# Crime, Social Control & Legitimacy

## Community Policing
### Public trust, legitimacy and democracy

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# **Community Policing**
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**(1) What learns us the literature on COP about legitimacy?**
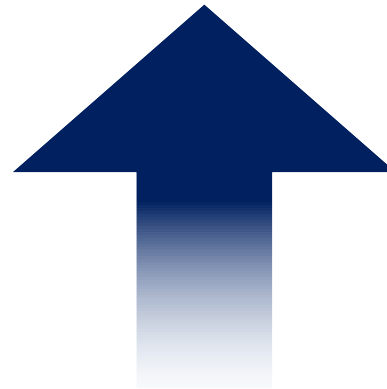
**(2) What learns us the literature on legitimacy about COP?**

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.1. The deficit of traditional policing

(1) Increasing **police capacity** → qualitative strategy;

(2) Population **needs the police** → police needs the population;

(3) Traditional policing is **too reactive** → affect the causes of crime and disorder;

(4) '**One size fits all**' → tailormade responses.

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.2. The evaluation of COP

### *Impact on crime*

**+/-**

- A **small reduction** of recorded crime (Gill et al.)
- Small impact of "Neighbourhood Watch" programmes

**+**

- Impact by means of **intensive problem solving** strategies on "hot spots"

**-**

- Involvement population is problematic in **structurally deprived neighbourhoods** (feelings of despair & powerlessness & distrust)
- Decrease of emergency calls (**Matteüs effect**)

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.2. The evaluation of COP

### *Impact on public opinion*

↗

(1) the **image** of police to the public;
(2) the **appreciation** of the police by the public;
(3) the **satisfaction** of the public;
(4) the **legitimacy** of the police (Gill et al.)

↘

(1) the **feelings** of insecurity;
(2) victims and offenders **dissatisfied**

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.2. The evaluation of COP

- Sherman and colleagues (**What works**, What doesn't, What's promising?) formulate hypothesises:

  a. ~~Neighbourhood Watch programmes encourage **the level of surveillance** by inhabitants;~~
  b. The stream of **information from the communities** is stimulated towards the police;
  c. ~~The improvement of **information from the police** to the public empowers the population;~~

  d. **The legitimacy of the police** is sustained and the population has **more confidence** in the police.

→ **Strong correlation between COP and legitimacy**

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.2. The evaluation of COP

Bailey: *"It is not proven that citizens can act against insecurity in an effective way. Initiatives as "neighbourhood watch" don't have an effect on crime. Most of the time these initiatives **work the best there were they are least needed and least where they are necessary**".*

## 1. The story COP tells us

## 1.2. The evaluation of COP

(1) Did COP converted into **aggressive- and arrest-oriented policing**, because of the growing pressure on results? (Manning)

(2) Weisburd & Braga: these types of policing have **destructive impacts** on order, sense of justice and "community"

(3) Mazeika et al.: **"COP is no longer the most prevalent in police literature, but research on target groups is"**

**(1) What learns us the literature on COP?**
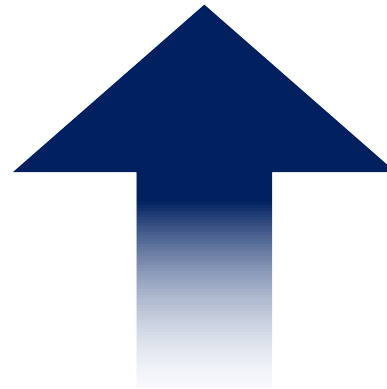
**(2) What learns us the literature on public trust?**

## 2. Key determinants of distrust towards public institutions

Legitimacy means the conviction, in large sections of the population, that institutions and their equipment are worth **public trust**

... a form of legitimate authority; citizens will **defer** to this authority, **obey** the law and as a consequence **cooperate** with the police and the justice system

... justice officials must treat citizens **respect**fully and observe their **rights**

... the **loss** of public trust will breed public **cynicism** about the rule of law and encourage negative outcomes such as **punitiveness**

... seems to be closely **associated with the public demand for a tough-on-crime approach** (Messner, Baumer & Rosenfield).

**2. Key determinants of distrust towards public institutions**

**2.1. The role of geographical characteristics**

(1) Important differences in distrust between countries, but also between cities, municipalities and neighbourhoods. This geographical variability is very **suggestive** for contextual interpretation.

(2) These differences can reflect the **differential composition** of municipalities, but also be the consequence of an environmental influence or contextual effect. What is the impact of **collective efficacy**?

(3) Today greater attention is given to the interaction between the **ecological context** (residential area, the social [school, family]) and **individual context** (socio-demographic background characteristics and psychological attitudes).

(4) It can be assumed that neighbourhoods with **a low degree of collective efficacy** have **high levels of distrust** in the police.

## 2. Key determinants of distrust towards public institutions

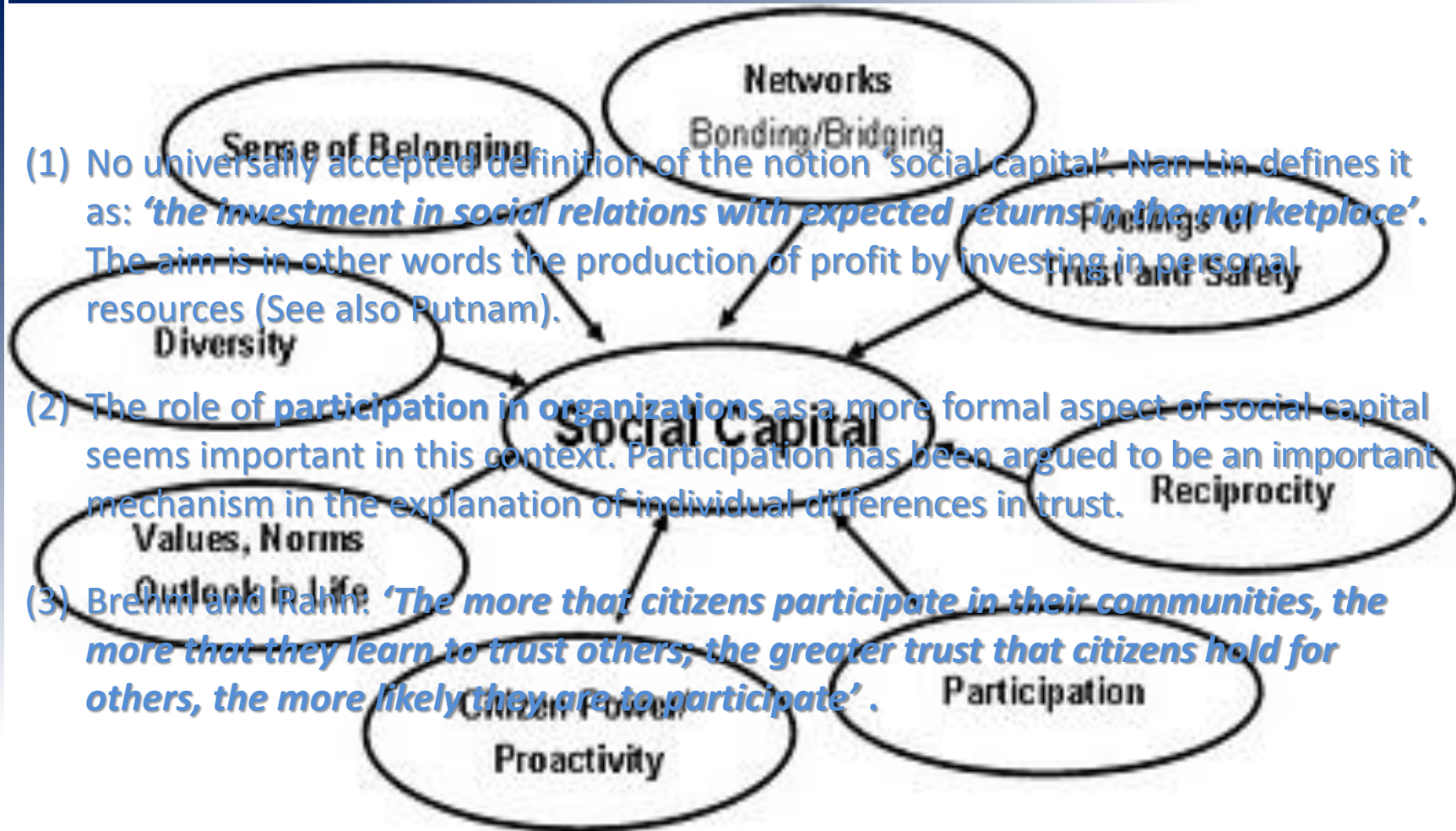### 2.2. The role of background characteristics

(1) **Socio-economic and physical vulnerability** are often connected with **distrust** in the police (e.g. Tyler).

- **Socio-economic vulnerability** means that some people do not have enough material and other resources to protect themselves. **Ethnicity, living alone and low education** are variables that can be used in a theoretical model as indicators for **socio-economic vulnerability.**

- **Gender and age** are variables often used as indicators for **physical vulnerability**.

(2) Is the relationship between vulnerability and institutional trust not **indirect** and does it depends on **other intermediate variables**? We assume that vulnerability has an impact on **social capital** and **feelings of discontent**

## 2. Key determinants of distrust towards public institutions

### 2.3. The role of social capital

(1) No universally accepted definition of the notion 'social capital'. Nan-Lin defines it as: *'the investment in social relations with expected returns in the marketplace'*. The aim is in other words the production of profit by investing in personal resources (See also Putnam).

(2) The role of **participation in organizations** as a more formal aspect of social capital seems important in this context. Participation has been argued to be an important mechanism in the explanation of individual differences in trust.

(3) Brehm and Rahn: *'The more that citizens participate in their communities, the more that they learn to trust others; the greater trust that citizens hold for others, the more likely they are to participate'* .

## 2. Key determinants of distrust towards public institutions

## 2.4. The role of feelings of discontent

(1)  General dissatisfaction with the current society (or **'discontent'**) is related to a **decrease in trust** in various institutions (e.g. McDill).

(2)  **Socio-cultural values** have effect on attitudes related to trust:

a)  *Anomia :* political powerlessness, predictor of distrust
     Negative related to trust
b)  *Ethnocentrism* : related to racism; xenophobia, prejudice, etc.
     Negative related to trust
c)  *Authoritarianism* is also strongly related to trust
     Positive related to trust

## Conclusion

Research based on understanding COP and its public legitimacy is **modes**t because the research focus is far too narrow.

Necessity to **combine research on COP and research on public trust**.

The link between research on COP and causal research on legitimacy of the police is not bridged. This link presents **important opportunities.**

More research is needed for a good understanding of effects of police strategies and tactics on police legitimacy, taking into account **social mechanisms** and **individual characteristics of citizens**, that might influence the effects.

It does, after all, affect our democratic society in a fundamental way.