

# Vice Chancellor's Message

## How not to develop cities?

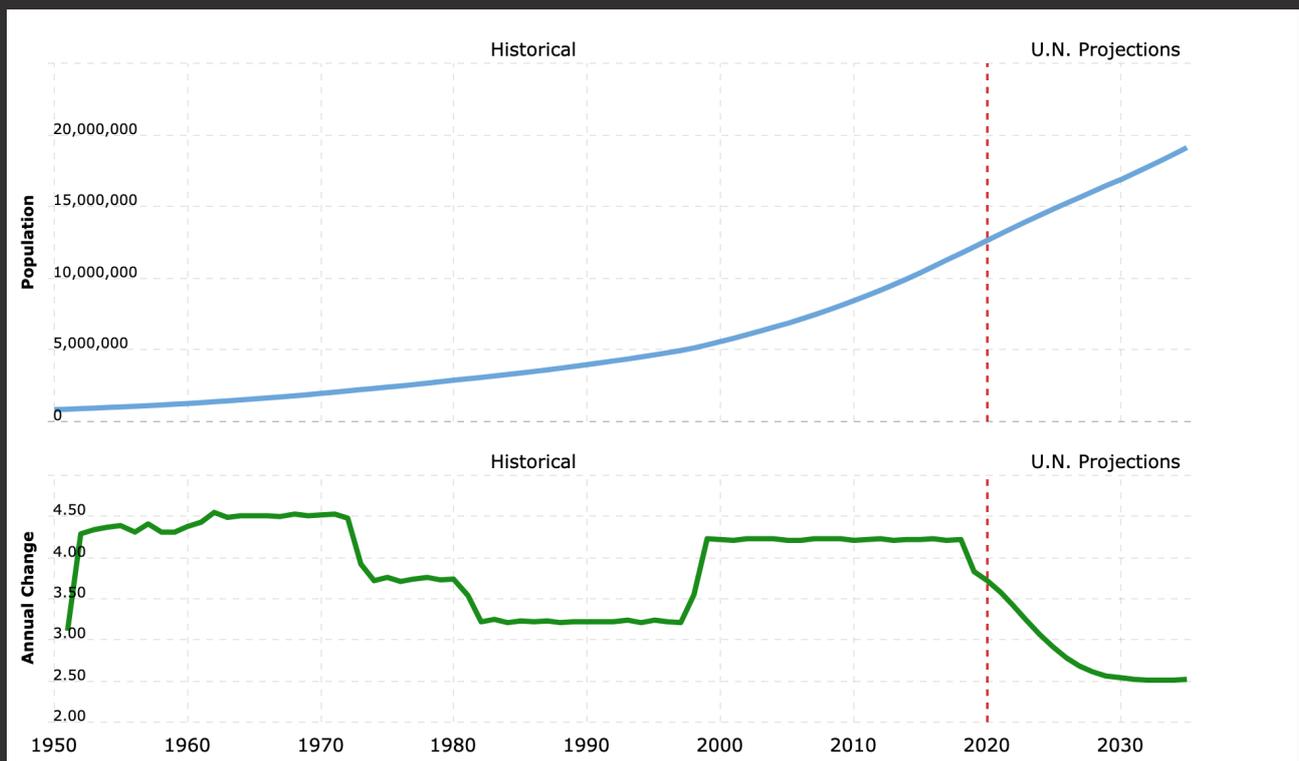
Once again, PIDE is providing you with substantive yet entertaining public policy thoughts, ideas and research for the curious in an enjoyable magazine. I congratulate the PIDE team on this issue which I hope will provoke you to join us in debating a better future.

The story of Pakistan's urban development illustrates very many faults: our lack of public sector capacity, the inability to develop local government, the intellectual inertia as well as the overwhelming elite capture. We remain besotted with 20th century central planning which meshes well with our inherited colonial extractive institutions. As a result, cities have been stifled through over-regulation.

A good crutch has been found in the early 20th century central planning paradigm which our centralized bureaucracy uses to keep cities overregulated. Outmoded plans are even used by courts to curb development (See <https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/Policy-Viewpoint-16.pdf>)

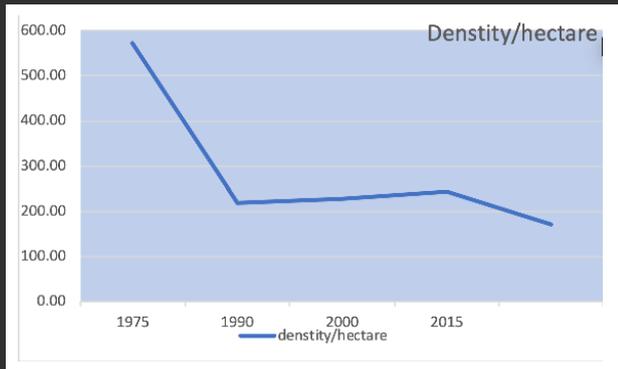
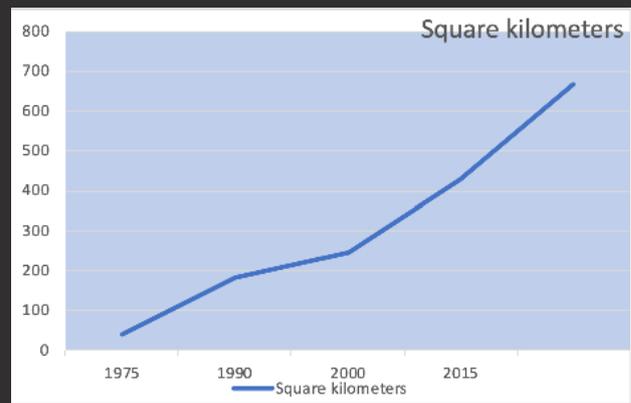
While this issue will give you details, let me illustrate the key points in three charts.

Lahore's population has grown from a few hundred thousand to 11 million in 2020. The annual rate of growth has been between 3-4%.



Meanwhile the area of Lahore has grown at a much faster pace. Available data suggests Lahore was 42 sq kilometers in 1975 and it is 688 sq kilometers in 2020—a growth rate of 6.3%.

As a result, population density of Lahore has declined opposite to what should be happening in a growing city. The density in 1975 was 571 per hectare and in 2020 it is about 172 per hectare.



As PIDE has been noting for a while, we are building suburban sprawl for cars and villas (See <https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/Policy-Viewpoint-12.pdf> and [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKQcdUKpwq9pWOfvw0P\\_eeFZlwfnQWui5j556JhIHIZ-3ISw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScKQcdUKpwq9pWOfvw0P_eeFZlwfnQWui5j556JhIHIZ-3ISw/viewform))

This is being done at huge cost and without regard to maintaining public services. It is also being done to starve many important activities such as schooling, community, health, commerce to develop. Most importantly the poor are squeezed out of the city (See <https://www.pide.org.pk/pdf/Policy-Viewpoint-12.pdf>)

The Prime Minister and many governments before him have lamented the inadequate supply of housing. We also lament the lack of investment opportunities, declining growth and unemployed youth. Yet outdated planning and heavy-handed regulation are starving cities of investment growth. There is a strange belief in government circles that growth will happen outside cities. Here we challenge this yet again. For prosperity, our cities must be liberated of the yoke of poor planning, administration and heavy-handed regulation.



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