

# **Economic Complexity & the Built Environment's Cost Webs after Globalization: Recommendations for Promoting Affordability through Planning**

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## **Abstract**

In countries like Pakistan, the cost of the built environment for citizens of villages and cities is so extremely high that owning a building for residential or commercial purposes, or even renting a space of decent standard, is becoming a dream more and more inaccessible to millions, and growing homelessness is a serious social issue. In fact, this situation is making people question the myth of Globalization as a true “agent of plenitude”.

This paper analyzes how these costs have transformed in Pakistan before and after globalization's impacts, by using the theoretical lens of “cost web structures”, “economic complexity-and-organization” and “values-based economic evolution” presented by authors such as David Warsh in his ‘Idea of Economic Complexity’, and Michael Benedikt in his ‘General Theory of Value’. The paper also reviews the academic writings and opinion on Pakistan's urban planning issues by planners, economists, development professionals, case studies from major cities of Pakistan, and interviews with representative local communities and builders in representative urban and rural areas. It presents a set of recommendations for planning that can promote affordability of a quality built environment for citizens, in the process linking with principles of social and environmental sustainability.

**Keywords:** Inflation; Cost Web Structures; Housing; Land; Labour; Economic Complexity; Sustainability; Urban Planning; Regional Planning, Social Development.