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*Re-identificar o Rural/Urban: Um estudo de caso do Paquistão*

*Reidentificación de lo rural/urbano: un estudio de caso de Pakistán*

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## Introduction

- 1 The 2017 census in Pakistan reveals that with about 210 million population, Pakistan will leap forward to be the fourth most populous nation in the world by 2030 (Jan and Iqbal, 2018). The census reveals that that urban population was about 37%, which increases from 33% in the 1998 census showing a continuous trend of rural to urban migration. It is estimated that this urban share of total population will increase exponentially to be over 50% by 2025 under the 'administrative definition' (Abdul & Yu 2020). This definition of administrative boundary has noticeable demerits as with the passage of time the cities expansion is occurring rapidly, thus all the new suburbs and peripheral growth will take place outside this administrative boundary, hence making the demarcation of city boundaries more delicate. This also leads to another misunderstanding of census definition as its criteria for urban designation is so narrowly defined, leading to the fact that everything else to be assumed as rural.
- 2 The notion of rural/urban was the most surprising outcomes of the 2017 census as (Ali, 2018) emphasize through his research using various methods, claims that about 70% of Pakistan's population is 'non-rural', which in clarification specified that not all the percentage be specific as 'urban'; rather the respective proportion of population are concentrated in or around some urban core. This claim brought a new discourse in the discussion as his idea argued that the Government definition for an urban area follows a pre-defined historical criterion with a fix dichotomy of rural/urban areas before taking census without incorporating the modern complex realities of urban sphere. This leads to a serious fallout in the identification of rural/urban areas as all these

figures reveal lack of proper methodological background in stating the concept of 'urban' and 'rural' as a proper characteristic norm. Besides population census, several other economic and social statistical background reveals the level of dubiousness and distortion in urban/rural recognitions.

- 3 The criteria for describing an administrative boundary in depicting the concept of a city or an urban place would be logical in the sense if the purpose include to discern the voting pattern in the legislative elections but not a prerequisite response in identifying either the citizen is rural or urban. Also, without proper structure and outline the marking of administrative boundaries leads in elimination of urban patterns, practices, and communities, as cities have engulfed the áreas once considered 'peri-urban' as they expand beyond there administrative limits. Perhaps more categories of settlements need to be considered, such as those which are unambiguously urban, which are peri-urban and integrated with cities, which are in a rapid process of urbanizing (as is much of rural Pakistan), and those by some residual criteria which could still be considered 'rural'.
- 4 The idea that in Pakistan all the areas that are far from the major urban cores with having remote composition are the only localities of 'rural' formations while urbanization has taken over all of Pakistan should be disregarded (Ali, 2013). Far from it, but what is being suggested is that census should be outline in such a manner that the criteria should be visible to plan and provide services, if that is one of the main arguments given for undertaking censuses. Perhaps it should be better to look at densities of populations, rather than artificial administrative categories in demarcation of rural/urban areas.
- 5 In this article I have make an attempt to identify which area can be classified as rural or urban by making criteria that is suitable to re-configure the areas into rural and urban classification. The article will try to answer the ambiguity in the 'urban administrative areas' as in the case of Karachi, the largest city of Pakistan', where the suburban residential communities around the city are not considered urban, even though they are provided with urban services. The dynamics of rural and urban are discussed to understand their complex relations in the context of Pakistan followed by the methodological framework.

## Definition of Rural/Urban in Pakistan

- 6 The definitions, which are usually used to define 'rural and 'urban' when a census is conducted, are mainly based on administrative or municipal status as the definition adopted in census of 1972, 1981, 1998 and more recently in 2017 census (Ali, 2018) thus omitting the population aspects of rural-urban dynamics. The definition also eliminates the previously designated urban areas including those unincorporated villages and towns with populations of about 5,000. It further exacerbates the defining rural-urban dichotomy by placing about 31 million people previously identified as 'urban' to the rural category, would the change in the definition remains static, the urban proportion would classified as 55% in Pakistan (Bajwa, 2018).
- 7 In all the censuses in Pakistan, the definition of urban was the status of local government, thus the population living within the boundaries of all 'urban local councils' was designated as 'urban' without taking in consideration the intrinsic difference between the concept of rural and urban phenomenon. The 1981 census

definition was based on ‘administrative definition’, which implies that all the places which would earlier have been qualified as urban, were ignored, referring in the context of 1951 census in which of a total of 235 urban places, 121 or 51.5% did not have administrative status, similarly in 1961 census, of 336 urban places, 219 or 65.2% did not have administrative status (Qadeer, 2000).

- 8 The administrative boundaries for defining the status of a place as a city or town, which are occasionally revised, are based on the population residing in the limits of municipal, town committees and such other classifications (Tuljapurkar, 2002). Hence, in Karachi, the largest city of Pakistan, population would include all those people who live in the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation area but exclude the hundreds of thousands who live just a few feet outside this irrational boundary and yet carry out all their economic and social activities within Karachi (Hasan, 2006), thus creating an obscure image of urban with illustrating a vague standard to draw a line between rural and urban.
- 9 Compare to the characterization to identify ‘urban’, though imprecise, since the basis for the definition requires an administrative order, ‘what rural is’, is actually more complicated (Khan and Adeel, 2017). The complication arises when the 2017 census shows the rural population as 64% of total population which considers anyone who does not live within urban boundaries is designated as a ‘rural’ dweller, a residual category. Hence, areas which social scientists and urban planners would call ‘peri-urban’ i.e., those large fringes of city-size settlements that are formally located outside the boundaries of cities, would be called ‘rural’, although they are as urbanized as the rest of the city from which they are being excluded.

## Rural Depiction in Pakistan

- 10 Traditionally, in Pakistan the impression of ‘rural’ is often associated with the agriculture activities in the traditional village background (Hasan, 2010). The Government census criteria also correspond to the same notion where the agriculture activity is one of the main bases of rurality demarcation (Batool and Jamil, 2019) but the statistics related to economic activities shows that this criteria for classification used in the census for rural is erroneous as agriculture now only contributes to one-fifth to Pakistan’s GDP making the agriculture as a criterion insignificant (Nadeem et al., 2011).
- 11 The non-agriculture activities now constates a large share of employment in much of the so- called rural areas (Nasir et al., 2021). Activities classified as ‘non-farm’ or ‘non-agricultural’ incomes, mainly services, constitute at least 60% of total rural incomes, taking in consideration the definition used for rural areas according to the (GoP, 2017) report. In other words, there is comparatively less agricultural activity taking place in rural areas as the economy is shifting to more services sector.
- 12 Moreover, services which were considered ‘urban’ few decades ago, such as electricity, education, access to television, communication and transport are now also very visible in so- called rural areas. The fact that one million mobile phones are added on each month in Pakistan (Kazi and Mannan, 2013) with nearly 75% of Pakistanis having mobile phones (Asmat and Ullah, 2015) shows that even in remote and rural areas, such technology and means of communication are easily available. Whether urban or rural,

Pakistan is heavily integrated and one can't better understand a territory without taking the other in the consideration.

- 13 The position and designation of rural/urban area and the difference between them in Pakistan is largely based on the fact how it is defined which in many instances are inconsistent and incomplete (Haider, 2006). The perspective to gaze at the recognizing and understanding of rural/urban division should begin as a gradient rather than dichotomy without having a clear natural dividing line and where the life changes in a variety of dimensions along the urban-rural route: from fields and intensive cultivation, villages, small market towns to larger towns, small, and the large cosmopolitan cities (Ali, 2013). These dichotomies in some cases act like 'ribbons of development' between different towns, cities, along highways and in some instances populations that have adopted a 'semi-urban' way of life as they didn't relocate physically to the urban areas which reflects a hybrid feature of fragmented rural/urban characteristics (Arif, 2013). Such dichotomies like rural and urban should be critically reassessed to be further understood by researchers and planner alike (Hasan and Raza, 2009).

### Political - Economic Factor

- 14 Historically, the rural/urban segregation has been swayed by the politics and economic factors. The electoral constituencies had always a say in influencing the categorization of an area with a significant or majority rural population to either be considered small or even medium size town owing to the size of the population (Mustafa and Sawas, 2013) which has led to in the assumption of the census results to much suspicion and doubtful since the political actor's personal desires come into play (Hassan, 2002). This has led to the continuous subjection of areas to the political violence and mileage as the influential political actor's wrestle to divide the constituencies mainly along the ethnic lines for their possible advantage in the electorate without taking in consideration of the complex dynamics of the localities resulting in further perplexing the rural-urban classification. (Khan et al., 2012; Gazdar and Mallah, 2013).
- 15 As with the contemporary political actors, the migration is also another player that has been a well-defined phenomenon in the context of Pakistan where people tend to move from rural to urban areas due to better economic opportunities resulting in radical change in the settlement pattern (Hasan and Raza, 2009; Mansuri, 2006). The statistical view of Pakistan presents a stark gap between the rich and the poor tending the people to migrate from rural to urban areas (Malik, et. al., 2010) leading to the context where the rural areas are continuously failing in achieving the economic steadiness despite several government initiatives mainly due to mismanagement and rampant corruption in the responsible government bodies (Mukhtar et al., 2018) hence the struggle to overturn the rural-urban migration by strengthening the structural transformation of rural areas are subdued (Kanwal et al., 2015).
- 16 The Government have implemented several acts and plans to properly manage the rural and urban localities in terms of the demarcation of the localities in to relevant categories and also in terms of economic incentives particularly in the marginalized zones in rural areas however the efforts has not been successful in the past due to absence of community participation, complicated bureaucratic procedures, lack off

transparency and accountability and the profound mistrust between communities and the Government bodies.

- 17 Also, due to the lack of proper planning and management, in recent years the urban built-up areas have expanded well beyond city limits; new suburbs and schemes have evolved around cities giving birth to the peri-urban growth with acquiring urban characteristics (Baqā, et al., 2021). This expansion of cities with movement of people has made great physical impact upon cities, creating sprawling, underleveraged agglomerations which has also put the relevant Government bodies in difficult situation to better manage and maintain these areas.

## Methodology

- 18 The population data was collected from the census data of 2017 from the official Government website of Government of Pakistan (GoP, 2017) department of 'Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' (PBS) that deals with the collection and processing of all the data related with census. To categorize the rural/urban divide and to estimate the percentage for each rural and urban area, the areas were first divided into districts and then to cities boundaries. The study area includes four provinces of Pakistan i.e., Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh Province while the disputed regions of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are omitted as they are not included in the census.
- 19 As mentioned earlier, the categorization of rural and urban appears inadequate and imprecise and there does not appear to be a natural dividing line or break point between the two: the urban/rural divide appears as a gradient, rather than a dichotomy. Behavior and conditions change drastically along the gradient, and there seems no compelling reason to segment them into just these two categories. We therefore introduce the concept of an 'urbanizing area' to classify areas that neither fit in rural or in urban categories since they have both an urban core and an overall density higher than the criteria, we are using to classify the rural although they have not achieved our criteria for urban areas but could be considered in transition (Table 1).
- 20 These two criteria are:
- 21 - 'Density' in which all areas with having scattered populations (i.e., low population density), all areas that do not contain a town (i.e., urban core), and all other areas beyond a given travel time (i.e., proximity to city) to be rural: the base case criteria are: 250 persons/km<sup>2</sup>; absence of a town of 50,000 within the area; and a travel distance of more than 75-minutes to a city.
- 22 - A city core (100,000 or more in a single Pakistan census urban place) and its associated built-up and surrounding areas as 'urban' area provided they have a minimum density of 500 persons/km<sup>2</sup> (overall).
- 23 The criteria selected here is still not sufficient in helping to quantify the rural/urban divide but owing to the ground realities, the census definition which defines only the urban perimeter while debar what rural should be, and keeping in mind the complex structure of political, economic and social complexities of the localities all around the country that greatly influence the outcome of an area to be either rural or urban, the

criteria is still enough to show the shortcomings in the Government representation of rural/urban places.

Table 1: Area Characterization with criteria

Factor	Rural Area	Urban Area	Urbanizing Area
Density	All areas with a density of up to 250 persons/km <sup>2</sup>	500 persons/ km <sup>2</sup> or more overall	250 persons/km <sup>2</sup> or higher overall and 400 persons/km <sup>2</sup> in urban core
Urban Core and Proximity	All areas without a town of at least 50,000 population in a census defined urban place and all areas beyond 75 minutes to city of 100,000 population or more	Population of 100,000 or more in a single Pakistan census defined urban place	Population of 50,000 or more in single Pakistan census defined urban place within 75 minutes of a city of 100,000 population or more

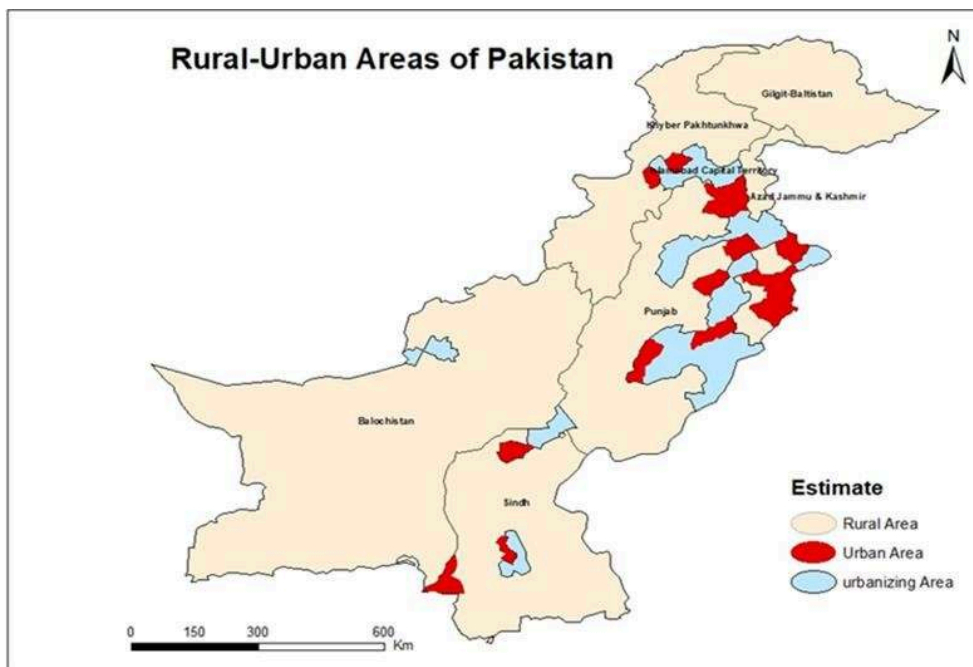
Fonte: o autor

## Discussion

- 24 The main differences between our estimate and the Government census are mainly in the case of rural estimate since the methodology for ‘rural area’ estimates are derived from defined criteria for the ‘rural’ which includes the census urban core (town of 50,000 population) and proximity to city (within travel time of 75 minute to a city of 100,000), while the Government census criteria incorporate the assumption that a very all the population outside the city boundaries are considered to be “rural” and to introduce the concept of an ‘urbanizing’ for the areas that does not fall in either rural or urban category i.e., they have both an urban core and an overall density higher than the criteria that I used to classify the rural while clearly these are not rural but also they have not achieved the basic criteria to be called as urbanized, hence the term ‘urbanizing’ is used here.
- 25 The introduction of ‘urbanizing area’ brings into play the various elements of criteria that are selected in the methodology i.e.,
- 26 a) In the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, due to higher population densities, the presence of population classified as rural by the census falls in the category of urbanizing area I selected i.e., the census classifies all areas outside city boundary as rural - the ‘residual’ approach.
- 27 b) In the province of Sindh, only the metropolitan city of Karachi and Hyderabad are considered as urban areas corresponding to the official census while certain areas classified as urban by the official census do not meet the criteria for an urban area but qualify as urbanizing areas in my criteria.
- 28 c) The provincial capital Quetta in the Balochistan province is the only city of the province, that can be considered as an ‘urbanizing area’ due to lower overall population density. There is a significant part of the population living in areas that are no longer rural but at different stages of urbanization.

- 29 While doing comparison, it should be noted that the Government census contains only two categories that defines urban, while rural is treated with encompassing all the 'residual' non- urban areas. In the methodology I tried to classify all the areas in one of the three categories with each having a well-defined criterion. By applying the criteria, it was revealed that the 'urban area' estimates in the case of provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are higher than the census urban population by 27% and 3% respectively. The resultant higher estimates are partly due to the use of administrative boundaries of the city by the census resulting in the exclusion of suburban development that forms an integral part of the city is excluded from consideration in the census but gets included in our estimates.

Fig- 1. Rural-urban areas of pakistan



- 30 Contrary to the above findings, the estimates in case of province of Sindh shows a contradicting scenario as the findings shows of decrease by 18% of urban area compared to official census due to the fact of exclusion of small rural towns in the province as they fall short of the criteria I set in methodology i.e., below the threshold size of 50,000 population for a town and lower density but are included in the census due to their administrative status, while in the province of Balochistan there doesn't exist any urban area due to the criteria for urban designation i.e., primarily due to the density criterion (Fig 1).
- 31 The definition adopted for rural-urban criteria would further implied that in the Provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a large population that is still classified as rural in the census would actually fall under the third category of 'urbanizing area' due to their high population density, prevalence of urban core (town of 50,000 population), and closeness to a nearby city (within a 75 minutes drive away from a city of 100,000 inhabitants) while the same definition for the Sindh province would result in the classification of certain urban areas to the third category of urbanizing areas. In Balochistan, only Provincial Capital city of Quetta would be considered urbanizing area (Table 2).



Table 2: Area ratio in Provinces of Pakistan

Provinces	Urban		Urbanizing Area	Rural	
	My estimate	1998 Census		My estimate	1998 Census
Punjab	39.65	31.3	33.20	27.14	68.7
Sindh	39.86	48.8	19.40	40.74	51.2
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	17.35	16.9	27.71	54.94	83.1
Balochistan	0	23.9	11.57	88.43	76.1

Fonte: o autor

## Conclusion

- 32 The identification of rural and urban areas in the census is mainly based on the attributes of administrative boundaries omitting the complex nature of the local population agglomerations and the socio-economic realities. In this study, the main emphasis was to identify the rural and urban areas in comparison with identification of rural and urban divide in the census based on the 3 factors i.e., population density, urban core and the distance to city. The factors were considered to evaluate how the urbanization process is measure, to incorporate an intermediate zone of 'urbanizing area' and to determine the underestimation of the magnitude of population in areas considered as urbanizing area.
- 33 As with the increase in population, the built-up areas in Pakistan particularly in urban conglomeration have expanded well beyond the city limits encompassing the surrounding 'rural' areas hence obtaining the urban characters resulting in the phenomenon of 'peri-urbanization'. The methodology adopted in this research article is aligned with the internationally accepted definition on rural/urban localities based on measurable indicators of population density, urban core and proximity to the city. The results revealed a considerable contrast in the comparison with the Government census identification of rural/urban places.
- 34 The analysis revealed that overall, the urban areas proportion is higher than what is represented in the census. The provinces of Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa shows a higher percentage of urban areas than the census with a 27% and 3% higher ratio than the census, respectively while in the province of Sindh, the findings reveal a decrease of 18% of urban areas compared to the census while in the province of Balochistan lack any urban area. A large part in all the provinces was occupied by urbanizing area which was characterized as an intermediate zone between rural and urban areas. These areas most probably will functions as an urban area in the future due to increase in population and the shifting of urban activities in these areas.
- 35 The analysis suggests some recommendation including the re-evaluation of the definition and criteria set by the local authorities to identify rural/urban anatomy. The

Government should revise the definition of urbanization in Pakistan as it is a major catalyst of political process, and which also shows the relationship between the state and its citizens through political participation and exercise of political rights. It is also important from the point of view of resource allocation and estimation of the revenue base.

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## ABSTRACTS

The historical census of Pakistan has always categorized the urban and rural areas with criteria lacking a clear discernibility. In this research study I chose 2 criteria i.e., density and urban core proximity to differentiate areas into either rural, urban and urbanizing area. The urbanizing area was added in the methodology to identify the places which neither fit in the of rural and urban category. The 2017 population census was taken for analysis. The analysis shows that the provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have higher percentage of urban population by 27% and 3% than the official census, respectively. While province of Sindh shows a contradicting scenario showing a decrease by 18% of urban area than official census while in the province of Balochistan the urban area doesn't exist, while the remaining areas was occupied by urbanizing area. The findings shows that urban areas far exceed the Government statistics.

O censo histórico do Paquistão sempre categorizou as áreas urbanas e rurais com critérios que carecem de uma discernibilidade clara. Neste estudo de investigação escolhi 2 critérios, ou seja, densidade e proximidade do núcleo urbano para diferenciar as áreas em zona rural, urbana e urbanizadora. A área urbanizadora foi acrescentada na metodologia para identificar os lugares que não se enquadram na categoria rural e urbana. O censo da população de 2017 foi levado para análise. A análise mostra que as províncias de Punjab e Khyber Pakhtunkhwa têm uma percentagem mais elevada de população urbana em 27% e 3% do que o censo oficial, respectivamente. Enquanto a província de Sindh mostra um cenário contraditório, mostrando um decréscimo de 18% da área urbana em relação ao recenseamento oficial, enquanto na província do Balochistão a área urbana não existe, enquanto as restantes áreas foram ocupadas por área urbanizada. Os resultados mostram que as áreas urbanas excedem de longe as estatísticas do Governo sobre as áreas urbanas.

rural, urbano, censos, população, governo, províncias, Paquistão

El censo histórico de Pakistán siempre ha clasificado las zonas urbanas y rurales con criterios que carecen de una clara discernibilidad. En este estudio de investigación he elegido dos criterios, a saber, la densidad y la proximidad del núcleo urbano, para diferenciar las zonas en rurales, urbanas y en proceso de urbanización. La zona en proceso de urbanización se añadió a la metodología para identificar los lugares que no encajan en la categoría rural o urbana. Para el análisis se tomó el censo de población de 2017. El análisis muestra que las provincias de Punjab y Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tienen un mayor porcentaje de población urbana en un 27% y un 3% que el censo oficial, respectivamente. Mientras que la provincia de Sindh muestra un escenario contradictorio, mostrando una disminución del 18% de la zona urbana con respecto al censo oficial, mientras que en la provincia de Baluchistán la zona urbana no existe, mientras que las áreas restantes fueron ocupadas por la urbanización. Los resultados muestran que las zonas urbanas superan con creces las estadísticas gubernamentales de zonas urbanas.

rural, urbano, censo, población, gobierno, provincias, Pakistán

rural, urbain, recensement, population, gouvernement, provinces, Pakistan

Le recensement historique du Pakistan a toujours classé les zones urbaines et rurales selon des critères qui ne sont pas clairement discernables. Dans cette étude, j'ai choisi deux critères, à savoir la densité et la proximité du noyau urbain, pour différencier les zones rurales, urbaines et en voie d'urbanisation. La zone en voie d'urbanisation a été ajoutée à la méthodologie pour identifier les lieux qui ne correspondent ni à la catégorie rurale ni à la catégorie urbaine. Le recensement de la population de 2017 a été utilisé pour l'analyse. L'analyse montre que les provinces du Punjab et de Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ont un pourcentage de population urbaine plus élevé de 27% et 3% respectivement que le recensement officiel. La province de Sindh présente un scénario contradictoire avec une diminution de 18% de la zone urbaine par rapport au recensement officiel, tandis que dans la province de Balochistan, la zone urbaine n'existe pas, tandis que les zones restantes sont occupées par des zones en voie d'urbanisation. Les résultats montrent que les zones urbaines dépassent de loin les statistiques gouvernementales sur les zones urbaines.

## INDEX

**Keywords:** rural, urban, census, population, government, provinces, Pakistan

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