satisfaction. However, urban development has to do with the residents of Mashhad. That is to say that the residents, though they benefit economically and socially from the incoming tourists and pilgrims to this metropolis, need themselves a high-quality city life and city space. Thus, they are affected by different parameters and as urban development is multifaceted, adherence to it would require a certain approach to the special distinction of the city. In other words, urban development necessities are different from those of tourism. As an instance, more developed residential facilities and those of higher quality are addressed in tourism while the improvement of accommodations and stability of urban residential areas is dealt with in urban development (Mafi, Saghaei, 2009: 13).
This is evident in the periphery of the Holy Shrine. The great amount of luxurious shopping centers, residential towers, and high rise buildings, as mentioned previously, have violated the reconstruction and renewal rules in significant ways. They have replaced original individuals with new people; changed human communications among pilgrims and residents; changed the residents' priority of

service provision to pilgrims to making more benefits; changed the pilgrimage use to tourism use and finally separated the Holy shrine from its periphery (MoshaverMehrazan, 2016).
A sample of projects and plans implemented within the year span of 2005-2013 has been presented in Table 5 and Figure 3.

This mapping has tried to delineate the large-scale uses at the urban scale within the target era and to compare them with the approved plan as the criterion to act upon (Khazeni detailed plan and the reconstruction plan of the Holy Shrine periphery). How the uses have changed as well as the altitude and other relevant factors are mentioned.

Table 5.
A sample of macro projects implemented in the target year span and the status of each project in Mashhad (Source: Authors)

Project's name	Date	Current use	Current number of floors	Features of the target area in the detailed proposal or the reconstruction plan of the holy shrine periphery [*]
Alton tower	2007	Multi-story car park, commercial, official	24	Residential
Iman project	2008	Commercial, residential	12	Additional density 60% compared to the plan approved in 2008
Yaqut&zomorod complex	2009	Commercial, official	5	Average- or high-density residential.
Arman project	2010	Commercial, residential	13	Additional density 60% compared to the plan approved in 2008
Aseman project	2010	Multi-story car park, commercial,, recreational,	18	Green space
Pazh	2010	Commercial, official	6 to 25	Commercial, having additional density
Janbaz grand center	2010	Commercial,, recreational, official	43	Commercial, having additional density
Salman tower	2010	Commercial, official	18	Educational
Kosar green tower	2010	Residential tower	18 & 22	Average-density residential.
Mojalal project	2011	Commercial, residential	17	Additional density 60% compared to the plan approved in 2008
Zamen project	2011	Commercial, residential	14	Additional density 60% compared to the plan approved in 2008
Payam project	2011	Commercial, residential	17	Additional density 60% compared to the plan approved in 2008
Axon tower	2011	Commercial	17	Commercial, having additional density
Sepehrkuhsangi	2011	Commercial, official	14	Low-density residential
Mehrkuhsangi	2011	Commercial, residential	25	Commercial, having additional density
Kian centre 2	2012	Commercial,, recreational, official	17	Commercial, having additional density
Artmitajgolshan	2012	Commercial, official	34	High-density residential
Baran tower 2	2012	Residential tower	22	High-density residential- having additional density
Yas tower	2013	Commercial, official	30	Commercial, having additional density
Mashhad mal	2013	Commercial, hotel and residential and official tower	23 & 17	Educational, green space (Astan-e Ghods land),
Aban plaza	2013	Commercial, official	12	Average-density residential.
Baran tower 3	2014	Residential tower	30	Average-density residential.

[*] The source of comparison in this section is Khazeni detailed plan, act within the required time span and the body of research by Moshaver Mehrazan (2016)
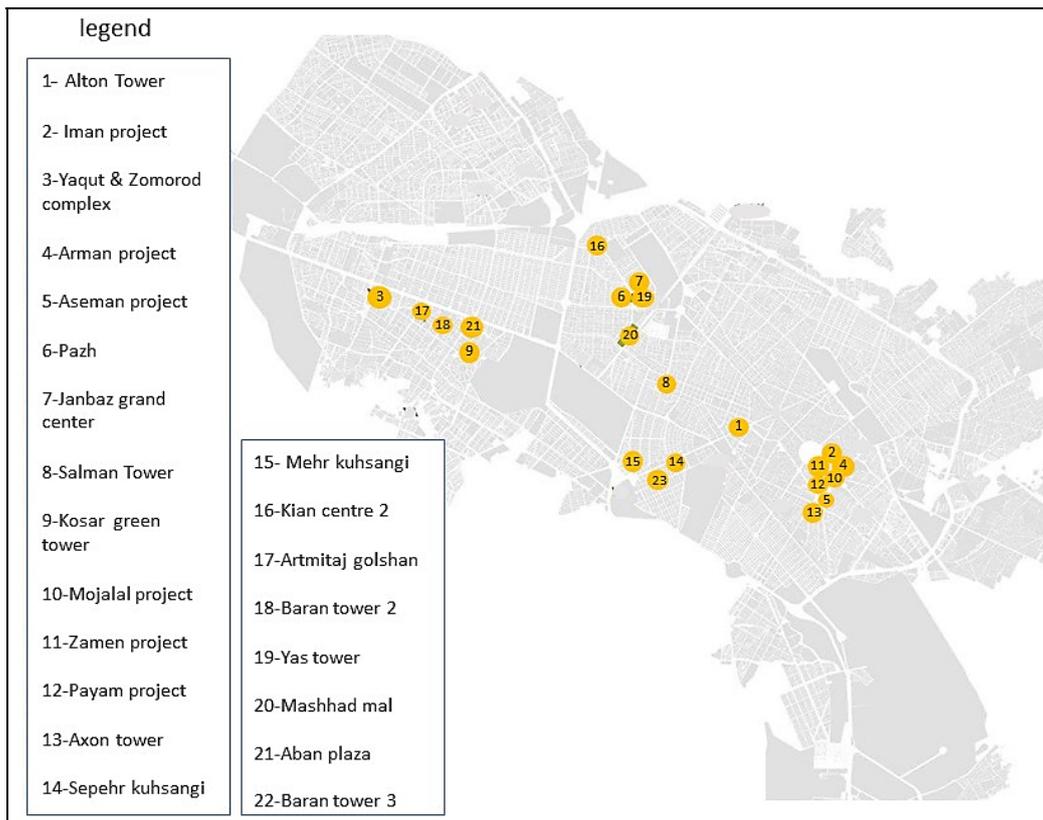
Fig. 3. Location of project in city (Source: Authors)

7. Conclusions

A practical way to know the existing socio-political relations within a community is to recognize the discursive domains of that community in each time era. With this respect, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis theory can be constructive and useful. In the present research, in order to analyze how tourism decision-making affects urban form and structure, we firstly analyzed the macro mentality of the government. Analyzing the discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government revealed the discussions about promoting religious and Islamic culture, the importance of communication in the Islamic world and promoting Islamic unity among the Shia further motivated foreign tourists to benefit from the religious potentials of Iran especially Mashhad. Moreover, due to the economic conditions of the zone and the world, this issue could play a key role in the flow of currency and investment in the country, reduced economic dependence on oil and achievement of a stable financial income. Religious tourism has been considered a type of indirect foreign investment within the country and its developmental effects on all economic sectors were taken into account.

The tourism industry has cultural, political and economic aspects. The city of Mashhad can be considered as a context for religious tourism. It reflects religious, cultural and economic motifs as the first steps which are empowered by the discourse dominant over the country and the zone and are realized objectively and structurally. In fact, we can say that within the eight years of the ninth and tenth boards of government (considering the discourse of the government to favor religious beliefs and grow religious), special attention was paid to Mashhad as the spiritual capital of Iran revealing itself in the fifth plan, conditions of the region and occurrence of conflicts among neighbouring countries raised the price of oil, incoming investment in construction work, economic benefits of national and international tourists evident in the statements made by policy makers have caused severe changes to the urban design of Mashhad. More investment in this section and attention to meeting pilgrims' needs were the outcome (according to the statistics reported by the tourism the organization mentioned in the text). Finally, these all affected the urbanism and urban form.

Such cases as the significant increase in the commercial and residential level of the city and change of uses at the large scale and high-rise buildings in the central and western sides of the city as can be observed in the figure are among the changes made.

It is inevitable that a large portion of the economic budget needs in the city and the return of capital in Mashhad depend on the presence of national and international pilgrims and tourists. However, the city residents and their needs should not be neglected. Though raising the quality of services and infrastructure is also to the benefit of the residents, and adds to the liveliness of the city resulting from the pilgrimage, considering only the

economic profits of pilgrimage has led to certain decisions and change in uses in the city that in the long run would damage the quality of life of the residents. It might even cause contact between residents and pilgrims. Therefore, the points raised here not only approve the effect of tourism policies in Mashhad on the form of the

city, but also show the inappropriate, unbalanced function with tourism policies and economy in the city influenced by the discourse perspective of the state toward urbanism and the urban form of Mashhad. The following figure casts a brief look at this relationship.
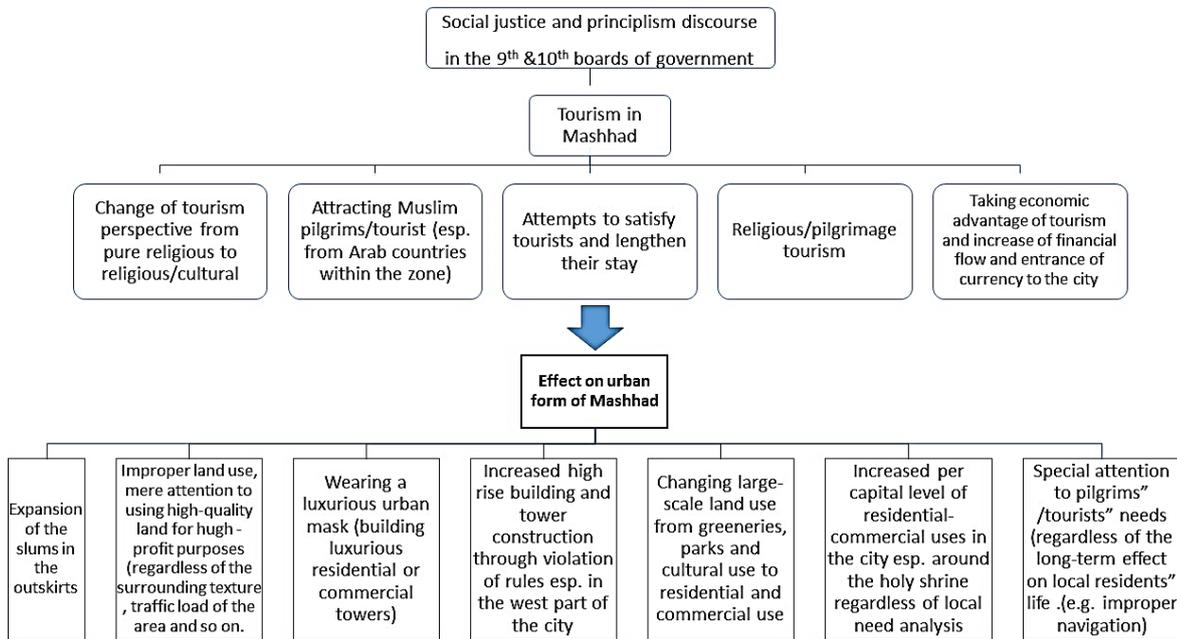

Fig. 4. Effect of the tourism discourse of the ninth and tenth boards of government on the urban form and structure of Mashhad (Source: Authors)

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[i] Single purpose oriented

[ii] Multi-purpose (with pilgrimage as the priority) (Momeni et al., 2006)

[iii] It is noteworthy that the increased cost of oil and the provision of adequate investment in the country led to a higher tendency to large-scale construction. In fact, in the oil-dependent industry of Iran and after the raised price of oil, more activities in the land construction work and accommodation can be a good stage for macro investments on large scale projects. The role of commercial activity is further highlighted in this realm (Kheirodin et al., 2013).