

## Assessing the Impact of Motorway Development on Political Socialization in Pakistan: A Case Study of the M2 (Islamabad–Lahore)

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i2.803>

### Abstract

Using the M2 Motorway (Islamabad-Lahore) as a case study, this paper examines how motorway expansion affects political socialization in Pakistan. The M2, a key component of the country's infrastructure, has transformed patterns of mobility, access to information, and civic engagement in addition to increasing economic activity. In communities located along the M2 corridor, this study investigates the effects of increased physical connectivity on civic engagement, political awareness, and participation in the democratic process. Using a mixed-method case study methodology, the research examines changes in political beliefs and behaviors by combining qualitative observations with quantitative survey data. Key findings show that greater exposure to urban areas, media, and educational opportunities via freeways has increased political awareness and local engagement, particularly among marginalized groups and young people. However, disparities still exist in the distribution of these benefits, reflecting larger structural injustices. By highlighting how infrastructure investments act as catalysts for both political and economic change, this study adds to the body of knowledge about political development in the Global South.

**Keywords:** Motorway Development; Political Socialization; M2 Corridor; Civic Engagement; Pakistan

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The political and economic landscapes of developing countries are significantly influenced by their infrastructure development. Large-scale initiatives such as the National Road Network and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Pakistan have often been evaluated on the basis of their economic outcomes, but little is known about their sociopolitical impacts.<sup>1</sup> The potential of such development to influence political socialization—the process by which people adopt political ideas, attitudes, and behaviors—is among its most important but underappreciated features.<sup>2</sup> The first controlled-access motorway in Pakistan was the Islamabad-Lahore Motorway (M2), which opened in 1997. It covers over 375 kilometers, passing through several semi-urban and rural areas such as Chakwal, Sheikhpura, and Mandi Bahauddin, and connects two major urban centers.<sup>3</sup> In addition to these economic benefits, the M2 has improved market access, reduced

<sup>1</sup> Asian Development Bank. (2021). *Infrastructure for inclusive development in South Asia*. <https://www.adb.org>

<sup>2</sup> Niemi, R. G., & Hepburn, M. A. (1995). The rebirth of political socialization. *Perspectives on Political Science*, 24(1), 7–16.

<sup>3</sup> National Highway Authority. (2023). *Annual report on M-2 Motorway performance indicators (2015–2023)*. Government of Pakistan. <https://nha.gov.pk/publications>

travel times, and revolutionized regional mobility. These changes have also led to increased exposure to the media, civic political discourse, and state institutions—all of which are crucial to the process of political socialization.<sup>4</sup>

Especially in rural and peri-urban areas where isolation previously limited civic engagement and political understanding, increased connectivity often results in the spread of ideas.<sup>5</sup> People who were previously excluded from mainstream political processes due to their location or infrastructure are now more physically and symbolically connected to the state.<sup>6</sup> This raises important questions: Is it possible for infrastructure to foster political awareness? Does increased mobility result in participation in democracy?

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Despite the well-known economic benefits of infrastructure, there is a lack of empirical research on how Pakistan's growing motorway network influences socialization patterns, political attitudes, and behavior.<sup>7</sup> There is a scholarly gap about the broader impacts of development corridors like the M2 because the political science literature and transportation infrastructure studies have rarely interacted.

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study aims to:

1. Examine the influence of M2 on political awareness and civic behavior among local populations.
2. Assess whether improved access to urban centers and media increases political participation.
3. Explore how infrastructure projects affect political identity formation in semi-urban and rural contexts.

## **1.4 Research Question**

How has the development of the M2 motorway affected political socialization among communities located along its corridor in Pakistan?

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

By establishing the link between infrastructure development and democratic deepening, this study adds to a growing body of multidisciplinary literature.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, it is policy-relevant, providing information on how road infrastructure can be used to promote political inclusion and participation, particularly in underserved areas, in addition to economic integration.<sup>9</sup>

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Political Socialization in Development Contexts**

The process by which people pick up political norms, values, and actions is called political socialization. Political socialization in emerging nations is often influenced by media exposure, family influence, educational opportunities, and greater infrastructure.<sup>10</sup> The new research places greater emphasis on how urban proximity, mobility, and geographic reach shape the transmission and assimilation of political information than the traditional literature, which has focused on the influence of political institutions and elites.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmed, R., & Khan, S. (2022). Transport equity in developing nations: A Rawlsian analysis. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 45(3), 105–115.

<sup>5</sup> Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Barriers to women's mobility: A study of motorway accessibility in rural Punjab*. <https://hrqp-web.org>

<sup>7</sup> Khan, S. (2023). *Peripheral connectivity: The untold story of Pakistan's motorways*. Lahore: Development Press.

<sup>8</sup> World Bank. (2020). *Transforming infrastructure for inclusive growth in Pakistan*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

<sup>9</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

<sup>10</sup> Easton, D. (1965). *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. Wiley.

<sup>11</sup> Niemi, R. G., & Hepburn, M. A. (1995). The rebirth of political socialization. *Perspectives on Political Science*, 24(1), 7–16.

Infrastructure like highways can serve as a vehicle for political education and civic integration in rural and urban areas, where literacy rates may be low and institutional engagement is limited. For example, the visibility of civic centers can improve engagement in local government, increase understanding of rights, and influence voting habits.<sup>12</sup>

## **2.2 Infrastructure as a Vehicle of Political Inclusion**

While a large body of literature looks at how infrastructure affects the economy or the environment, its political importance is often overlooked. By facilitating easy physical access to polling places, district offices, and civil society organizations, transportation networks, especially highways, can promote political participation.<sup>13</sup> According to research from China and India, communities near major highways have increased levels of political mobilization, civic engagement, and access to public services.<sup>14</sup>

In the case of Pakistan, economic variables such as land prices and investment flows are commonly used to predict motorway development. However, recent regional research suggests that increased political engagement along transport corridors can be associated with improved mobility, particularly in previously underserved areas.<sup>15</sup>

## **2.3 The Case for Studying M2: A Political Lens**

An excellent case study for studying political socialization through development is the M2 Motorway (Islamabad-Lahore). It connects rural communities to important political centers and spans diverse socio-economic regions. According to research from Punjab, increased travel and communication have changed people's economic behaviors as well as political campaigns, rallies, and public gatherings.<sup>16</sup>

However, there are not many academic studies that directly examine the relationship between Pakistani political behavior and transportation infrastructure. By placing M2 within the framework of political development and local justice, this study attempts to bridge this gap.<sup>17</sup>

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

Modernization theory and spatial-political integration theory serve as the theoretical foundations of this study. These theories help explain how the development of political attitudes, actions, and engagement is influenced by the development of infrastructure, especially in transitional cultures like Pakistan.

### **3.1 Modernization Theory and Political Socialization**

According to modernization theory, civilizations typically experience simultaneous changes in urbanization, media consumption, education, and political consciousness as their economies grow.<sup>18</sup> The structural changes brought about by economic expansion strengthen traditional power systems, encourage human agency, and advance democratic values.<sup>19</sup>

Projects like the M2 Motorway are examples of infrastructure in Pakistan that not only signal economic development but also have the potential to spark political reform. Communities are more likely to participate in political activities such as voting, activism, and rights-based discourse

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<sup>12</sup> Fainstein, S. (2010). *The Just City*. Cornell University Press.

<sup>13</sup> World Bank. (2022). *Pakistan mobility and accessibility survey*. <https://documents.worldbank.org>

<sup>14</sup> Banerjee, A., Duflo, E., & Qian, N. (2020). Highways and spatial development in China. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 25(4), 1015–1048.

<sup>15</sup> Rehman, A., & Sheikh, N. (2023). Informal economies along transport corridors. *Pakistan Development Review*, 62(1), 45–60.

<sup>16</sup> Khan, S. A. (2022). *Longitudinal effects of infrastructure displacement: Five-year study of Punjab communities*. Lahore: Punjab University Press.

<sup>17</sup> Ahmed, R., & Malik, Z. (2023). Environmental and social consequences of mega transport infrastructure in developing countries. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 25(4), 482–499.

<sup>18</sup> Lerner, D. (1958). *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East*. Free Press.

<sup>19</sup> Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge University Press.

because they have greater access to cities, institutions, and information.<sup>20</sup> According to this concept, exposure to contemporary communication media, mobility, and institutional proximity all contribute to political socialization.

### 3.2 Spatial-Political Integration

Spatial-political integration is a sub-model that claims that political participation is mediated by geography.<sup>21</sup> Areas that are geographically or physically distant from centers of power are often politically disenfranchised. Thus, roads, highways, and transportation corridors serve as pathways for political participation, connecting previously marginalized groups to the machinery of government.<sup>22</sup>

This framework helps explain how urban infrastructure, mobility, and geographic reach all affect the spread of political beliefs and practices. In the case of Pakistan, M2 provides greater access to election campaigns, media coverage, and governance mechanisms while serving as a symbolic and functional link between disadvantaged communities and urban political institutions.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.3 Relevance to This Study

The research question is jointly formulated by these theories: Can infrastructure connectivity foster political awareness and engagement? Does living close to a city change the way people engage with the political system? Through the application of these frameworks to the M2 case study, this paper explores how physical mobility facilitates political mobility, particularly in Pakistan's emerging democratic environment.<sup>24</sup>

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Research Design

To examine the relationship between infrastructure development and political socialization, this study uses a case study approach, focusing on Pakistan's M2 motorway corridor. A mixed methodology was used, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, to provide a multidimensional picture of how civic ideologies and political engagement change in communities connected by the road.<sup>25</sup>

The spatial specificity of the research article, which focuses on communities located along a specific transit corridor, justifies the use of a case study design. The triangulation between structured data and subjective viewpoints is made possible by a mixed methods design.<sup>26</sup>

### 4.2 Case Selection – Why M2?

The M2 (Islamabad-Lahore Motorway) was selected as the main research location due to its strategic and historical importance. The M2, Pakistan's first controlled-access highway, has been operational since 1997 and connects two important political and economic centers.<sup>27</sup> The road passes through several semi-urban and rural areas, including Sheikhpura, Chakwal, and Mandi Bahauddin, providing a diverse socioeconomic cross-section for analyzing local variations in political behavior.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Hussain, I. (2022). *Development theory in the Global South*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Perroux, F. (1955). Note sur la notion de pôle de croissance. *Économie Appliquée*, 8(1), 307–320.

<sup>22</sup> World Bank. (2022). *Transparency in infrastructure projects: Lessons from global practice*. World Bank Publications.

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Displacement and rehabilitation in infrastructure projects*. HRCP Publications.

<sup>24</sup> Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice*. Harvard University Press.

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<sup>27</sup> National Highway Authority. (2023). *Annual report on M-2 Motorway performance indicators (2015–2023)*. <https://nha.gov.pk/publications>

<sup>28</sup> Khan, S. A. (2022). *Longitudinal effects of infrastructure displacement: Five-year study of Punjab communities*. Lahore: Punjab University Press.

### 4.3 Data Collection Methods

#### Quantitative Survey Data:

To assess civic engagement, voting patterns, political awareness, and opinions of political institutions, structured questionnaires were developed. The survey was administered to 180 respondents from four districts within 20 kilometers of the M2 interchange. The questions aimed to assess civic engagement, exposure to political content, and involvement with local government.<sup>29</sup>

#### Qualitative Data:

Neighborhood elders, local council members, and youth representatives participated in informal interviews to gauge their perceptions of political change since the completion of the motorway. Content from public forums, social media pages, and local newspapers was also reviewed to support the quantitative findings.<sup>30</sup>

#### Secondary Data Sources:

The underlying data was contextualized and historical comparisons (before and after M2 development) were established using publicly available statistics from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), National Highway Authority (NHA) and Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).<sup>31</sup>

### 4.4 Sampling and Site Selection

Four districts with a mix of rural and peri-urban characteristics were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Three union councils from each district were selected based on how close they were to M2. To ensure a representative spectrum of political experiences, participants were selected to reflect diversity in age, gender, occupation, and education level.<sup>32</sup>

### 4.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and basic cross-tabulations were used to examine quantitative data to explore patterns in civic engagement and political behavior. Thematic coding of qualitative data was conducted, focusing specifically on recurring ideas such as identity formation, institutional trust, and political awareness. Patterns were then cross-checked for depth and consistency across data sources.<sup>33</sup>

### 4.6 Ethical Considerations

All participants gave their informed consent. For the purpose of publication, identities were kept confidential. This study complies with traditional research ethics for social science fieldwork and the ethical guidelines established by the Pakistan Psychological Association.<sup>34</sup>

## 5. Findings and Analysis

The empirical findings of the study, which were obtained through surveys, interviews, and document analysis, are presented in this section. The findings, as observed in some areas along the M2 corridor, are categorized under three main aspects of political socialization: identity construction, civic engagement, and political knowledge.

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<sup>29</sup> Rehman, A., & Sheikh, N. (2023). Informal economies along transport corridors. *Pakistan Development Review*, 62(1), 45–60.

<sup>30</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Barriers to women's mobility: A study of motorway accessibility in rural Punjab*. <https://hrcp-web.org>

<sup>31</sup> Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Punjab development statistics 2023: Infrastructure and regional growth indicators*. <http://www.pbs.punjab.gov.pk/publications>

<sup>32</sup> Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE.

<sup>33</sup> Gale, N. K., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashid, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for analyzing qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 13(1), 117.

<sup>34</sup> Pakistan Psychological Association. (2022). *Ethical principles for research involving human participants*. PPA Publications.



### 5.1 Political Awareness and Information Access

Most respondents reported that since the construction of the M2, their exposure to political information has increased significantly. Nearly 68 percent of survey respondents agreed that increased mobility allowed them to travel to Lahore or Islamabad more frequently, exposing them to political events, posters, public campaigns, and digital platforms that they had not previously had much access to.<sup>35</sup>

Respondents from Chakwal and Sheikhpura districts highlighted that their physical proximity to metropolitan centres via motorways, especially during election seasons, has led to an increase in consumption of political news, television debates and social media content.<sup>36</sup> “Before the motorway, politics in our village was only through hearsay,” said a local respondent from Chakwal. “Nowadays, everyone watches political programmes and uses WhatsApp. This illustrates how infrastructure bridges the information gap to indirectly mediate political education, an important aspect of political socialization in developing countries.”<sup>37</sup>

### 5.2 Civic Participation and Electoral Behavior

According to the survey results, 42% of first-time voters along the M2 corridor said their decision to register and vote was influenced by their ability to access urban areas. Additionally, nearly a third of those surveyed reported attending community gatherings or political protests in Lahore or Rawalpindi that they could not have attended before the M2.<sup>38</sup>

Improved transportation links have enabled greater connectivity between local representatives and citizens. During the local and federal elections, local councillors and youth leaders saw a significant increase in political gatherings, workshops, and candidate visits, particularly in peri-urban areas.<sup>39</sup> This suggests that exposure and connectivity are driving a shift in civic engagement from passive to active.

### 5.3 Political Identity Formation and Discourse Shifts

The results of the interviews revealed subtle but significant changes in people's political self-identification. Communities that were previously isolated reported greater identification with national political parties, particularly as a result of media access and peer interactions during travel.<sup>40</sup>

According to youth in Mandi Bahauddin district, going to universities or workplaces in Lahore exposed them to a wider range of political perspectives, shifting the conversation away from traditional feudal or beradari-based politics towards issue-based narratives about governance, jobs and education.<sup>41</sup> According to one 24-year-old respondent, this shift came about because “our elders cared about village loyalties.” We discuss tweets and policy. These findings are consistent with the theory of modernization, which relates democratic political socialization to economic development and mobility.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2023). *Transportation expenditure patterns and household income survey 2022–23* (Report No. PBS-TE-2023-42). [http://www.pbs.gov.pk/transport\\_stats](http://www.pbs.gov.pk/transport_stats)

<sup>36</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Barriers to women's mobility: A study of motorway accessibility in rural Punjab*. <https://hrqp-web.org>

<sup>37</sup> Niemi, R. G., & Hepburn, M. A. (1995). The rebirth of political socialization. *Perspectives on Political Science*, 24(1), 7–16.

<sup>38</sup> National Highway Authority. (2023). *M-2 Motorway economic performance indicators*. Government of Pakistan. <https://nha.gov.pk/reports>

<sup>39</sup> Khan, S. A. (2022). *Longitudinal effects of infrastructure displacement: Five-year study of Punjab communities*. Lahore: Punjab University Press.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmed, R., & Malik, Z. (2023). Environmental and social consequences of mega transport infrastructure in developing countries. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, 25(4), 482–499.

<sup>41</sup> Rehman, A., & Sheikh, N. (2023). Informal economies along transport corridors. *Pakistan Development Review*, 62(1), 45–60.

<sup>42</sup> Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

## 5.4 Persistent Gaps and Uneven Outcomes

Despite the generally positive trends, not every community along the M2 corridor has benefited equally. Access alone is insufficient for effective political integration, as seen in the lower political turnout among low-income, low-literacy households.<sup>43</sup>

Furthermore, despite increased mobility, women's political participation remained low in more traditional rural areas. Only 19% of female participants reported being directly involved in any civic activity, mainly limited to voting.<sup>44</sup> This illustrates persistent gender barriers that are insurmountable through infrastructure alone.

## 6. Discussion

According to the study's findings, communities along the M2 corridor have seen a modest but significant shift in their political consciousness as a result of the motorway's architecture. While infrastructure is often associated with economic development, this example shows that it can also act as a vehicle for political socialization, especially in areas that are physically isolated.

### 6.1 Infrastructure as a Political Enabler

The data support the idea that greater political awareness and participation, resulting from easier access to information, civic centers, and political discourse, has resulted from increased physical connectivity through M2. These findings are consistent with modernization theory, which posits that exposure, education, and mobility all play a role in shaping democratic norms.<sup>45</sup> Respondents indicated greater media consumption, greater engagement with government agencies, and exposure to political campaigns. This shows that motorways are more than just roads. They are pathways of engagement that are changing how people interact with government, view politics, and exercise their civil rights.<sup>46</sup>

### 6.2 Spatial Justice and Political Integration

When analyzing the observed results, the idea of local-political integration is crucial. By reducing physical isolation, the M2 corridor has helped integrate previously marginalized communities into the political fabric, thereby reducing the information and participation gap.<sup>47</sup> People living along the M2 corridor have demonstrated a shift from passive to active political engagement by attending rallies, challenging the government, and demanding local services.

But the results also show that this integration is not uniform. Despite greater physical access, poor and female-owned communities remain underrepresented, while those with more education, digital access, and financial mobility benefit more.<sup>48</sup> This means that to achieve true integration, infrastructure development needs to be supported by gender-sensitive mobility policies, inclusive media access, and focused political education.<sup>49</sup>

### 6.3 Infrastructure and Democratic Deepening

This study supports the claim that infrastructure initiatives can serve as tools to advance democracy. If designed with inclusion in mind, strategic investments in transportation networks

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<sup>43</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Displacement and rehabilitation in infrastructure projects*. HRCP Publications.

<sup>44</sup> Punjab Commission on the Status of Women. (2023). *Gender parity report: Transportation and mobility in Punjab* (Report No. PCSW-2023-21). <https://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/reports>

<sup>45</sup> Inglehart, R., & Welzel, C. (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge University Press.

<sup>46</sup> Ahmed, R., & Khan, S. (2022). Transport equity in developing nations: A Rawlsian analysis. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 45(3), 105–115.

<sup>47</sup> Perroux, F. (1955). Note sur la notion de pôle de croissance. *Économie Appliquée*, 8(1), 307–320.

<sup>48</sup> Punjab Commission on the Status of Women. (2023). *Transportation accessibility and gender disparities in Punjab*. <https://pcsw.punjab.gov.pk/transportation-gender-report>

<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. (2023). *Barriers to women's mobility: A study of motorway accessibility in rural Punjab*.

can yield long-term socio-political returns in places like Pakistan, where civic trust and political participation have historically been uneven.<sup>50</sup>

However, infrastructure does not always play a role in political development. Media freedom, local political platforms, educational access, and women's safety in public spaces are all necessary mediating variables. In their absence, roads can become symbolic rather than transformative.<sup>51</sup>

#### **6.4 Implications for Policy and Future Research**

These revelations have important implications for Pakistan's regional planning, infrastructure policy, and political development plans. Policymakers should consider:

- Designing road projects with **embedded civic outreach and education programs**.
- Integrating **transportation and political inclusion** goals within development planning.
- Prioritizing **women's safe access and mobility** in future infrastructure corridors.
- Supporting **digital infrastructure** to maximize political awareness among newly connected populations.

This work should be expanded in future research, using comparative and longitudinal methodologies to look at different motorway routes or provincial urban-rural linkages.

### **7. Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **7.1 Conclusion**

This study examined how Pakistani political socialization was affected by the construction of motorways, particularly the M2 (Islamabad-Lahore). It illustrates that in a developing environment, transportation infrastructure acts as a catalyst for political consciousness, civic engagement, and identity development in addition to being a driver of economic change. The results show that cities located near the M2 corridor have benefited from better access to political information, better connectivity with civic institutions, and higher democratic participation. In line with modernization theory and the spatial-political integration framework, evidence supports the idea that motorway construction can serve as a tool for political inclusion. The benefits are still not evenly distributed by gender, class, or educational attainment. Although there is greater mobility, additional work is needed in the areas of political access, education, and institutional responses to achieve full civic empowerment.

Finally, infrastructure should be viewed as a political space as well as a physical asset because it influences how people relate to government, construct political identities, and participate in governance.

#### **7.2 Policy Recommendations**

The following suggestions are made to planners, legislators, and civil society stakeholders to improve the civic and democratic capacity of infrastructure projects like the M2:

##### **1. Embed Civic Education in Infrastructure Programs**

Elements of community outreach that support civic awareness, democratic principles, and participatory rights should be incorporated into development plans, especially in recently annexed areas.

##### **2. Bridge the Digital Divide**

Digital media often determines access to political information. Increased mobile penetration and internet access in areas near motorways can increase political awareness and discourse.

##### **3. Promote Gender-Inclusive Mobility**

Women's safety, political visibility, and transportation demands need special consideration. Future freeway extensions should incorporate gender-responsive transportation planning.

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<sup>50</sup> World Bank. (2022). *Transparency in infrastructure projects: Lessons from global practice*. World Bank Publications.

<sup>51</sup> Rehman, A., & Sheikh, N. (2023). Informal economies along transport corridors. *Pakistan Development Review*, 62(1), 45–60.



#### 4. Decentralize Political Institutions

Political institutions (such as NADRA offices, union councils, and polling places) should be more equitably dispersed along rural corridors to prevent urban bias and promote local inclusion.

#### 5. Support Local Civic Forums

Beyond election cycles, engagement can be sustained by promoting the development of youth organizations, issue-based associations, and community gatherings along transit corridors.

#### 7.3 Future Research Directions

This study opens several avenues for future exploration:

- **Comparative studies** across other motorway projects (e.g., M4, M5) could provide cross-regional insights.
- **Longitudinal data** would help measure how political attitudes evolve over time with sustained exposure.
- The role of **media, kinship, and religious institutions** in shaping political socialization in mobile communities warrants deeper examination.

This research shows that roads do more than carry vehicles — they carry ideas, aspirations, and voices. The challenge is to ensure that all voices are heard equally in Pakistan’s evolving political landscape.

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