

THINKING BEYOND 'ENGINES OF GROWTH: RE-CONCEPTUALIZATION URBAN PLANNING DISCOURSE IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Ring towns, twin-cities, city regions, peri-urban, intermediate cities and more, the vast nomenclature captures the unrelenting interest in secondary cities as 'engines of growth', capable of surmounting the challenges of urbanization in Pakistan. This conceptually-driven article examines the burgeoning interest in secondary cities and proposes alternate ways of thinking about such conurbations. It underscores the need to go beyond technocratic discourse and capitalist assumptions of infinite growth and modernization as conventionally applied in regional and urban planning discourse in Pakistan. The article calls for re-orienting planning discourse in Pakistan to incorporate the substantive theme of 'urbanism', which is crucial for comprehending how citizens experience urban life across a diverse and shifting landscape, where the city fades into the countryside, or where 'urban sprawl' and 'ribbon developments' defy categorization.