URBAN PLANNING AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO HUMANIZING CITIES

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Abstract:
This study looks at urban planning in the context of "Humanizing Cities," trying to move city development away from just infrastructure and economic issues and toward a human-centered strategy. The study conducts a critical analysis of the shortcomings in contemporary urban planning methods, which frequently disregard the psychological and social requirements of city dwellers. This study employs a descriptive-analytical methodology to examine the essential concepts and elements required for the design of human-centered urban landscapes. Using Najaf as a case study, examples from globally successful projects are utilized to explore how humanizing concepts could be included into city planning. This study is significant because it draws attention to the increasing gap that exists between the requirements of urban residents and contemporary city planning, which usually prioritizes automobiles and economic growth over public safety. The standard of living declines in the absence of sufficient green areas, public areas, and cultural infrastructure. Therefore, understanding the concept of humanized cities—which includes encouraging walkability, supporting sustainable transportation, and conserving cultural heritage—is essential to the growth of social well-being and improving urban life. Incorporating social sustainability, green infrastructure, and public areas into metropolitan Among the important ideas at play are planning frameworks. This study contrasts worldwide experiences with local demands, offering significant suggestions for striking a balance between urban expansion and the preservation of cultural and natural resources. The case of Najaf provides a unique viewpoint on how people-oriented urban planning may be tailored to local circumstances and emphasizes the significance of community involvement and cultural identity in shaping the course of future urban development.

Keywords: Public spaces, cultural heritage, urban planning, humanizing cities, social sustainability, and the historic city of Najaf.

Introduction:
Urban planning is crucial to ensuring a sustainable and appealing urban environment in light of the population growth and cities' fast expansion. The term "human city" refers to a broad idea, that aims to shift the focus of cities from infrastructure, economic growth to people; and their well-being. Building sustainable, adaptable cities is the goal of urban planning, which is one of the most important instruments to make this idea a realit. A setting that satisfies inhabitants' requirements and enhances their well-being. Following World War II, the concept of a "humane city" initially surfaced in scholarly publications in the 1950s. Since then, a number of elements of cities have changed dramatically due to population growth, economic expansion, and technological advancements. Modern civilization revolves around cities, which serve as hubs for many social and cultural communities to convene. Meeting the needs of citizens for a high quality of life and promoting sustainable development are made more difficult by the growing number of people residing in cities. Among these problems is the disappearance of the human element from urban planning and development, which negatively impacts people's sense of place in cities. The importance of "Humanizing Cities" and how it affects local communities in fostering sustainable urban living become clear in this setting. "Humanizing Cities" typically refers to

creating sidewalks and pedestrian-friendly zones in the neighborhood, but a city should be more than just a system of walkways, broad avenues, and skyscrapers.

The interest in this direction emerged after it became clear that city design in many communities, particularly in Arab countries, was not originally intended to serve human beings but rather to accommodate automobiles. Disconnected from local settings, traditions, and customs, this design approach has facilitated the spread of chronic illnesses and unhealthy social behaviors.Therefore, transforming cities into lively, human-oriented spaces by improving their quality indicators has become essential. The humanized city embraces a set of values and principles such as sustainability, affinity, compassion, well-being, communal living, aesthetics, solidarity, respect, and recreation. Cities that empathize with and respect their residents will meet their needs and provide a place where they feel valued and human, rather than making them feel diminutive amidst massive concrete buildings. If cities worldwide adopt these concepts, they will reflect the cultural and environmental diversity of their inhabitants, thereby enhancing their role in shaping their future cities. The responsibility for achieving this transformation lies with decision-makers who must strive to shape the future of our cities in ways that enhance residents' well-being and the sustainability of the urban environment.

Research Problem:

The research problem lies in the insufficient focus on human-centric design and urban planning, which leads to a deterioration in quality of life and social well-being. This research aims to answer the central question: What are the key principles and elements of humanizing cities, and how does urban planning contribute to achieving them?

To comprehensively answer this question, the following sub-questions must be addressed:

1. What is the concept of humanizing cities, and what are its key elements?
2. What are the main principles of humanizing cities?
3. What are the major projects that have successfully implemented the concept of humanizing cities at the city level?

Research Objective:

The primary objective of this research is to identify the key principles of humanizing cities and how to apply them through urban planning, with a focus on the city of Najaf as a case study. Apart from the primary goal, the study aims to accomplish the subsequent secondary goals:

1. Explain and evaluate the idea of "humanizing cities" and its main components.
2. List and evaluate significant initiatives that have effectively put the ideas of humanizing cities into practice.
3. Ascertain the fundamental ideas that support the notion of "humanizing cities."

Research Approaches:

The research will employ the following approaches to meet its intended goals:

1. The descriptive-analytical method: This approach will be used to both characterize the idea of humanizing cities and their constituent parts and to examine significant projects that have made an effort to put this idea into practice.
2. Najaf case study: As a case study, the research will assess particular Najaf neighborhoods. For putting into practice the humanizing city concepts, according to surveys of experts.
3. Expert questionnaires: Through focused surveys, the study will gather the thoughts and assessments of professionals in the fields of urban planning and humanizing cities. To identify the fundamental ideas and procedures that go into creating humanized cities, the data that has been gathered will be examined.

Theoretical Framework
The Concept of Humanizing Cities

There is no universally agreed-upon definition of the concept of "humanizing cities" in the literature of sociology or urban planning. However, the mainstream focus emphasizes the importance of providing ample spaces for people to walk, enjoy the surroundings, and ensure smooth traffic flow. This includes removing obstacles and informal settlements from sidewalks and involving citizens in improving the urban environment, thereby creating sensory, visual, and natural comfort for residents of the city, neighborhood, or district. [1]

Gehl's Perspective:

Jan Gehl, an influential urban designer, views the city as a social dimension that fosters intimacy among all social groups. According to Gehl, a humanized city provides pedestrian-friendly spaces that allow individuals to meet their daily needs, interact with others, and overcome modern-day health issues. Gehl emphasizes that communities should create spaces that respect people's values, history, and present circumstances rather than trapping them in towering buildings that dwarf and suffocate them. Innovative methods are needed to sustain cities in the future to guarantee sustainable living conditions for current and future generations, as well as to make cities environmentally friendly. According to Gehl, a humanized city's fundamental component is to offer soul-nourishing experiences that arouse memories of the place and arouse all five senses without overstimulating them with noise, odors, or other forms of pollution. [2]

UN-HABITAT's Perspective:

Through improving the functioning of the urban environment, urban development is seen by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) as essential to promoting social contact, integration, health, well-being, economic exchange, cultural expression, and conversation in urban areas. In both cities and towns, this plan aims to create public spaces that are of the highest caliber, accessible, safe, and open to all. The local community is involved in these activities, which are carried out with the goal of creating an inclusive and sustainable urban environment. [3]

Joel Kotkin's Perspective:

Joel Kotkin believes that a "humanized city" is a civilized urban area with a humanistic, cultural, and aesthetic essence. According to Kotkin, the purpose of the city, within the framework of sustainable

urban development, fundamentally differs from traditional urban planning, which relies solely on architectural and engineering approaches. He criticizes this classical approach as "retro-urbanist" or regressive urbanism. For Kotkin, true urbanism integrates political, social, and economic dimensions to achieve human values and a dignified life for the majority. [4]

Summary The concept of humanizing cities revolves around designing urban spaces that prioritize human needs, well-being, and social interaction. This approach involves providing pedestrian-friendly areas, ensuring environmental sustainability, promoting social integration, and creating aesthetically pleasing environments that respect the history and culture of the inhabitants.

Urban Planning Experiences for Humanizing Cities

The Danish Experience in Urban Planning: Copenhagen as a Model

Copenhagen, Denmark: A Model of a Human-Friendly City

Copenhagen is a well-known example of human-centric urban planning, having a long history of creative urban planning that successfully satisfies local requirements. Jan Gehl, a well-known Danish architect, was among the trailblazers who made a substantial contribution to Copenhagen's transformation into a human-friendly city. [5]

- Principles of Urban Planning in Copenhagen
    1. Creating Car-Free Zones in the City Center: One of the most significant projects was making portions of the city center pedestrian-only zones. This improved social and cultural activities while lowering traffic and pollution.
    2. Promoting Cycling: Copenhagen is one of the world's most bike-friendly cities thanks to its comprehensive infrastructure for cycling, which includes designated lanes and a bike-sharing program.
    3. Creating a Public Transportation Network: Improving public transportation increased accessibility and efficiency for city movement, which raised the standard of living for citizens.
    4. Emphasizing Quality of Life: Copenhagen is regarded as one of the happiest cities in the world because urban planning advancements work to make citizens' daily lives safer and more comfortable.

Results

The transformation of city center areas into vibrant, active zones led to the development of markets, restaurants, and social life. Focusing on humans rather than cars resulted in reduced traffic, noise, and pollution, along with improved cycling infrastructure and public transportation.

The Singaporean Experience in Urban Planning: A Model of Sustainable Development

Singapore: A City of Far-Sighted Planning

Singapore is an ideal model of advanced and sustainable urban planning, achieving a perfect balance

between economic growth and environmental sustainability. [6]

- ▪ Principles of Urban Planning in Singapore
1. Urban Planning and Housing: The government has clear and regularly updated plans for housing and urban planning to meet community needs.
2. Investment in Infrastructure: Significant investments in transportation, water, sanitation, and electricity infrastructure have improved residents' quality of life.
3. Efficient Land Use: Singapore conserves natural resources, sustainably uses energy, and strikes a balance between economic, environmental, and social concerns.
4. Integrated Development: The development of commercial, industrial, and residential sectors is done so in a way that gives the locals employment and economic prospects.
5. Sustainability in Urban Planning and Architecture: With an emphasis on cutting-edge technology and sustainable construction materials, Singapore implements green building standards and sustainability in all projects.

Results

Singapore has made great progress in efficiently and sustainably constructing its cities, offering its citizens safe and comfortable living environments, all because of these regulations. By incorporating sustainability into its architectural and urban design, Singapore has emerged as one of the world's most sustainable cities.

The Spanish Experience in Urban Planning: Barcelona as a Model

Barcelona, Spain: A City of Innovative Urban Planning

Barcelona, which focuses mostly on knowledge-based services, has emerged as the leader of a new urban wave after enduring social, environmental, and economic upheavals over the previous few decades. Today ranked among the world's most successful cities, it is recognized for its creative urban design on a worldwide basis. [7]

- ▪ Principles of Urban Planning in Barcelona
    1. Updating Structures and Converting Them into Green structures: Many historically significant structures have been restored and made into green buildings by utilizing solar energy as a clean, renewable energy source.
    2. Promoting Bicycle Use: Barcelona has installed about 6,000 bicycles in city facilities as an alternative to conventional forms of mobility, easing the burden on public transportation and reducing carbon emissions.
    3. Establishing an Online Urban Planning Platform: Barcelona established an online platform based on the "15-minute model" to ensure that residents may obtain all necessary resources within a fifteen-minute stroll or bike ride.
    4. The city wants to enhance its residents' environment and well-being, hence one of its goals is to incorporate green spaces into urban design.

Results

Barcelona has emerged as a leader in sustainable urban development, having established an integrated urban environment that raises the standard of living for its residents, because of its innovative planning and tenacious efforts towards sustainability.

The Japanese Experience in Urban Planning: Tokyo as a Model

Tokyo, Japan: A Model of Advanced Urban Planning

Tokyo is among the cleanest and safest cities in the world because to a series of central planning initiatives that have produced a state-of-the-art transportation system and modern infrastructure [10]. Tokyo Urban Planning Guidelines:

1. Promoting the creation of an advanced public transit system: Tokyo's public transit network, which is made up of an integrated system of buses, express trains, and subways, is always expanding and provides quick and simple access across the city.
2. Expanding parks and green spaces: The city aims to raise general well-being and improve inhabitants' quality of life through expanding parks and green spaces. One way it encourages healthy urban environments is this.
3. Encouraging physical activity and a healthy lifestyle: Tokyo wants to make sure that people live active lives. To this end, it has designated safe bike lanes and provided a range of sports and cultural events. These actions both push people to participate in physical activities and leisure time.
4. Sustainable development of smart buildings: Tokyo has adopted renewable energy technology and increased resource efficiency in building development to meet sustainability and innovation needs in urban construction.
5. Building smart digital infrastructure: Tokyo is building cutting-edge digital infrastructure that will increase the city's sustainability and the effectiveness of its urban services. Innovative waste management strategies and intelligent public lighting systems are two examples of this infrastructure.

Results

Tokyo's attempts to create a safe and comfortable environment for both residents and visitors have made it one of the most prominent examples of a sustainable metropolis; Striking a balance between growing urbanization and rising living standards is the aim of these projects.

The Arab Experience in Urban Planning: Saudi Arabia as a Model

Saudi Arabia: Towards Sustainable and Human-Friendly Cities

A rising number of projects and programs are being implemented in numerous Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, with the goal of enhancing cities' sustainability and compassion. A collection of leaders from local government, non-governmental organizations, universities, and specialized research centers are spearheading these activitie [11].

- Principles of Urban Planning in Saudi Arabia

1. Choosing Green Spaces and Building Pedestrian Walkways: Playgrounds, green areas, and walkways are being constructed by towns.
2. Enhancing public transit: Modernizing the infrastructure of public transportation can lessen the need for private vehicles; which helps to cut down on air pollution and traffic jams.
3. Offering public amenities that promote social contact and enhance people's physical and emotional wellbeing is the third tactic.
4. Remodeling historical buildings: By being preserved and updated, historical structures draw more visitors while preserving their cultural character.
5. Development of Digital Infrastructure: More digital infrastructure would improve municipal intelligence and urban services.

Results of Initiatives in Saudi Cities

1. Jeddah: Converting dilapidated structures into tourist attractions in an effort to boost the local economy and sense of cultural identity.
2. Medina: according to Vision 2030, aims to enhance living circumstances by constructing public buildings, open spaces, and updated infrastructure.
3. Riyadh: The park and sports facility provision of the city has undergone considerable improvements, with an emphasis on sustainability and raising living conditions.

Four Main Takeaways from the Experiences

This section provides a summary of the main ideas behind human-centered urban planning based on worldwide experiences. These recommendations will improve the quality of life for residents as well as urban sustainability. It covers a wide range of subjects, including enhancing public transportation, promoting cycling, establishing green areas, and emphasizing general quality of life. The foundational aspects that are visually portrayed in the following image, which highlights these concepts and their connected sub-points, can serve as a guide for urban development projects.
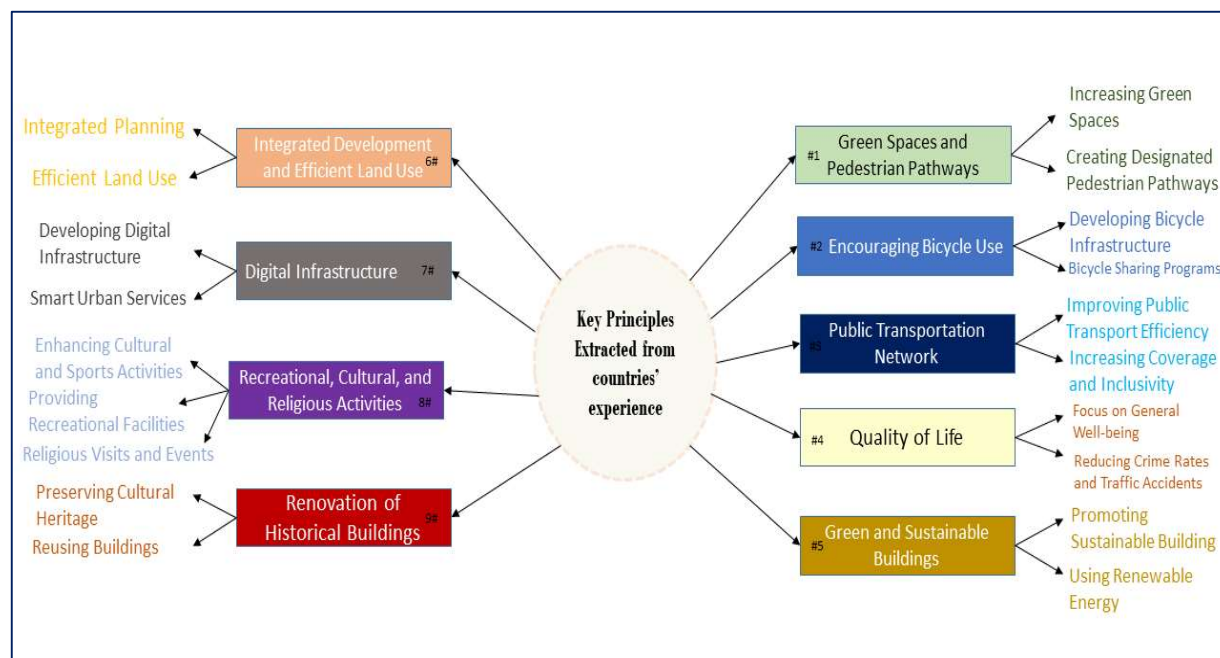
Diagram 1 presents the lessons obtained from experiences.
Source: The effort of researchers.

Study Area: The Old City of Najaf

Introduction to Najaf Governorate

Overview of Najaf Governorate

Situated in the southwest of the country, the Najaf Governorate is one of the most significant religious and cultural governorates in Iraq. The governorate covers an area of approximately 28,824 square kilometers, bordered to the north by the governorates of Karbala and Babylon, to the east by the governorate of Qadisiyyah, to the south by the governorate of Muthanna, and the west by Iraq's border with Saudi Arabia. [12]

Geographical Location and Climate

Najaf is uniquely situated on the central Iraqi plateau near the Euphrates River, making it strategically and economically significant. The climate in Najaf is desert-like, with high temperatures during the summer, reaching over 40 degrees Celsius, and cooler temperatures in the winter, dropping below 10 degrees Celsius. Rainfall is sparse and occurs mainly during the winter months. [13]

Demographics and Economy

The governorate of Najaf is home to about 1.5 million people. There are numerous communities and religious groups represented within the governorate's inhabitants. The three primary pillars of the local economy are trade, agriculture, and religious tourism, which is a substantial source of revenue for the governorate. [14]

Religious and Cultural Significance

Najaf is a major Islamic religious center due to the Holy Shrine of Imam Ali, the first Imam of the Shia Twelver. The city's prominence as a religious and tourist attraction is increased by the millions of tourists and pilgrims who visit it every year. Najaf serves as a hub for education and culture, housing a

number of religious schools and libraries. [15]
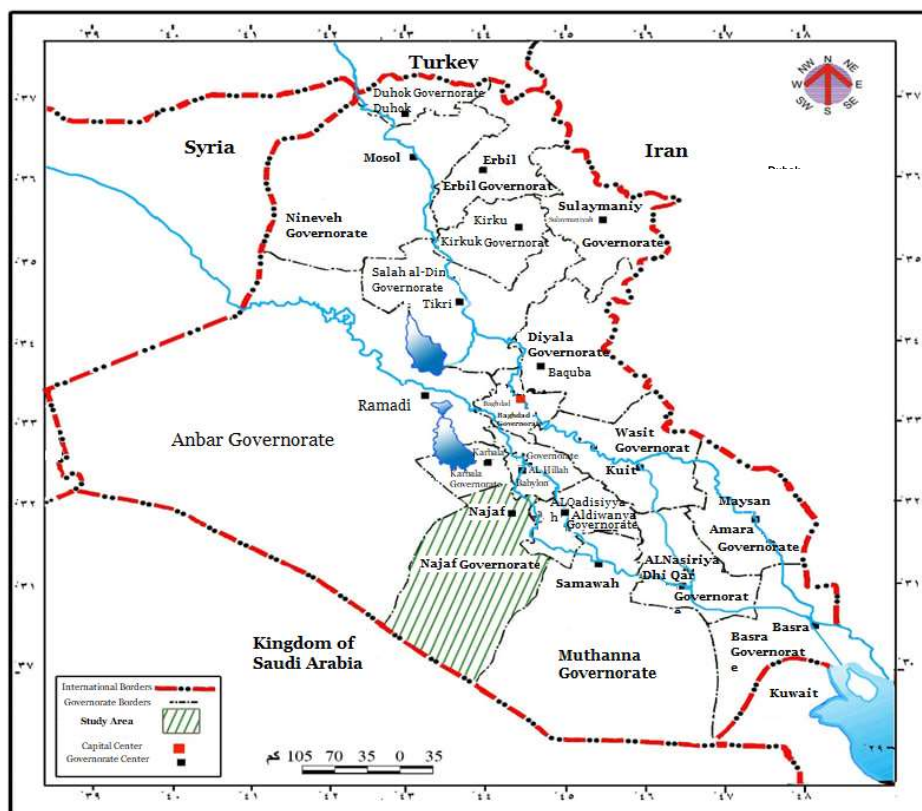
Map 1 The Najaf Governorate's location about Iraq
Source: General Authority for Survey

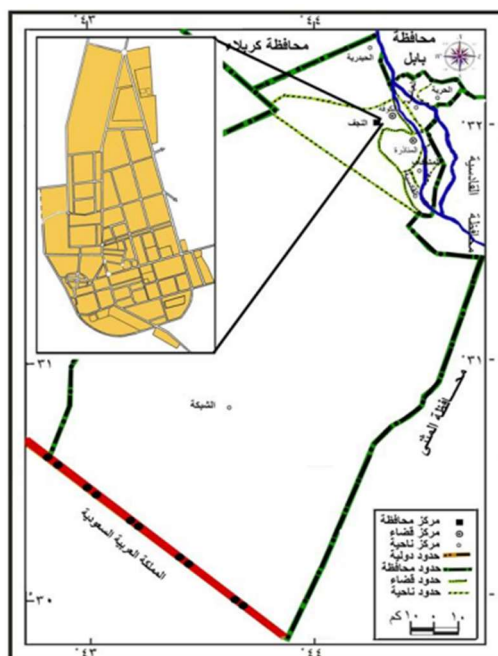## Old City of Najaf

Overview of Old City

Najaf's Old City is the historical and religious center of the governorate, The Holy Shrine of Imam Ali is one of the significant historical and religious sites in this region; Old City is distinguished by its winding lanes, old marketplaces, and historic buildings that showcase the region's rich architectural and cultural history [16].

The Holy Shrine of Imam Ali and Surrounding Areas

Old City's focal point and primary religious site is the shrine of Imam Ali. It is surrounded by a number of historic markets, the most well-known of which is the Grand Market, a significant hub for city commerce [17]. Numerous historical and religious sites, such as the Safi Al-Safa Shrine and the shrine of Imam Zain Al-Abidin, line the streets that encircle the shrine, such as Al-Tusi Street and Al-Soor Street [18].

Challenges and Opportunities

Numerous social, economic, and environmental issues confront the Old City. Congestion, a lack of green space, and pollution are some of the environmental problems. Unplanned urban expansion and rapid population growth are social difficulties, and unemployment and poverty are economic ones. However, there are many opportunities to improve urban planning in the Old City through current and future projects, government and community initiatives, and the use of modern technology in urban planning. [19]

Map 2 Location of the holy city of Najaf from the governorate
Source: General Directorate of Urban Planning
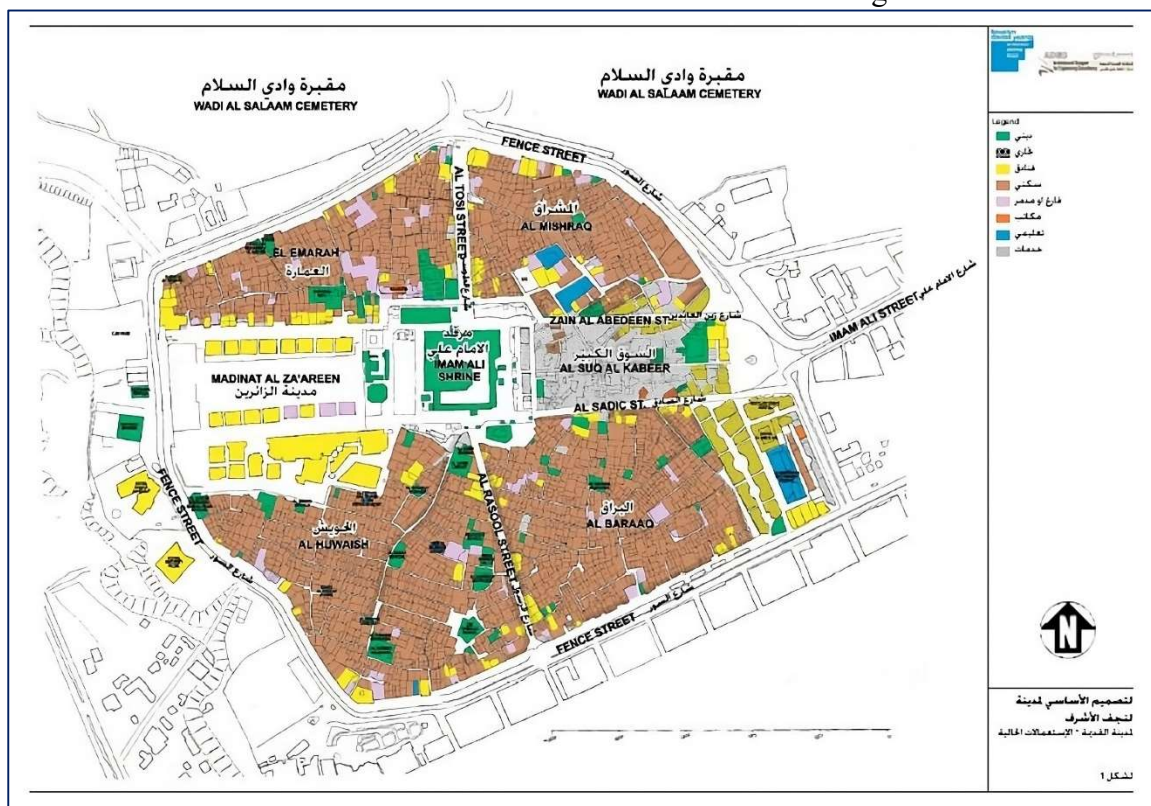
Map 3 the basic plan for the city of Najaf
Source: General Directorate of Urban Planning

Results and statistical data analysis

To understand the impact of various urban factors on achieving the humanization of cities and enhancing

overall citizen satisfaction, a survey was conducted covering a set of key indicators such as green spaces, infrastructure, security levels, and social activities. These indicators were evaluated using a Likert scale ranging from 'Very Poor' to 'Very Good'.

The survey aims to assess how these indicators contribute to improving quality of life and creating an urban environment that fosters belonging and social interaction. The table below summarizes the participants' responses for each urban indicator, and these data will be used in a statistical analysis to evaluate the impact of each factor on overall citizen satisfaction.

These results will be analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis to determine the extent to which each of these indicators influences urban development in line with the concept of humanizing cities.

Descriptive Analysis of Urban Indicators :(Table 1)

1. Green Space Ratio:

   o Mean: 2.43, Mode: "Poor", Standard Deviation: 10.20

   o The analysis reveals a significant deficiency in green spaces, with most respondents rating it poorly. Increasing green spaces is essential for enhancing environmental quality and residents' well-being.

2. Impact of Green Spaces on Quality of Life:

   o Mean: 2.88, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 10.20

   o Although respondents view green spaces as moderately influencing their quality of life, further improvements in these areas could result in a more substantial impact.

3. Bicycle Path Length:

   o Mean: 2.2, Mode: "Poor", Standard Deviation: 12.25

   o The low score highlights a severe lack of dedicated cycling paths, indicating the need for expanding this infrastructure to promote sustainable transportation.

4. Pedestrian Walkway Quality:

   o Mean: 2.39, Mode: "Poor", Standard Deviation: 11.03

   o The results show dissatisfaction with the current state of pedestrian walkways, underlining the need for significant upgrades to improve walkability and safety.

5. Pedestrian Walkway Coverage:

   o Mean: 3.06, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 9.27

   o While the availability of pedestrian walkways is deemed acceptable, there is still room for improvement, especially in high-density areas.

6. Public Transportation Dependency:

   o Mean: 2.83, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 12.49

   o Public transportation is considered moderately effective, though its efficiency and reliability require significant improvements to meet residents' daily needs.

7. Public Transportation Efficiency:

    o   Mean: 2.56, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 14.70

    o   Respondents expressed concerns about the efficiency of public transportation, highlighting the need for system upgrades to ensure it becomes a more viable option.

8. General Happiness and Well-Being:

    o   Mean: 3.06, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 11.66

    o   Residents report moderate satisfaction with their overall happiness and well-being, suggesting that targeted urban improvements could boost these levels.

9. Crime and Traffic Accident Rates:

    o   Mean: 2.56, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 14.70

    o   Safety concerns, particularly regarding crime and traffic accidents, require urgent attention to improve public safety and quality of life.

10. Personal Safety:

    o   Mean: 3.06, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 9.27

    o   The average rating for personal safety suggests that while conditions are acceptable, enhanced security measures are necessary to improve residents' confidence in public spaces.

11. Public Lighting Systems:

    o   Mean: 3.06, Mode: "Average", Standard Deviation: 11.66

    o   The current state of public lighting is deemed acceptable, though further enhancements could improve night-time safety and visibility.

12. Restored Historic Buildings:

    o   Mean: 3.5, Mode: "Very Good", Standard Deviation: 10.95

    o   Positive feedback on the restoration of historic buildings highlights successful efforts in preserving cultural heritage, with room for further expansion.

13. Solar Energy Use in Public Buildings:

    o   Mean: 3.6, Mode: "Very Good", Standard Deviation: 10.49

    o   Solar energy adoption in public buildings is well-received, but continued investment is necessary to expand the use of renewable energy across the city.

14. Organization of Religious and Social Events:

- Mean: 4.46, Mode: "Excellent", Standard Deviation: 25.78

- The organization of religious and social events received a very high rating, reflecting the importance of these events in fostering social interaction and preserving cultural and religious identity within the community.

15. Interaction between Cultural and Religious Events:

- Mean: 4.32, Mode: "Excellent", Standard Deviation: 23.21

- The interaction between cultural and religious events plays a significant role in enhancing social cohesion among city residents. The results highlight the importance of continuing to support these events to achieve better cultural integration.

Table 1. Responses obtained from a survey

Question	Very Poor (1)	Poor (2)	Average (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	Total	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
Green space ratio	10	30	20	10	0	70	2.43	10.20	10
Impact of green spaces on life quality	5	25	30	15	5	80	2.88	10.20	15
Length of bicycle paths	15	35	20	5	0	75	2.2	12.25	15
Quality of pedestrian walkways	12	30	25	8	0	75	2.39	11.03	12
Pedestrian walkway ratio	5	25	30	20	10	90	3.06	9.27	20
Dependency on public transportation	5	30	35	15	5	90	2.83	12.49	15
Efficiency of public transportation	10	30	40	10	0	90	2.56	14.70	10
Overall happiness and well-being	5	20	35	25	5	90	3.06	11.66	20
Crime and traffic accident rate	10	30	40	10	0	90	2.56	14.70	10
Personal safety	5	25	30	20	10	90	3.06	9.27	20
Public lighting systems	5	20	35	25	5	90	3.06	11.66	20
Number of restored historic buildings	0	20	30	30	20	100	3.5	10.95	20
Impact of historic buildings on tourism	0	15	25	35	25	100	3.7	11.83	25
Use of solar energy in public buildings	5	10	30	30	25	100	3.6	10.49	25
Number of integrated residential and commercial projects	5	20	30	30	15	100	3.3	9.49	20
Employment opportunities available to residents	10	30	40	10	0	90	2.56	14.70	10

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Use of digital technology in urban services	10	30	40	10	0	90	2.56	14.70	10
Improvements in public service quality due to digital infrastructure	5	15	25	30	20	95	3.47	8.60	20
Social and community events	5	20	30	25	10	90	3.17	9.27	20
Resident participation in events	8	10	15	20	47	100	3.88	14.13	15
Accessibility to health and educational services	7	12	13	18	50	100	3.92	15.40	13
Accessibility of public facilities for people with disabilities	3	6	10	10	71	100	4.4	25.64	10
Provision of facilities for people with disabilities	2	5	8	15	70	100	4.46	25.37	8
Organization of religious events annually	1	6	10	12	71	100	4.46	25.78	10
Participation rate in religious events	2	7	9	12	70	100	4.41	25.21	9
Diversity of religious events	3	6	10	11	70	100	4.39	25.16	10
Availability of infrastructure for religious events	4	5	7	14	70	100	4.41	25.24	7
Impact of religious events on social interaction	3	7	10	13	69	102	4.35	24.52	10
Interaction between religious and cultural events	4	6	10	15	66	101	4.32	23.21	10
Government support for religious events	3	7	10	13	66	99	4.33	23.34	10
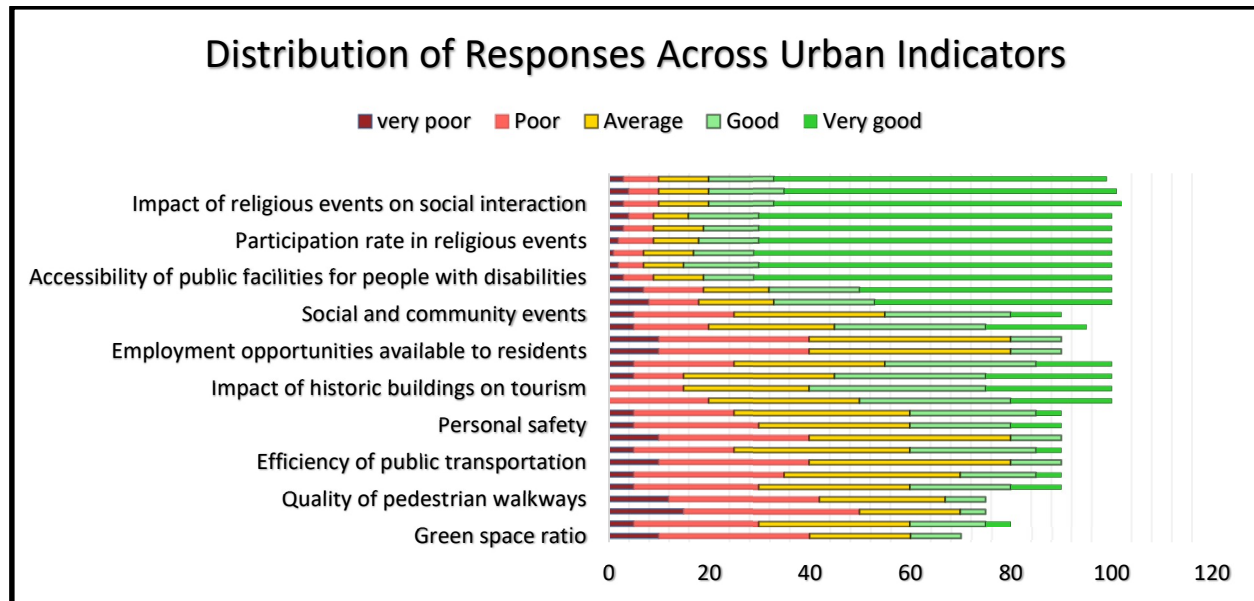
Figure 1. Distribution of Survey Responses across Urban Indicators

Analysis of the Distribution of Responses Across Urban Indicators:

The chart illustrates the distribution of participants' responses across various urban indicators, reflecting a significant variation in the evaluations. It is observed that indicators related to religious and social infrastructure, such as "interaction between religious and cultural events" and "availability of infrastructure for religious events," received the highest ratings, with most responses concentrated in the "Good" and "Very Good" categories. On the other hand, indicators related to green infrastructure and pedestrian pathways, such as "green space ratio" and "length of bicycle paths," received lower ratings, with most responses falling into the "Poor" and "Very Poor" categories, indicating clear gaps in these areas. Indicators related to public transportation, such as "efficiency of public transportation" and "crime and traffic accident rate," also recorded below-average ratings, suggesting a strong need for improvements in these areas.

Conclusions:

1. Balancing Urban Growth and Cultural Identity Preservation:

Based on the case study of Najaf, the research concludes that achieving a balance between urban expansion and the preservation of cultural identity is key to the success of any urban planning project. Preserving the cultural and religious heritage of Najaf enhances residents' sense of belonging and strengthens the local economy through religious tourism.

2. The Importance of Sustainable Urban Planning for Humanizing Cities:

The study concludes that integrating environmental and social aspects, such as green spaces and infrastructure for bikes and pedestrians, is necessary for sustainable urban development, which emphasizes human-centered design. These components are essential for enhancing life quality in a long-term way. Without these elements, cities could experience social and environmental problems that have

a detrimental effect on the well-being of their citizens.

3. Challenges Related to Community Participation:

Community involvement is essential to urban planning, but there are substantial obstacles to getting people involved in the decision-making process, especially in places where political or community participation is not ingrained. However, such participation is essential to ensure that community desires are taken into account during urban planning.

4. The Role of Cultural and Religious Events in Humanizing Cities:

The study concludes that cultural and religious activities significantly improve social connection and a sense of belonging, which contributes to the humanization of cities. By supporting these activities, communities come together and humanized cities that celebrate their population's diversity are developed.

5. Unplanned Urban Expansion and Its Impact on Humanization:

The study highlights the major threat that unplanned urban growth poses to the creation of humanized cities. Pollution and a lack of public spaces are two social and environmental issues that worsen the quality of life. These issues are exacerbated by haphazard planning. Cities must enact more regulated and organized planning regulations to address this issue.

Final Conclusion:
• The study shows that communities like Najaf may achieve significant progress in humanizing their urban environments by putting into practice an integrated human-centered strategy that fosters social and environmental sustainability while taking into account cultural and religious past.
• According to participant evaluations, the city's social and religious infrastructure indicators are its strongest points; public transit and green infrastructure, on the other hand, are significant shortcomings that need immediate attention.

Recommendations:

1. Improve Green Spaces and Pedestrian Infrastructure:
    - The city should enhance the percentage of green spaces to improve the environment and health of its residents.
    - Improve sidewalks and pedestrian walkways to make them safer and more aesthetically beautiful while promoting the use of eco-friendly forms of transportation.
2. Develop Public Transportation:
    - Increase the efficiency of public transportation by improving scheduling and adding more cars to prevent crowding.
    - Provide discounts on fares or incentive programs to entice residents to use public transportation.

3. Enhance Personal Safety and Public Services:
    - To reinforce security protocols and augment law enforcement's presence in residential areas to enhance residents' sense of safety.

- In highly populated areas, modernize the infrastructure supporting public lighting to provide safety and visibility at night.

4. Preserve Cultural and Historical Heritage:
   - Expand efforts to repair historic buildings to preserve the city's past and strengthen cultural identity.
5. Encourage the Use of Solar Energy:
   - To encourage environmental sustainability and lessen dependency on fossil fuels, increase the usage of solar energy in public buildings.
6. Continue Supporting Social and Religious Events:
   - Continue to encourage variety in the planning and hosting of social and religious events to strengthen the city's cultural and religious character and to stimulate social interaction.

Future Research Directions:

1. Studying the Impact of Technology on the Humanization of Cities:
   - This research aims to investigate how contemporary technology, such as smart cities, contributes to the increased humanization of metropolitan settings.
   - Key Aspects:
     - Examine how digital tools might enhance quality of life, such as smart infrastructure monitoring and applications for transportation planning.
     - Examine how smart city technology can improve the way people engage with their urban surroundings and feel more a part of the city.

2. Evaluating the Impact of Community Participation in Different Stages of Urban Planning:
   - This study aims to examine how community involvement affects urban planning at different stages, such as design, implementation, and evaluation.
   - Key Aspects:
     - Examine the impact that such involvement can have on project outcomes and the development of more human-centered cities.
     - Examine ways to increase community involvement so that people can voice their wants and ideas for urban development.

3. International Comparisons of Humanized Cities:
   - This study aims to compare cities across the globe that have effectively implemented the humanization principles.
   - Key Aspects:
     - Study at South American, Asian, and European cities that have successfully incorporated humanization ideas.
     - Conclude the lessons learned that can help Najaf and other Iraqi cities enhance their human-centered design and urban planning.

4. Planning to Preserve Cultural Identity in Historical Cities:
   - Develop urban policies to maintain cultural identity while merging historical landmarks with contemporary development.
   - Key Aspects:

- Examine how urban development plans can incorporate cultural and historical heritage preservation measures.
- Make use of contemporary technology like digital preservation and adaptive design to respect historical settings and strengthen the city's unique cultural identity.

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