

Q: Discuss how declining public trust in institutions can contribute to deviant behavior, non-cooperation and social resistance in Pakistani society.
(CSS-2026)

Contribution of Declining Public Trust in Institutions to Deviant Behavior, Non-Cooperation and Social Resistance in Pakistani Society

In Pakistani society, declining public trust in institutions can contribute to deviant behavior, non-cooperation, and social resistance.

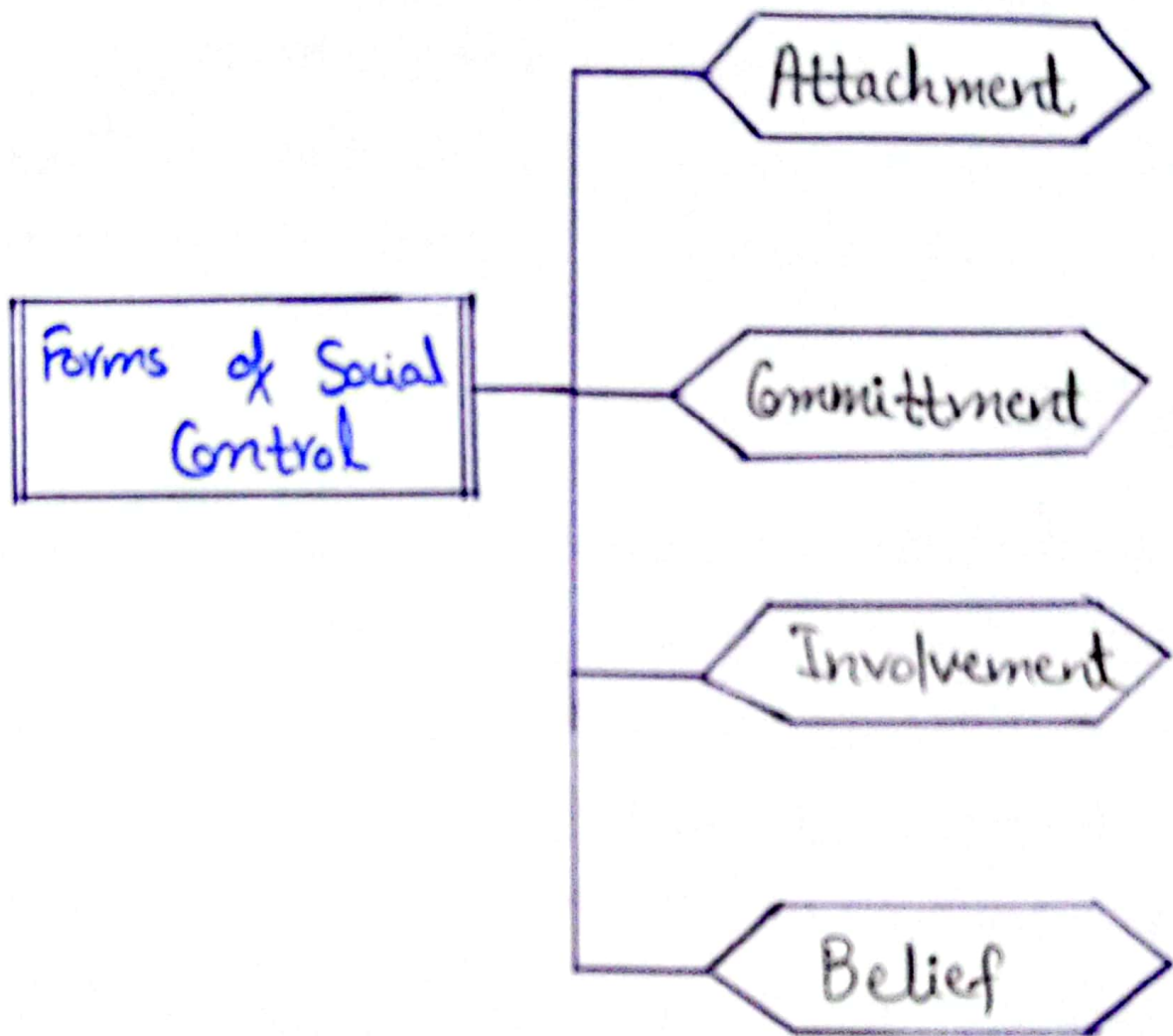
This can be explained in the light of Travis Hirschi's social bond theory (a major variant of social control theory). Travis Hirschi argued in his book Causes of Delinquency that all individuals are naturally capable of committing crime, but they are prevented from doing ^{so} when they are strongly bonded to society. According to this theory, the strength

an individual's social bonds— to family, educational, and social institutions— determines their likelihood of conforming to laws and social norms. However, declining public trust in institutions reflects weakening of individual's social bonds that increases likelihood of deviant or criminal behavior.

1. Elucidating the Relation between declining Public Trust and Deviant Behavior in the light of Social Control Theory

Social Control theory is a criminological perspective that explains why people conform to societal rules and laws instead of engaging in deviance. Its central assumption is that human beings are naturally inclined toward deviance and crime, but they are restrained by various forms of social control.

Forms of Social Control in the Light of Travis Hirschi's Social Bond Theory



i- Attachment

Emotional closeness and sensitivity to the opinions of others such as teachers, parents, peers etc.

ii- Commitment

Investment in conventional goals such as career, education, reputation. The more people have to lose, the less likely they are to engage in deviance or crime.

iii. Involvement

It refers to involvement in conventional ^{activities} goals like education, employment etc. When an individual is involved in conventional activities, his bond to society is strong due to this social control he is less likely to engage in deviance.

iv. Belief

It refers to the extent upto which an individual internalizes and accepts societal laws and norms. Strong belief in laws, regulations and authority, and moral code makes an individual less likely to violate rules. Due to weak belief in law and justice, people feel less bound to follow them.

2. Causes of Declining Public Trust in Institution in Pakistan

i. Weak Family Attachment

This is a major cause of declining public trust in family institutions. For instance, domestic

has surged by 17% in past five years in Pakistan which damages emotional fabric of home and contributes to weakening of attachment to family (Tribune, Weakening of Family Attachment, Jan 2026). This is a major cause of declining public trust in family institutions in Pakistan, which contributes to deviant behavior.

ii- Political Instability

According to Chatham House: Pakistan faced its worst political instability from 2022 to 2025 (Analysis of Political Instability in Pakistan, Jan 2026). This is a major cause of declining public trust in Pakistani institutions, which contributes to social resistance.

iii- Corruption and Lack of Accountability

Another major cause of declining public trust in institutions is corruption and lack of accountability. For instance, Pakistan ranked 136th out of 182 countries in Corruption Perception Index (Dawn, Corruption in Pakistan, Feb 2026).

iv. Weak Rule of Law

In 2023, Pakistan ranked 130th out of 143 in World Justice Project Rule of Law Index. This is a major cause of declining public trust in institutions.

v. Unemployment

Pakistan's unemployment rose to 7.1% from 2024 to 2025 (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Unemployment in Pakistan, Dec 2025). This is another major cause of declining public trust in institutions in Pakistan.

vi. Chronic Poverty and Governance failures

Due to governance failures, poverty is rising to acute levels. Such as in 2023, nearly 45% population was living below than poverty line and this figure is expected to rise in 2026 (World Bank, Poverty in Pakistan, Feb 2026). This is another major cause of declining public trust in institutions in Pakistan.

vii-

Poor Education System

Pakistan's education system is plagued by chronic underfunding (less than 2.3% of GDP) (Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Poor education system of Pakistan, March 2025). This is another major cause of declining public trust in institutions in Pakistan.

3. Consequences faced by Pakistani Society Due to Declining Public Trust in Institutions in the light of Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory

i- Juvenile Delinquency

In Pakistan, there has been a surge of 5.3% in juvenile delinquency in 2026 as compared to that of 2020 (Al-Jazeera, Juvenile Delinquency in Pakistan, March 2026).

One of the major contributing factors to this is ~~weakening of individual's~~ declining public trust in family institutions caused by growing domestic violence and increase in the number of divorce cases in Pakistan.

ii- Drug Addiction

In Pakistan, 6.7 million people are drug addicts. One of the main contributing factors for this is declining public trust in institutions caused by unemployment, decay of education system, and family dysfunction.

iii- Growing Resistance among Youth against State

In Pakistan, declining belief in societal laws, regulations, norms and state institutions, caused by chronic political instability and governance failures, is leading youth toward resistance against state.

iv- Surge in Crimes

Due to declining public trust in legal authorities of state, there has been a surge in crimes in Pakistan. Due to

which, Pakistan has become third-worst country in terms of law and order in 2025 (World Justice Project (WJP), Rule of law in Pakistan, Dec 2025).

4. Effective Measures for Mitigating Declining Public Trust in Institutions in Pakistan

(i) Nurturing Healthy Family Relations

Example: Nordic countries have taken family well-being initiative which guide parents how to nurture healthy family relations. By doing so, Pakistan can revive public trust in family institutions.

(ii) Employment Generation

Example: South Korea is known for creating start-up ecosystems; due to which, unemployment stands at 2.9% and crime index at 24.9. Pakistan also needs to take these steps for mitigating declining public trust in institutions.

iii-

Providing Vocational Education and Training

Example: China made investment of \$27.9 billion in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for youth in 2026.

Pakistan also needs to do so for mitigating declining public trust in education institutions.

Conclusion

Travis Hirschi's Social Bond theory explains how declining public trust in institutions can contribute to deviant behavior, non-cooperation, and social resistance. He argued that declining public trust in institutions leads to weakening of (public trust) individual's bond to society and weakening of social control, thereby leading individuals toward deviance.