



Tourist planning and its impact on the development of the Al-Najaf Sea: a vision for urban and regional planning

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Abstract

The tourism movement in Al-Najaf Governorate has witnessed significant development after 2003 in light of the development of human and developmental awareness and the improvement of quality of life linked to various elements, including the importance of tourism. The research showed that Al-Najaf enjoys a developed and modern internal land transport network that connects various parts of the city and its commercial and tourist centers. The developmental tourist planning focused on the civil aspect and the essential components of the environment, working to create areas of attraction and services that match the volume of tourist landmarks in Al-Najaf, which are intended for future development to suit their importance and size in order to connect the elements to provide better services and make the Al-Najaf Lowland an internal and external economic tourist center to expand the economy and improve the community's welfare economically, by providing job opportunities and marketing the touristic products and the natural and historical tourist areas present at the lowland.

The main problem of the research is that (the Al-Najaf Lowland represents a multidimensional tourist center that requires tourist planning and the development of its natural and heritage resources), and the tourism movement and its development help to increase the structure of tourism development, activate it, and raise its functional level with the availability of job opportunities and community prosperity.

Keywords: Tourism planning, Ecological diversity, Investment, Biosphere, Hotel, Nature reserve

Introduction

The research problem

Each research has a major problem on which the results and recommendations depend. The main problem of the research was (that the Najaf Sea depression represents a multidimensional tourist center, and it needs tourism planning and the development of its natural and heritage resources), and the research questions were as follows:

- What do we mean by tourism planning? What are its objectives?
- What is the nature of the Najaf Sea depression and its natural resources?
- To what extent could the Investment Authority offer investment projects for the Najaf Sea depression?

Research hypothesis

The main hypothesis of the research is based on the fact that there are challenges facing natural tourism, especially in the Najaf Sea depression, due to the strength of religious tourism and the presence of natural resources in the depression area that hinder the process of tourism planning for it).

The sub-hypotheses are:

- Religious tourism has a great impact on tourism planning.
- The presence of natural resources and historical monuments at the depression.
- The media had no role in marketing the natural tourist areas of Najaf.

Research objective

The research aims to:

- Diagnosis of the nature of the Najaf Sea depression and its natural resources.
- Identify the role of the Investment Authority and development decision-makers in the type of projects that are offered to invest in the low economically and develop the surrounding area.
- The research represents a practical and systematic approach for those seeking knowledge about the Najaf Sea depression and the projects prepared for its development.

The importance of research

This enabled tourism in all its forms as an economic base for countries in the era that provides the economic cycle that is reflected in the increase in the number and quality of infrastructure, which is an effective element in providing job opportunities and the prosperity of the local community economically, culturally and socially, and the Najaf depression is a natural element that has the elements of tourism in it if tourism planning is used to be a tourist landmark and an economic tributary for the state and society and a recreational center for tourists.

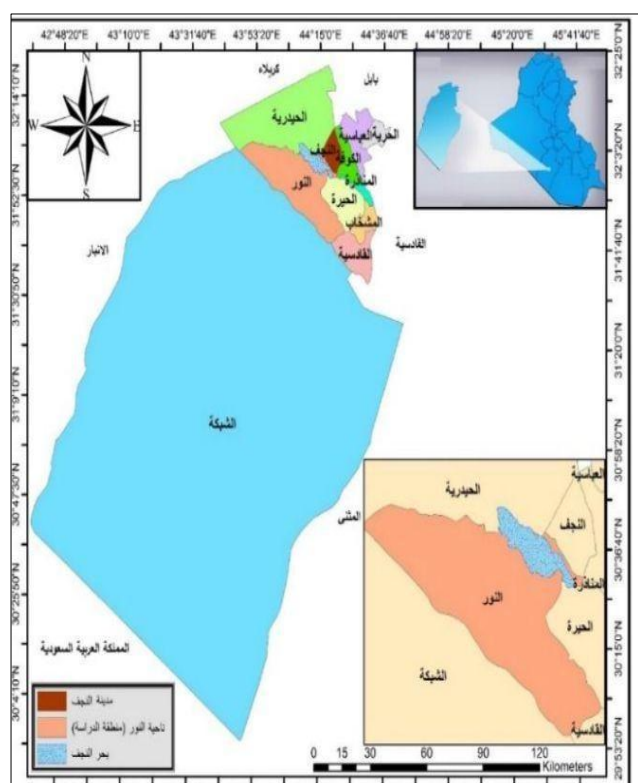
Research methodology

The research relied on the historical approach to determine the tourism planning approach, its objectives, principles, foundations and levels, which are determined according to its

importance, in addition to the analytical approach to diagnose the nature of the Najaf Sea depression, analyze the types of natural resources surrounding it, and analyze the tables and data that have been accessed.

Research limits

The depression is located in the central and southern parts of Iraq and extends longitudinally from the north of the city of Najaf to the southwest of the city of Al-Hira the depression is bordered by the Wadi Al-Salam cemetery from the eastern side and the agricultural lands of Al-Hira district on the southern side and from the southwest the strategic line borders it, and its width is 19 km at the southeast, but it shrinks to 15 km at the center to cut 40 How much from northwest of Najaf to southwest of the city of Al-Hira on the right side of the road linking the two cities, and astronomically located between two latitudes (432)– 33 45 (north and longitude (6 – 44 – 44 – 29 (east and according to map 1).



Source: Jamal Baqir Mutlaq, Flood and Flood Disaster Management in the Najaf Sea Region, *Journal of Geographical Research*, Issue 27, ص 39.

Fig 1: Indicate the study area

A) Tourism planning

Concept and objectives

a) The concept of tourism planning

Tourism planning is defined as an organized sequence of operations and actions designed to achieve either a specific goal or a set of interrelated goals. It is a set of intentional, represented and legislated interim procedures that aim to exploit and optimize the use of tourist attractions (climate, place and maximum benefit) with follow-up, guidance and control of this exploitation to keep it within the desired circle and prevent the occurrence of negative results and effects

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resulting from it. Tourism planning is defined as the pivotal intervention to determine the specific future dimensions of the tourism sector and direct the variables affecting the sector through policies taken by the public sector or local and regional organizations to ensure the achievement of sustainable tourism development goals and meet challenges.

Tourism planning appeared and developed with the growth of tourism as a behavioral civilizational phenomenon on the one hand and an economic and social phenomenon on the other hand. Tourism occupied a place in the economies of countries because of its economic, social and urban effects, so it required the adoption of the method of tourism planning to achieve the maximum degree of economic benefit, especially after the impact of tourism as an industry and a basic source of income for many countries of the year, it is development planning based on achieving optimal use of resources. With planning, the concerned authorities can draw a future picture of tourism activity to achieve development. Organized and comprehensive tourism includes all branches of tourism activity and tourist areas of the country.

Therefore, it is not limited to the work of government institutions but is the result of joint work between government agencies, the private sector, tourism service providers and even consumers of tourism services.

It started from the stage of developing the plan and formulating goals until the implementation and application of tourism planning policies on reality, and therefore the success of the strategic planning program is linked to economic activity at all levels and is linked to the environment that provides elements of tourist attractions such as corridors, beaches, forests, civilized, historical and religious areas, and tourism planning is associated with those going to the tourist area and preparing them with a set of information, maps and plans that belong to the area to be visited because of its impact on the impact of showing the role of institutions in all its forms by paying attention to educating the tourist, which is part of From the promotion and marketing operations in a way that achieves economic, tourism and entertainment goals, and also the role of tourism planning in the flow of foreign exchange, the more successful the planning goals, the more it helps the flow of hard currency to the state, which works to support the economy, provide job opportunities and provide an economic cycle that has a role in the development of urbanization in all its directions ^[1]. The success of any country's tourism planning depends on:

- Tourism planning and programs should be part of the state's national planning.
- Tourism planning should be taken as a strategic development option.
- Promoting the tourism industry to be an integral part of tourism activity.

b) Tourism planning objectives

The strategic objectives of tourism planning in Iraq, in general, and the province of Najaf, in particular, were of particular priority in the projects that were put forward to invest in tourist areas in all their natural, civilized, religious and historical

forms. The Najaf Sea represented the interface of natural tourism in Najaf, which presented to him several investment projects for the state and the private sector. Those projects have economic, social, institutional and sustainability goals.

Economic Objectives: The Investment Commission in Najaf Governorate seeks to transform the Najaf Sea region into a tourist area full of pioneering projects that it would like to plan, which in turn will:

- Expanding the contribution of tourism to the GDP in the province.
- Increase foreign currency cash income for Iraq and the province with support for payment features.
- Enhancing state revenues from taxes and fees.
- Increased tourist numbers imply a rich and multidirectional economic cycle.
- Expanding the tourism product and its accompanying tourism activities.

Social objectives: Tourism development plays a role in bringing about social transformations in a way that preserves the social and cultural patterns and traditions of the population within societies, in addition to developing the capabilities and cadres working in tourism in line with the provision of appropriate services and line with the goal of the system.

- It is necessary to organize and agree with the public and private tourism sectors in providing their services to tourists.
- There should be consistency between tourism and economic activities in an integrated manner.

Successful tourism planning has important specifications as flexible, continuous and gradual planning that accepts modification and change if required based on development and training. It must be comprehensive planning in all aspects of tourism development, as it integrates with the elements of the local environment and is affected by them. It provides integrated tourist attractions with sustainable resources to make tourism an integrated economic sector. It is a system that has specific inputs and outputs that can be directed to achieve the desired goals [2].

Social associated with a law that protects society may not fit into the nature of customs and traditions.

Tourism has a role in social prosperity because visitors spend money that has a role in increasing income, providing job opportunities and developing services, and this is in line with any form of deterioration or social exploitation if we work that tourism has a role in community cultural enrichment and heritage promotion. It is a basic motivation for preserving natural and civilized areas.

c) Sustainability goals

They are goals related to preserving and protecting environmental diversity from degradation. The city of Najaf is witnessing two million visits and the majority of tourists go to religious and cultural monuments in addition to standing on the Najaf Sea depression and seeing its natural features. Tourism planning has a role in the urban development of the tourist facilities contained in Najaf. The joining parties are keen to

prevent any change in the natural environment data or depletion, so the Najaf Investment Commission is working to launch investment projects that work on the sustainability of the Najaf Sea region because of its diversity. Multiple ecology, agricultural and irrigated land and other natural resources.

d) Institutional objectives

These goals include technical aspects related to the ability of the agencies responsible for providing standards and technical specifications to control and direct tourism activities in line with the goals of national development to achieve harmony between the tourism sectors and its activities and other sectors, and this requires the establishment of new institutions and the issuance of legislation and regulations related to tourism and credit facilities from granting loans, investments and land use operations and determining a section of tourism investment according to the laws of familiar tools and municipalities, all of which require the development of policies based on achieving the desired goals of providing safety. Economic that can compete and develop and provide benefits for a long time and, in turn, will provide prosperity and well-being for the local community due to the economic growth provided by tourism revenues, the number of jobs, raising the level of wages and improving the efficiency of the workforce in tourism. One of the required goals is to distribute the economic and social benefits of tourism on a large scale to provide job opportunities and improve incomes, and this either raises the quality of life and the welfare of society, and this is what further enhances the historical and civilized commitment and work on the sustainability of resources and their optimal investment by State institutions that support the preservation of heritage and cultural areas and the protection and purity of the environment. There are many national, regional and local tourism plans.

They are interrelated development areas, but economic considerations are the important element that attracts attention at all levels, such as interest in infrastructure improvements such as transportation and public utilities; from this, the city of Najaf will witness an increasing number of bridges and tunnels to reduce traffic jams, especially on religious occasions, in addition to the development of infrastructure for the tourism sector, so hotels with religious construction and tourist attractions have emerged with their quality.

B) Najaf sea and investment projects

a) Nature Najaf Sea

Najaf depression is a submerged body of water formed by the factors of internal erosion that led to rock formations called Baltirat, which are high hills exposed to erosion factors left their effects in the form of which the depression chasm line collapsed occurred due to the movement of refraction of the ground led to its subsidence and feeding channels from successive depressions, which helped the rise of water and its slope from the Euphrates to the broad depressions connected to the city of Al-Hira and the Najaf Sea as shown in the picture (No. 2).

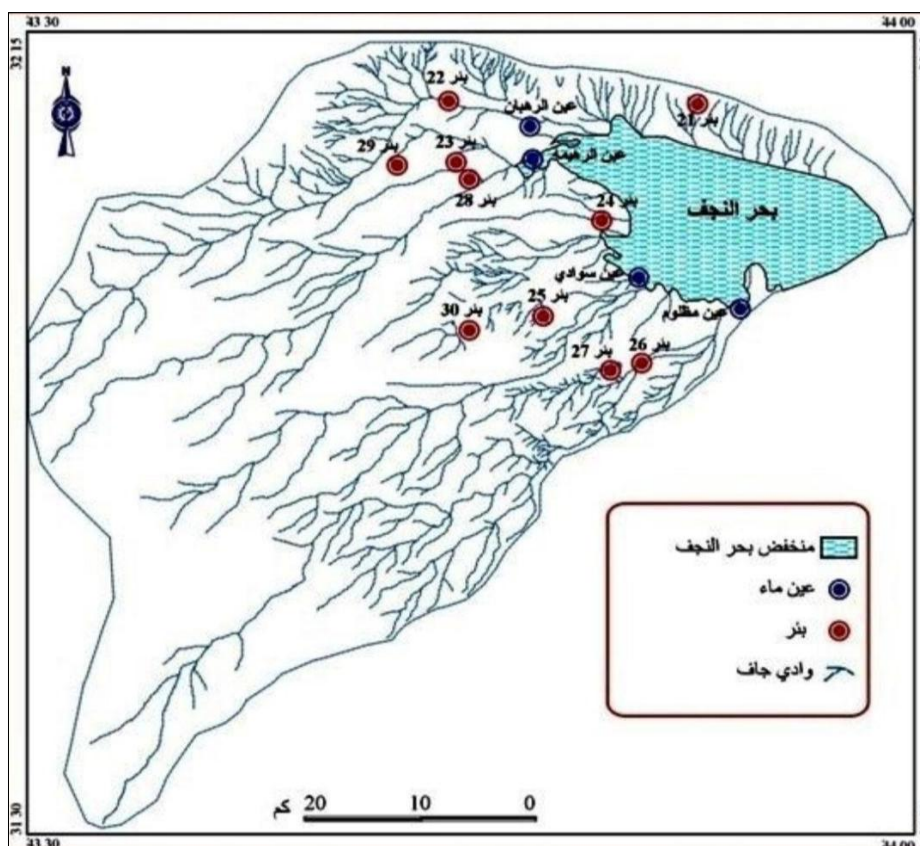


Source: Image posted on the Internet

Fig 2: The study area shows

And differed studies on the naming of the sea called the Sea of Confusion and the Sea of Panicia and finally the Sea of Najaf and had an important commercial and administrative

dimension during the rule of the state of Manathira was ships and ships bring products from India and China across the Arabian Gulf to the ports of the Euphrates River in the city of Samawa and then to the Sea of Najaf and the area of the Najaf Sea was much larger than what we see now was Numan bin Munther sitting on the balcony of the Palace of Khorang, which is the center of Najaf The ships are seen on the one hand and the agricultural land on the other side, in addition to the group of churches and monastery in the Najaf Sea region (Mazloun and Al-Rahba Hayadia area) and are called monks, which still exist until now, and the groundwater from the springs and springs is the main source of water resources in the Najaf Sea region, such as Ain Al-Hayadiya, Wadi Al-Monks, Ain Jawad, Ain Abbasiya, Ain Al-Rahima, Al-Azzia and Al-Asawid, Others, in addition to wells of public benefit that are exploited in agricultural production and local consumption, such as the Al-Nouri well, the northern and Al-Madhawiya supports, and other projects established by the Public Authority for Groundwater in Najaf as shown in map No. 3).



Source: General Survey Authority, 1/50,000 scale topographic maps.

Fig 3: Showing water eyes in the study area

The Low Sea extends for an estimated distance) 303.3 km2 (within the administrative boundaries of the centre of Najaf district, which is 5 km away from the depression, and runs in the territory of the Najaf Sea main streams branching from the stream of Jamat branching from the Shatt Kufa and are the streams of Sudair and Numani, Budiriya and the table of fat, which is bordered from the eastern side, but 70% of the feed of the Najaf Sea is from the incoming and outgoing trocars from the side of confusion at the time of planting in addition to the www.synstojournals.com/multi

water represented by the eyes and springs near the surface that It is found at a depth of 3-7 feet and is reliable for agricultural production and is the most water-intensive in the western plateau region.

The geology of the Najaf Sea is divided into ancient rock formations dating back to the era of (Miocene and Eocene), a structural depression that expands due to weathering factors There are economic tourism elements in the Najaf Sea region that have a role in tourism planning, and the Directorate of

Agriculture in Najaf had a role in protecting those components and investing in them through the establishment of a large and multidimensional nature reserve that has worked on:

- Allocating 5 km² in the Najaf Sea region for the cultivation of fruit trees of various types, such as olives, figs, irons, pomegranates and palms of excellent types.
- Allocating 70,000 dunums in the area of a network for investment and cultivation with grains such as wheat and barley while leaving 250 dunums for the state to cultivate them with grains as well.
- Allocating 3,000 dunums for growing vegetables and crops for daily consumption.
- Lands overlooking the Najaf Sea have been allocated for the construction and construction of tourist hotels in the Safi Al-Safa area, and lands have been allocated for the establishment of tourist and residential complexes.
- Specific areas have been allocated and represented by the penalty, which includes hills and plateaus overlooking the Najaf Sea, to establish gardens and a modern game city.
- Protection of mud-flooded plants, many of which are located in the shallow areas of the Najaf Sea depression, as shown in Figure No. 4).
- Protecting multiple livestock, there are 500 birds and ecological diversity according to the indicators of ecological diversity of the Ministry of Environment, in addition to the diverse livestock on which the region's inhabitants depend in their lives and trade.
- The Directorate of Agriculture in Najaf allocated land at a rate of) 25-50 km² (for agricultural engineers to exploit and cultivate according to contracts, rents and investment opportunities.



Alia Hussein Salman Environmental characteristics (natural and constructive) in the Najaf Sea depression and the possibilities of investing them in the establishment of the nature reserve, Journal of the Faculty of Arts - Ninth Issue - University of Dhi Qar - Iraq - 2013 - p 288

Fig 4: Showing aquatic plants in the study area

Since Najaf is a tourist destination for millions of visitors to visit Imam Ali (peace be upon him) and a group of shrines of saints and righteous and historical symbols, it is a city that has the elements of daily tourism that have a relationship with man and his faith and historical link, if we know that more than 25 countries around the world intend their residents to the city of Najaf annually and the duration of the visitors' stay is for a month or more, so development decision-makers should take

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the tourism industry and develop natural tourism to generate multi-type economic cycles that benefit the national and local economy.

b) Tourism investment projects in the Najaf Sea depression

The strategic objectives of tourism planning in Najaf Governorate are a priority to invest in the Najaf Sea depression with all its natural, heritage and population components and to make the region a tourist interface and an outlet for the city's residents and a tourist attraction for visitors.

It required the use of modern infrastructure related to tourism and presented it to companies and investors who submitted offers to start tourism, residential, commercial and service projects. The Chairman of the Najaf Investment Commission mentions that the Najaf Sea is a nature reserve, and the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Environment have developed tourism plans to invest in the area and establish projects commensurate with its low status. Among these projects that have been planned.

Establishing a tourist, residential, commercial and recreational city costing up to one billion dollars and then completing the plans was developed by the National Investment Authority, which is a strategic project within the standards of tourism planning. The projects will be presented to the Council of Ministers for a vote. The project will provide 20 thousand additional job opportunities to attract tourists and expatriates to visit the holy places, which increases local income in particular.

The project includes:

- The construction of eight thousand housing units of different sizes will be implemented, and some of them are in the process of construction.
- A network of roads and service projects.
- Gardens, recreational areas and public squares.
- Establishing an integrated sports city.
- The Directorate of Water Resources has developed a design to establish a tourist lake in the Najaf Sea area on an area of 40,000 dunums and cost 40 billion Iraqi dinars. However, it was not completed due to financial and administrative difficulties, the lake plan has been fully completed and the file has been submitted to the National Investment Commission. The lake's planning includes providing tourism services such as hotels, restaurants, and parks that make the Najaf Sea a destination for tourists. The tourism industry also has a role in achieving social and economic development and advancing the conservative economy.
- Investment in the Najaf desert, which is an area qualified for the tourism industry (tourist camping) by the residents of the city and the people of the center and south, it is economic tourism and has a cultural and social role.
- Attention to archaeological areas to be a tourist attraction for many of the world's population. The head of the Investment Authority in Najaf province states that the Najaf Sea depression, surrounded by churches, monasteries, temples and historical palaces, belongs to the

Kingdom of Al-Hira and before this, Najaf Governorate seeks to rehabilitate these urban treasures, which will provide a large economic base for the city and its workers after planning, investing and providing the necessary services.

The Investment Authority in Najaf confirmed that planning includes protecting livestock, increasing their number, preventing the process of hunting birds and other types of living organisms in the Najaf Sea depression and surrounding areas, and there was a project to establish dams in the village of Al-Aziya, Al-Rahima and Mazloum to face the floods.

Accordingly, the drawing of the planning board for the Najaf Depression has broad social dimensions in addition to the architectural aspect illustrates the relationship of water tourism for people in particular, and the city is clear in its religious, natural, cultural and historical dimensions, so tourism planning is responsible for investing this four-dimensional panel to be planning tourism role for the sustainability of such investment centers.

The end

Najaf Governorate represents a religious, natural and civilized tourist interface, and the Najaf Sea depression is the fulcrum of natural tourism in the city, including the vital and recreational field for the city's residents and visitors, and it is the only area to which the city opens up with green spaces, palm groves and agricultural lands, in addition to the multi-species ecological diversity, and in front of the urban development witnessed by the city, many of these species surrounding the sea began to fade, especially the archaeological areas that contain churches, temples and Historical areas, which have a historical heritage of humanity, and the depression represents an environment of ecological diversity in which a group of living organisms and many animals suffer from neglect and unstudied overfishing, and despite the investment projects that have been put forward to advance the tourism reality in the Najaf Sea region to be an economic resource for the state and the city, but the financial and administrative challenges face in the implementation of many of these projects and those challenges prevent investment resources better for the region to obtain A distinctive tourist site, these factors led to the decline in the feeding of the water channels of the sea, the decline in the water level in it and the high level of salinity despite the efforts of the Agriculture Authority Ltd. in Najaf, due to the importance of religious tourism and its diversity, the beginning of the agricultural lands surrounding the sea fading to contain residential complexes, and most importantly, tourism planning did not take its way to invest this site and prepare it and add modern tourism in the region, which has highly diverse potential. Accordingly, the researchers recommend the following:

- Development decision-makers in Najaf province should consider the completion of work in the tourist city, which is a residential, commercial and recreational city.
- There is a need to build a complex for tourist hotels overlooking the Najaf Sea to be a tourist attraction for visitors and residents of the city on all their occasions.

- Completion of the lake near the Najaf Sea, which represents a nature reserve and is a tributary of the Najaf Sea, the water corridor of the trowel of the water level branch of the Najaf Sea.
- The architecture of gardens and parks with modern models suits the modernity of the region's tourism planning.
- The Investment Authority shall complete the investment projects that have been offered and direct their investment by the residents of the city to have a role in economic and social development.
- Tourism planning will play a role in the Najaf Sea depression by building a low-cost tourism complex that provides 20,000 job opportunities while building community infrastructure and culture, especially if we take the development of vocational education and vocational institutes.

Extract

Tourism planning is a set of interim procedures that aim to achieve the optimal exploitation of the elements of tourist attractions available with follow-up, guidance and control of these exploitations to achieve the goals of tourism planning, and the Najaf Sea region has the elements of tourism that deserve to be developed and developed in an environment that is originally attractive to determine the specific future dimensions of the sector within urban and regional planning. The research problem culminated in the fact that the Najaf Sea region has tourism potential. Tourism planning must invest these elements to build an important economic base, and the research on such a subject has economic, social and administrative goals, in addition to the sustainability of resources and the development of tourism sector structures to suit and its importance to the region and its components.

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