

Spatial Analysis of the Housing Problem in the Cities of Najaf Governorate (Causes, Results, and Solutions)

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Abstract

The housing crisis in Najaf Governorate is a rampant problem that accumulates because all the solutions that were implemented are temporary, random and not based on a long-term strategic policy to solve the problem. Then came the wars and economic blockade, and then the post-2003 conditions that led to the halting of construction operations, urban expansion and a significant rise in prices. Construction materials and land in the real estate market. Among the reasons that the residents of the governorate suffer is the low level of monthly income for families, due to the low salaries of employees on the one hand, and the low salaries of retirees, as well as those with limited income who work in self-employment compared to the high prices of residential land and houses, which makes it difficult to buy or build land in light of this great increase. Residents of Najaf Governorate are suffering from a severe housing crisis due to the rise in real estate prices and rents, which has led to burdening the citizen. The housing crisis in Najaf Governorate is reflected in the violations of empty residential lands, where they are constructing houses in them within the neighborhoods and even outside them.

Keywords: housing crisis, suffering, salaries, employees

Introduction

Housing is one of the most important infrastructure for building the state and society, and it is dialectically and closely linked to urbanization and the process of development of societies with their various economic and social formations throughout the ages. The concept of urbanization in our contemporary world makes it one of the priorities of the state and the Iraqi government to provide adequate and comfortable housing for the Iraqi citizen at symbolic subsidized prices commensurate with his income and the number of his family members. This is a right that should be guaranteed by law and included in the constitution. His financial capabilities, his academic level, his job position and his social decline is the state's symbiotic responsibility with all its governmental, political and civil institutional formations. Responsibility falls on everyone, with rates varying, the size of the responsibility, and the available resources that can be used. Everyone bears a share of this responsibility. The law is a homeless citizen, and the state bears responsibility for his inhuman condition. The housing crisis is one of the intractable problems in Iraq, and many developing countries have similar social, intellectual and demographic conditions, and the population problem - as specialists know it - is (the current situation in the

country, when the population increases without this increase being accompanied by a suitable increase in education to health facilities and the economy, and this growth will be in quantity without quality. The housing crisis in Najaf is a rampant problem that accumulates because all the solutions that were implemented are temporary, random and not based on a long-term strategic policy to solve the problem. Then came the wars and economic blockade, and then the post-2003 conditions that led to the halting of construction operations and urban expansion and a significant rise in prices construction materials and land in the real estate market. This situation made the governorate suffer a major challenge in the housing sector in light of the enormous demand for housing and the continuous increase in the population, in addition to immigration from the provinces to Najaf.

Research problem

- 1 -What are the reasons behind the housing problem in Najaf?
- 2 -Are there negative consequences due to the housing crisis in the governorate?

Research hypothesis

- 1 -There are many reasons behind the housing crisis in Najaf Governorate
- 2 -There are many negative consequences due to the housing problem in the governorate

The goal of the research

The study aims to uncover the causes of the housing problem in the governorate with an indication of the negative consequences of the impact of this problem, with an indication of alternative solutions to reduce the housing problem in the governorate.

Study methodology

The researcher relied on the deductive approach in general, which is the model based on a theory related to the problem and hypothesis based on the observation of spatial phenomena and data, as it studies reality to match with the model or theory, and it is not permissible to put reality in theory or refine it. The reality is not subject to it, but it is correct and becomes the model upon congruence. Intuitive rational and based on our perception of the thing and our vision of it, as it is based on thinking about a specific problem while reviewing all theoretical branches in order to build the model, i.e. starting to develop a general hypothesis and then starting to prove the hypothesis with evidence (1). The researcher also relied on the method of standard analysis when compared with the information resulting from the use of data.

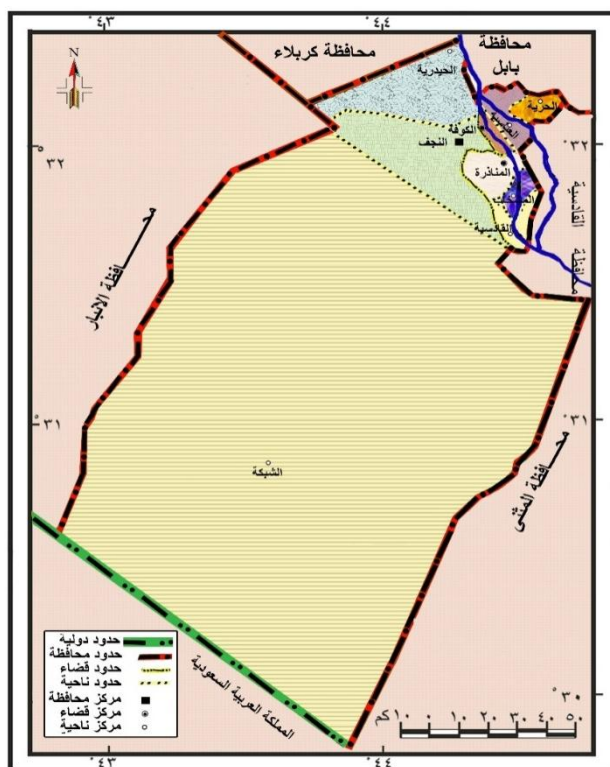
The research was divided into four sections:

- 1 -The normal situation in Najaf Governorate
- 2 -The causes of the housing crisis in Najaf Governorate
- 3 -The consequences of the housing crisis
- 4- Alternative solutions to reduce the housing problem

The normal situation in Najaf Governorate

The study area is represented by the administrative boundaries of Najaf Governorate, its districts and its suburbs, as the governorate occupies the southwestern part of the Republic of Iraq and extends between longitudes (50 ,42 44 45) east and between two latitudes (50 29 21 32) North (2) forming a shape closer to a rectangle, as in map (1). As the governorate is bordered on the north by the governorates of Babel and Karbala, and from the south and southwest, it borders the borders of Iraq with the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia, and on the east it is bordered by the governorates of Qadisiyah and Muthanna, while it is bordered on the west by the governorate of Anbar. It turns out that the study of the astronomical and geographical location is of great importance, as the extension of the study area from the northeast to the southwest made it located within two different natural regions, which has an impact on the nature, as the western plateau occupies 95% of the governorate, while the sedimentary plain is 5%. Therefore, the housing units in the governorate are concentrated within the sedimentary plain.



Map (1) Administrative units in Najaf Governorate(**Source:** General Survey facility, Baghdad, Najaf administrative map, 2017)

The causes of the housing problem in Najaf Governorate

Housing is one of the most important infrastructure for building the state and society, and it is closely and closely linked to urbanization with its various economic and social formations throughout the ages, and the concept of urbanization in our contemporary world makes it a priority for the state and the Iraqi government to provide suitable and comfortable housing for the citizen at nominal subsidized prices commensurate with the individual's income and the number of his family and this right, it should be guaranteed by the law and the constitution (3). The first man grew up in local environments whose resources were overflowing with what man required of various needs, and the number of tribes and human settlements were few, and the

successive increase in the number of these settlements was limited by what was afflicting them at that time from epidemics and various diseases (4). The large and accelerating increase in the size of the population in the world in recent times has started to cause the population to double in shorter periods of time, and these progressive population increases during close periods of time does not mean that the human ability to reproduce has increased more than before, but rather the opposite. It is correct, but the fundamental reason for the population increase is the decrease in deaths as a result of improved living standards and the health conditions of the population, while the birth rates remain the same (5). The impact of the population on the housing problem in Najaf Governorate can be seen through the following.

- Population growth in Najaf Governorate

Najaf Governorate is considered one of the governorates of Iraq that is important in terms of human and economic capabilities, as it was and is still attracting immigrant residents from inside Iraq and even outside because of this province's important religious stature represented by the shrine of Imam Ali and religious schools as well as its important commercial and industrial activity as a religious area. It is visited by large numbers of visitors. Therefore, the size of the population in the province of Najaf has developed and has increased dramatically in recent years. Table (1) shows an increase in the population growth rate in the governorate through the census results, as it increased for the period from 1977-1987 to reach 4.2%, as this increase in growth rates. It goes back to the migration that took place in Najaf Governorate, in addition to the spatial stability factor and natural increase, then it returns and decreases for the period from 1987-1997 to reach (2.8) %, then it returns to increase for the period from 1997-2007 to reach (3.4)% and increases for the period 2007-2017 to (3.5) %). This increase in population growth rates was reflected in the housing crisis in light of the lack of municipal services activities and the deterioration of their work in most aspects of the governorate in addition to the lack of environmental awareness among the population in preserving the basic components of the environment, namely land (soil), water, air, etc. Population Number Your needs have increased in terms of housing, food and services, as Table (1) shows the large population increase in Najaf Governorate during the census years, and all this will lead to pressure on the governorate to expand housing and will certainly have a significant impact on agricultural lands in the study area.

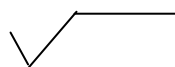
Table (1) The evolution of population numbers and growth rates in Najaf Governorate compared to Iraq for the years 1977-2017

Growth rate		Iraq	Najaf	Population Year
% Iraq	% Governorate			
3.2	-	12000497	389680	1977-1965
3.1	4.2	16335199	590078	1987-1977
3	2.8	22046244	775042	1997 -1987
3	3.4	29682081	1081203	2007 -1997
2.9	3.5	37061000	1462706	2017-2007

Sources:

- 1.Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, the Central Bureau of Statistics in Najaf Governorate, population estimates by environment, gender, and administrative unit for the year 2018.
2. Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Central Statistical Organization, Directorate of Population and Manpower Statistics, Census Results, 1977-1987-1997.
3. Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Central Bureau of Statistics, Directorate of Population and Manpower Statistics, Estimates of Iraq's population by environment, governorate and gender, 2018.

* Extracting the population growth rate according to the following equation (1):



$$P1^tR = (/ P_0 - 1) 100$$

Where = R is the rate of population growth.

t = the population between the two censuses.

P1 = the population at the subsequent census.

Po = the population at the previous census.

-Incorrect distribution of population

Table (2) and figure (1) show that the residents of Najaf Governorate are not evenly distributed between the districts and sub-districts, as the district center of Najaf ranked first in terms of population, reaching (837,647) people with a percentage of

(52.6) % of the total population of the governorate and the adult. The district of Kufa comes second, with a population of (261,426) people, with a percentage of (16.44) %, followed by the Abbasiya district in third place with a population of (101,601) people, at a rate of (6.4)%, and each center comes in fourth place. Al-Mishkhab district and Al-Manathira district center (with a population of 100,826 - 100,633) people, with a percentage of (6.3) % for each of them, respectively, and it came in the fifth place in Al-Haidariyah district with a population of (59,317) people and a percentage of (3.7)% with a population of (43,334) people, a rate of (2.7)%, and it came last in the area of the network, with a population of (503) people, and a rate of 0.03) %. Through what you may notice, the concentration of the population is very large in the center of the district of Najaf, which made the city overcrowded, and this was at the expense of the expansion of agricultural lands, as well as random housing and construction violations, and many agricultural lands in the district center were converted into residential homes, and this will greatly affect the environment increases the level of pollution in it, as more than half of the governorate's population is in the district of Najaf, and this is also observed in the Kufa district center, which came second in the number of inhabitants and this increase in the number of inhabitants and the population encroachment on green spaces is due to the religious standing represented by the shrine of Imam Ali, the Kufa Mosque and the shrine of Muslim bin Aqeel, in addition to commercial, industrial and agricultural activities in these two cities, job opportunities are provided in the districts of Najaf and Kufa compared to the rest of the other regions, as well as the cheaper prices of random housing or agricultural land titles in these areas. As for the rest of the areas, the percentage of the population decreases, as they are rural and agricultural areas, except for the network side, as it is a desert area in which all the elements of life are absent.

Table(2) Estimating the population numbers in Najaf governorate by district and sub-districts for the year 2020

Population / people		Administrative unit
%Ratio	Total	
52.6	837647	Najaf District
3.7	59317	Al-Haidarya sub-district
0.03	503	Network area
16.44	261426	Kufa district

6.4	101601	Abbasiya sub-district
2.1	34095	Al-Hurriya sub-district
6.3	100633	Munadhirah spend
2.7	43334	Al-Hirah sub-district
6.3	100826	Al-Mishkhab District
3.1	50579	Al-Qadisiyah sub-district
%100	1.589.961	Total province

Source: Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation, Central Bureau of Statistics in Najaf Governorate, estimates of population by environment, gender and administrative unit for the year 2020.

Rising land prices

One of the important reasons that the residents of Najaf are suffering from the high price of residential land, as well as the high prices of houses, in a very large way. (Million per meter) and rises until it reaches (8-10) million per meter in good neighborhoods, that is, the land of (100 m) reaches (20-40) million and rises until it reaches very large numbers that many cannot buy, in addition to the high construction prices and high labor wages.

-Low income of the population in the governorate

Among the reasons that the residents of the governorate suffer is the low level of monthly income for families, due to the low salaries of employees on the one hand, and the low salaries of retirees, as well as those with limited income who work in self-employment compared to the high prices of residential land and houses, which makes it difficult to buy or build land in light of this great increase. The state's failure to finance employees and non-employees with advances helps reduce costs if most of the advances are of great benefits that are difficult to take or the state's distribution of residential lands in order to reduce the continuous rise.

Customs and Traditions

The lack of acceptance by many residents of Najaf governorate of the vertical construction method due to social and cultural reasons, which led to the trend towards horizontal construction in which large areas of land are lost, in addition to the fact that many people are not convinced of the feasibility of this type of construction, which provides a lot in providing services (electricity, water, etc.) Sewer and others). Also,

Najaf families' insistence on using old construction methods and methods of high cost, which leads to burdening individuals when building and not keeping pace with modern construction methods that save time, effort and costs.

There are other reasons, too, that we can explain:

- 1.The weakness of the planning agencies in terms of efficiency, randomness and improvisation in their decisions during previous decades, that is, successive governments 'neglect of the housing crisis and their failure to provide successful solutions to it. The weak capabilities and urban planning, and the lack of competent institutions or ministries capable of getting out of this crisis, despite the availability of vast lands in Najaf Governorate for this purpose.
- 2.The absence of the financial and banking policy and the necessary support to finance housing projects, whether at the level of individual construction or large housing projects.
- 3.The lack of a clear, stable and continuous housing policy adopted by the state.
- 4.Migration from the countryside to the city, and the pressure on urban places, for many reasons, including the lack of work in rural areas and high unemployment rates in those areas or because of tribal conflicts.
5. Lack of attention to housing in development plans, assuming that economic growth parallels with the passage of time appropriate solutions to the housing problem.

The consequences of the housing crisis

The housing crisis in Najaf Governorate is reflected in the violations of empty residential lands, as they build houses in them within the neighborhoods and even outside them, as more than 5,000 citizens live within the Al-Rahma neighborhood bypassing state lands, and many citizens exceed the empty lands in residential neighborhoods. Empty lands in the north of the northern neighborhoods, where they build random, unorganized homes with an unpleasant appearance, distorting the residential area, as well as the level of pollution they witness in terms of soil pollution, because most of these homes do not have sewage water, so they dig in front of the houses, in addition to the waste collection (Figs. 1, 2).

The housing problem has also been reflected in the reluctance of many young people to marry because of their inability to buy or rent a house because of the high cost or even build an extension inside the family's home, and the problem of residents has

also been reflected in the destruction of many green spaces inside the homes, as many citizens By building an attached house at the expense of home gardens, their preachers chant it to builders and with a bone they rent to take advantage of it to increase income, and this situation has started to increase dramatically in recent times (Fig. 3).



Figure (1) Unplanned housing in one of the Najaf neighborhoods



Figure (2) Environmental pollution resulting from informal housing



Figure (3) a change in the style of the housing unit and its division into more than one house

Alternative solutions to reduce the housing problem

- 1 .Increase financial allocations from the annual state budget for the housing sector.
- 2 .Developing and supporting the housing finance sector to empower individuals and encourage them to build and purchase housing units or through real estate companies and investors.
- 3 .Reducing the costs required for the construction of housing units and supporting the manufacture of construction materials and developing the capabilities of manpower.
- 4 .Determine the minimum standards for housing that make water habitable.
- 5.Giving a residential plot of land:
 - For every employee after a year has passed from his appointment, there are many employees who did not get residential plots and he has a long service that may reach more than 15 years.
 - Married young men
 - The handicapped and the pathologically impaired
 - Sons of the martyrs

-Widows

6.Giving citizens who get housing plots a financial loan without an increase to suit the building

7.Providing construction materials and supplies necessary for construction at reasonable prices

8.Building huge housing complexes that meet the needs of the citizens and distributing them to them in the form of loans that citizens pay annually part of them

9.Balance between the government's concerns for the city and the village so that the government builds modern villages that are ready and have all the services and requirements of daily life to limit migration between the village and the city

7.Establishing a housing fund to grant citizens financial loans commensurate with the construction costs

8.Distributing residential lands to employees and providing loans in proportion to the increase in the prices of raw materials for construction.

9.Building residential complexes and benefiting from vertical construction, especially when building residential complexes

10.Enhancing and developing the information system and databases of the actual need for housing units in each governorate, predicting the population growth therein, and updating them continuously.

11.Paying attention to coordination between municipalities, urban planning and real estate registration departments in the governorates, as they are concerned departments for this field.

12.Re-drawing and planning cities according to the correct scientific principles, taking into account the annual population increase.

13.Encouraging researchers and scholars with primary and higher diplomas to develop studies and research and provide them with ideas and proposals for the advancement of the demographic reality.

14.The Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction alone cannot undertake the task of solving the housing problem unless it is supported by other institutions, such as ministries or humanitarian institutions, from civil society organizations, or what is provided to it by the private sector, which has contributed in many countries to solving this problem. Therefore, the government is called to benefit from all the good efforts in resolving the crisis in light of the increase in population and the density of

some areas that have become an obstacle for people to meet the requirements of daily life.

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