

## ABSTRACT

UNDERWOOD, TABITHA LYNN. Individual and Contextual Factors Associated with Community Building in Apartment Complexes. (Under the direction of Roger E. Mitchell).

Although a large portion of society is housed in rental units, much of the literature on sense of community has focused on homeowners and their role in community development activities within neighborhoods. Much less attention has been paid to the circumstances under which renters become engaged in local communities. In particular, the potential for apartment complexes to serve as locations for community development and the promotion of sense of community has not been examined. As an initial step, this study explored the factors associated with apartment complex managers engaging in community building activities within their complexes. It was hypothesized that individual characteristics of the managers (i.e., perceived importance of community building to their role, managers' personal experience with community building in their non-work life, and favorable perceptions of renters more generally) would be associated with community building activities, and that these relationships would be moderated by a contextual variable (i.e., the perceived organizational support for community building from the management company).

A sampling frame was constructed by identifying all apartment complexes in North Carolina advertised in online search engines (e.g., Apartments.com, Forrent.com, Apartmentguide.com). A random sample of 800 complexes was drawn, and letters and follow-up phone calls were employed to invite property managers to participate in an on-line survey. About 17% (N=133) provided usable data. In terms of measures, a community building scale was constructed by summing the number of community-building activities the property managers reported engaging in during their lifetime and during the past 12 months. Exploratory factor

analysis showed adequate internal consistency for scales developed to assess importance of community building, perceptions of renters, personal experience with community-building, and organizational support for community-building.

At the bivariate level, there was no relationship between managers' community building activities and the following variables: average income of residents, managers' length of time in the management industry, personal experiences with community building, perceptions of renters, and a measure of social desirability. Average rent, age of complex, number of apartments, perceived importance of community-building, and organizational support were all significantly correlated with community-building at the bivariate level. Hierarchical regressions showed evidence of a significant relationship between community building and the independent variables of number of apartments, importance of community building, and organizational support. However, the analyses failed to show evidence of a moderating effect of organizational support. Such analyses clearly indicated that organizational support was the strongest predictor of community-building activities.

Successful community building initiatives often create alliances with key stakeholders within neighborhood and community settings. Property managers represent one such stakeholder (but certainly not the only one) that could be involved in efforts to promote sense of community within apartment complexes. This study suggests that property managers report being receptive to such activities, and that organizational support may be a key variable in whether such interest is turned into action. Limitations of the study include the following: use of self-report data and the possibility of inaccurate reporting; low response rate and the possibility that only more positively biased managers responded to the survey; and the challenges of developing valid measures of community-building. Future research should examine: measurement issues regarding community

building, the circumstances under which renter and property managers have convergent views of property managers' activities and the impact of such activities on community-building.

Practitioners could examine the possibilities of promoting sense of community within apartment complexes, and assist renters in becoming more engaged in their communities.

Individual and Contextual Factors Associated with Community Building in Apartment  
Complexes

by  
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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this work to my husband, David Underwood, who has been a constant source of strength for me.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Tabitha Underwood grew up in Bruceville, a small town in southern Indiana. She attended Indiana University in Bloomington, IN and graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and minors in both Philosophy and Latin. In 2003, Tabitha entered North Carolina State University pursuing a PhD in Psychology within the Psychology in the Public Interest program. While in the program, she earned her Masters of Science degree in Psychology in December 2006. Tabitha has a passion for improving the quality of life of individuals through community building and neighborhood improvement. She has spent her career helping others become engaged in their communities.

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## INTRODUCTION

As you drive through many of our cities today, you will see that large portions of the American population are housed in high density apartment complexes. Due to increasing urban populations, the potential for urban sprawl, and the recent crisis in the housing market, there is an increasing demand for these higher density developments. Approximately 33% of the population rents, 44% of which live in complexes with more than 5 units. As of 2008, there were over 17 million individual apartment units across the US (National Multi-Housing Council, n.d. b). They are becoming fixtures in our neighborhoods and are often communities in and of themselves. Therefore, it is important to understand how these complexes operate and how they function as communities. However, little attention has been paid to the ecological context of complexes or to renters as a housing class. Part of this context includes sense of community and neighbor interaction. The purpose of this study was to examine whether apartment property managers can facilitate community building in the complex and what influences their participation in such endeavors.

Community building efforts are a way to enhance the social fabric of communities. These endeavors help residents feel a sense of belonging, trust one another, and rely on one another. We have many relationships in our lives, at work, in the family, and in the community. Neighboring relationships can have role expectations that are often quite unclear. Neighbors are part of our everyday lives yet how we interact with them varies from situation to situation (Perin, 1988). Community building helps to clarify the expectations of neighbor relationships in positive ways. It has many other benefits both for the community, the individuals, and the managers. For instance,

it has been linked to decreased turnover (Babka, 2008; Day, 1988). Sense of community is the result of community building which has been linked to a reduction in crime and in social and physical disorder (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997; 1999) and enhanced well-being of the residents (Farrell, Aubry, & Coulombe, 2004; Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001).

Much of the literature on community building comes from work with traditional single family owner-occupied neighborhoods. In our society, the American Dream encompasses and portrays a bias toward homeownership (Barreto, Marks, & Woods, 2007; Dreier, 1982; Heskin, 1981; Lands, 2008). It is expected that people will make a natural progression from renting to owning (Perin, 1977; 1988) and that people should not be “spatially out of place” for the renting phase of their life (Perin, 1988, p.98). Renting is seen as a temporary situation reserved for certain points in the life cycle while homeownership is perceived as the housing situation that everyone should be striving to achieve. So, much effort goes into understanding and enhancing these types of mostly owner-occupied communities.

Within owner-occupied neighborhoods, there are often homeowner’s associations or neighborhood groups that work to enhance the social fabric of the neighborhood. These groups are targeted for placemaking and community building endeavors because of their ability to reach residents. Efforts may include such activities as community problem solving, neighborhood watch, enhancing public spaces, block parties, or youth activities. However, there is little reference ever made to the social fabric of rental communities. One type of rental community, apartment complexes, can house hundreds of people and could be viewed as its own type of community. Some even have amenities that traditional neighborhoods lack such as a clubhouse, swimming

pool, or tennis court. Yet, few have neighborhood groups that work to build community among the residents. The prevailing view in community development practice seems to be that if we could just get more people into homeownership we could increase their quality of life (Glickman & Servon, 1998). What about influencing the lives of people where they are and working to make the communities and homes in which they live better?

One reason for the lack of research on apartment complexes could be the prevailing view of renters, which often includes stereotypes of transiency and apathy. Renters are often treated as second class citizens (Heskin, 1981; Perin, 1977; Perin, 1988). For instance they are not always included in communication from municipalities. Only owners are sent information about upcoming initiatives, ordinances, zoning issues, and any other pieces of communication. There is a stereotype that renters are apathetic, uninterested in their communities, transient, and fundamentally different from homeowners (Perin, 1977). We are socialized toward a negative stereotype of renters (Rowlands & Gurney, 2001) especially renting during certain parts of the life cycle when you are expected to own (Perin, 1977). This negative perception could be the result of a potential linkage between renting and social class. For instance, the median household income for apartment dwellers is much lower than that of the general population, \$25,500 and \$47,000 respectively (National Multi-Housing Council, n.d. b). There are a higher percentage of Caucasian individuals in owner-occupied housing and a higher educational attainment for homeowners versus renters (US Census, 2008). So, the negative perception of renters could in fact be due to social class and not housing tenure. Whatever the cause, one purpose of this study is to analyze

how property managers' perception of renters may influence their own behaviors in terms of community building activities, not to determine the causes of the negative perceptions.

It was the purpose of this study to shed light on what is happening within apartment complexes in terms of community building activities and how those efforts can be increased. Many complexes are not fortunate enough to have a tenant association that can act in place of a homeowners association and activate social programs to build community within the complex. So, the task falls on lone renters. However, the level of community building may also be influenced by the actions of the apartment management. Research has shown that community building is most successful when there is motivation for such activities from the community itself and not imposed upon a community by outsiders. However, the existence of leadership is also a critical factor (Mattessich, Monsey, & Roy, 2004). This study proposed that property managers exist within the community and can serve as potential leaders and allies in a community building process. Traditionally community building is a grassroots process whereby residents are empowered. It was not the intent of this study to claim that community building cannot be a grassroots process nor that the residents cannot be the experts in the process. It merely suggests that one can examine the circumstances in which property managers can assist in the process and help it along.

This study proposed that there are two mechanisms that can influence whether property managers partake in community building activities within their apartment complex. One is individual characteristics, which pertain to the perceptions that property managers have of the renters, their personal experiences with community building, and the importance they place on

community building. It was hypothesized that if the manager has a negative view of renters as apathetic, irresponsible, or transient, the manager may be less willing to help the residents organize or put any effort into community building. It was also hypothesized that if property managers have personal experiences with community such as interacting with their own neighbors and feeling a sense of community in their own neighborhoods or place importance on community building as part of their job they will be more likely to participate in community building.

Another mechanism is contextual, which pertains to the organizational resources and support available for community building within the complex. Property managers may want to help residents with programs to build their sense of community but do not have the staff, funding, or support to do so. In terms of organizational characteristics, it is proposed that the support received by the managers for community building will moderate the relationship between two of the individual characteristics and community building. For instance, even if managers place a large importance on community building or have an enormous amount of experience with community building, if they do not have the organizational support from the management company, they will be less likely to implement community building endeavors. The following literature review outlines what it means to be a renter in American society, what community building looks like, its effects on the individual and community, and the organizational atmosphere of apartment property management.

#### *Definition of Community*

Community has been defined in many different ways (Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993; Selznik, 1992). Traditionally, community has referred to either a locality or a relational group

(Heller, 1989; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Walter, 2005). A community defined as a locality refers to a geographic area with defined boundaries and residents as members. For instance with a locality definition a neighborhood, city, or block could be considered a community. On the other hand, some have argued that groups can be merely relational and not be bound by a geographic location. A relational community is one that is based on interpersonal relationships. For instance, a church group or sports team does not have particular geographic boundaries, yet these groups have the same potential for social cohesion, strong ties, and a sense of community (Heller, 1989). A relational community is one in which members are drawn together by shared interests or skills (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Heller (1989) proposes a third type of community, community as collective political power. This definition of community is typified by a political coalition, a group of like-minded individuals that come together to express their political will.

This study defines the term *community* by building upon previous definitions. The theoretical orientation of this study maintains that the term *community* carries with it certain dimensions that go beyond definitions of a community simply as a locality or a relational group. As Minkler (2005) states, a community is an experience not necessarily a location. Research has proposed that the term community carries with it certain characteristics. In a community, there is a feeling of connectedness. This connectedness means that a community consists of common bonds, a sense of belonging, and a common identity (Day, 2006; Selznick, 1992). It has been proposed that a community is multidimensional, dynamic, and ever evolving (Minkler, 2005). Shaffer and Anundsen (1993) state that “community is a dynamic whole that emerges when a group of people (1) participate in common practices (2) depend upon one another (3) make



decisions together (4) identify themselves as part of something larger than the sum of their individual relationships (5) commit themselves for the long term to their own, one another's, and the group's well-being." (p.10). The social interaction that forms the interpersonal relationships and in turn the sense of belonging creates a *community*.

Depending on the quality of the relationships, community can be seen on a continuum (Minkler, 2005) or categorized into a typology. Warren (1978) developed a typology based on three characteristics: residents' identification with the neighborhood, neighboring, and connection to the larger community. The combination of these three characteristics created six different types of neighborhood. They were integral, parochial, diffuse, stepping-stone, transitory, and anomic. Each has a different combination of identification, neighboring, and connection to the wider community. For instance, an integral community has high levels of interaction, strong connections to the local government and political process, and residents feel a deep sense of community with the neighborhood. Anomic, on the other hand, has a lack of resident interaction with each other and with the wider community and residents do not identify with the neighborhood. The type of neighborhood has the potential to influence the success of different interventions based on the informal helping networks in the neighborhood. In all of the above instances of defining community, the term entails social ties and a sense of community both of which are the outcomes of community building.

This study uses Mattessich's (2004) definition of community developed for a study of factors that influence community building. They define it as "people who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with

the place where they live.” (p.6). Social ties refer to the neighbor interaction and social participation in the community and the psychological ties refer to a sense of community (Mattessich, 2004). It combines the ideas of a locality and a relational group to define community.

How we define community is crucial to our practice. If community was not something more than just a locality then there would be no meaning to the practice of community building. “The goal [of community building practice] is to build the capacity of the entire system and all of its participants to operate as community” (Walter, in Minkler, 2005 p.66) and “the emergence of community depends on the opportunity for, and the impulse toward, comprehensive interaction, commitment, and responsibility.” (Minkler, 2005, p.359)

#### *Definition of Community Building*

As mentioned above, this study examined community building in apartment complexes. Community building has been defined as “any identifiable set of activities pursued by a community in order to increase community social capacity” (Mattessich, Monsey, & Roy, 2004, p.11). It is the act of enhancing the social fabric of an area through increasing resident interaction and sense of community whereby locations collectively develop not just connections with one another but social norms and values to create a community (Jason, 1997). There are many ways to think about community building but one central theme prevails; community building works to increase self-reliance, confidence, and responsibility so that communities depend upon themselves to solve problems. It creates an environment where neighbors rely on one another, work together, and feel connected to each other (McNeely, 1999). Community building can be focused on

increasing resident interaction, neighboring, sense of community, collective efficacy, social cohesion, pro-social norms, informal social control, community organizing, etc.

Examples of how to build a sense of community and neighbor interaction include resident initiated activities, recreational opportunities, a resident organization, informal neighboring, social activities, and clubs (Zaff & Devlin, 1998). The following are examples of community building activities in homeowner communities with an association and association manager: neighborhood watch, walking groups, book clubs, and welcome meetings (Overton, 2004). In the realm of community policing, community building has been utilized by police departments through the following steps: improving neighborhood space, identifying with neighborhoods, encouraging resident efforts, resident participation, and coordinating organizations (Renauer, Duffee, Scott, Chermak, & McGarrell, 2004). Besides these examples, The Foundation for Community Association research includes a list of tips that neighborhood association managers can utilize in order to build resident involvement. These include welcoming new residents and helping them become affiliated with the activities of the neighborhood, creating activities for new residents, utilizing give-aways, sending thank-you's when someone volunteers, practicing positive customer service, holding board office hours and quarterly town hall meetings, celebrating successes, helping residents become involved in the wider community, facilitating awareness of local political issues, establishing committees with clear objectives and responsibilities. (Foundation for Community Association Research, 2001). No matter what techniques are used, community building means "neighbors learning to rely on each other; working together on concrete tasks that take advantage of new self-awareness of their collective and individual assets and, in the process,

creating human, family, and social capital that provides a new base for a more promising future and reconnection to America's mainstream." (McNeely, 1999, p. 742). In all, community building helps residents claim responsibility for the outcomes of their community (McNeely, 1999).

### *Community Building in Relation to Other Constructs*

#### *Community Organizing*

Community building is sometimes used interchangeably with community organizing. Although there is overlap in the use of these terms, there are differences in emphases. Typically, the literature refers to community building as consensus based and community organizing as conflict based. Community building is seen as a neighborhood improvement strategy that focuses on developing relationships. Community organizing is seen as a confrontational strategy that focuses on changing existing power structures. Community building does not presume equality across groups yet doesn't focus on power differences as a starting point. It works to bring people together from multiple constituencies to solve a common problem and realize a common interest. Community organizing also works to solve a common problem, yet starts with the premise of inequality and works to change the power structures in order to combat the inequality, which in turn solves the problem facing the residents (Saegert, 2006). Saegert (2006) proposes that community organizing is a community building strategy that has local outcomes and helps to build community civic capacity. She sees community organizing as also building relationships but through its use of the exchange of power. Others have proposed that community building is a community organizing strategy. It is seen as a type of organizing but using consensus-based

methods (Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Saegert (2006) argues that we should be building civic capacity and that community building and community organizing both do just that but in slightly different ways. In general, the distinction made refers to community organizing as addressing power dynamics and community building as building relationships. However it is still unclear as to whether community building and community organizing are two separate constructs. For instance, community organizing benefits from community building. The effects of organizing could be greater if the residents know one another and feel bonded to one another before beginning to combat the existing power structures. So, currently, the literature does not support any conclusions as to whether community building and community organizing are separate constructs.

### *Community Capacity Building*

The terms community building and community capacity building are often used interchangeably as well. According to the Aspen Institute (1996), “community capacity is the combined influence of a community’s commitment, resources and skills that can be deployed to build on community strengths and address community problems and opportunities” (p.8). For the purposes of this study, community building creates or enhances the social capacity of the neighborhood (Nitzberg, 2005). It creates sense of community and neighbor interaction. Community capacity is considered a broader concept. It is the community’s capacity to create change. Social capacity is a part of that but community capacity is much more. Goodman et al (1998) proposed that community capacity has the following dimensions: participation, leadership, skills, resources, social and inter-organizational networks, sense of community,

understanding of community history, community power, community values, and critical reflection. Community building is not only a part of the concept of community capacity but it also has the potential to enhance any of these other dimensions. For instance, community building activities such as organizing a community watch could enhance the leadership skills of the residents. Similarly, Chaskin (2001) defines community capacity as “the interaction of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of a given community” (p. 295). The term community building focuses on the social capital dimension of this equation.

### *Social Capital*

For a broad definition, the literature typically states that social capital refers to social networks (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). However, some extend the definition beyond social networks to include what comes from them or the quality of the relationships. For instance, Putnam (2000) defines social capital as the “connections among individuals” specifically, the “social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p.19). Paxton (1999) states that “social capital involves two components: objective associations between individuals and a subjective type of tie” (p.93). The objective associations refer simply to social connections among people. The subjective tie component refers to a positive connection with others that includes reciprocity, trust, and emotional connections. In general, these concepts of objective associations and subjective ties can be applied to any type of setting, not necessarily a locality. However, there is a link to locality based community building. The objective associations coincide

with the concept of neighboring and the subjective ties could coincide with the concept of sense of community. As can be seen from these definitions, community building's focus is to build social capital through its efforts to increase sense of community and neighbor interaction. However, social capital can refer to broader contexts than the level at which community building works. Often, the term social capital is applied to settings as large as cities or societies. In general, social capital refers to the aggregate of social networks whether in a locality or a relational group.

### *Effects of Community Building*

Community building could have effects at multiple ecological levels. Using Bronfenbrenner's model of ecological levels, community building effects can be mapped onto the individual, organization and locality levels (Dalton, Elias, & Wandersman, 2001). The effects at the individual level could include quality of life and personal well-being. The effects at the organization level could include consequences for the apartment complex such as retention, and those for the locality include consequences for a neighborhood. The literature is deficient when it comes to not only the direct effects of community building on outcomes for individuals and communities, but also the link between actual community building endeavors and sense of community and neighbor interaction. Community building is assumed to build social capacity or sense of community and neighbor interaction (Mattessich, Monsey, & Roy, 2004), which in turn can affect such outcomes as personal well-being, crime, retention. Much of the discussion of the effects of community building focuses on the relationship between constructs such as sense of community and neighbor interaction and their outcomes such as enhanced personal well-being, reductions in crime, and retention rates. The literature illustrates the link between sense of

community and neighbor interaction and the above outcomes (i.e. Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedechi, 2001; Farrell, Aubry, & Coulombe, 2004; Davidson & Cotter, 1991; Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997; O’Dea Hein, 2007). However, it does not contain evidence of the direct link between community building activities and these outcomes or the link between community building activities and sense of community and neighbor interaction.

Searches of databases revealed no empirical studies of the direct link between community building endeavors and outcomes such as health, quality of life, well-being, crime, and neighborhood improvement. During the literature review, two different databases were used for the initial search for scholarly research, Google Scholar and Web of Science. Search terms included but were not limited to such items as community building, community capacity building, sense of community, neighboring, neighbor interaction, effects, outcomes, evaluation, health, well-being, quality of life, crime, neighborhood improvement. First, any research on community building was investigated for any indication of the link between community building and outcomes. Second, any handbooks, guides, and resources for practitioners on the subject of community building were searched. These searches produced limited results as to the link between community building and various individual and community outcomes. So, the third step involved locating research on potential mediating variables. By definition, community building works to increase sense of community and neighbor interaction. So, any research on the outcomes associated with sense of community and neighbor interaction was investigated. The same outcomes mentioned above were used in this literature search as well. These included health,



quality of life, well-being, crime, and community improvement. This search revealed many more studies of this link than the one between community building and individual and community outcomes.

*Personal Effects as a Result of Community Building*

Community building is presumed to have a variety of benefits for individual residents. In general, it is presumed to influence the quality of life of residents and to aid in working on social problems (Hyman, 2002; Jason & Kobayashi, 1995). Since community building entails fostering a sense of community and neighbor interaction, it presumably has many benefits for individuals. Both sense of community and neighboring have been found to be positively associated with personal well-being and enhanced mental health. Each has been found to be associated with an increased sense of well-being and life satisfaction and a decreased sense of loneliness (Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi, 2001; Farrell, Aubry, & Coulombe, 2004). Sense of community in particular is associated with a decrease in worrying and an increase in coping and happiness (Davidson & Cotter, 1991; Pretty, Conroy, Dugay, Fowler, & Williams, 1996). Greater social cohesion has also been linked to lower incidences of child abuse (Putnam, 2000). Being part of a supportive and cohesive community increases an individual's social connections, which in turn increases their chance for social support and adds to their quality of life. Increasing social support and resources decreases disease morbidity and lowers mortality rates (Berkman & Syme, 1979; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). Saegert and Winkel (1996) found a positive association between informal and formal participation in co-op activities and personal leadership skills and political efficacy. With few exceptions, the links between sense of community and positive

outcomes have been more closely examined than the links between community building, sense of community, and these outcomes

Specific activities to change the residential environment have been found to be associated with increases in sense of community, social capital, and mental health (Semenza, March, & Bontempo, 2006). Each of these has been found to be related to improvements to public spaces that build interaction. Semenza, March, & Bontempo (2006) evaluated the effects of the improvements in public spaces such as a mural, labyrinth, benches, planters, lawn chess board, and an information kiosk. Residents were brought together in workshops to collaboratively design each of the sites. Then residents who lived within a two block radius of each of the public sites were surveyed before and after the improvements. A total of 265 residents completed both surveys, which were conducted through door to door interviews. The survey tool included measures for depression, well-being, social capital, and community capacity. Results revealed a significant decrease in depression and a significant increase in sense of community, and overall social capital (Semenza, March, & Bontempo, 2006). Overall, results showed that community building activities in the form of enhancing public spaces for social interaction has a significant positive effect on the individuals who participate in such efforts.

There are limitations to the previous work on the effects of community building. For the most part, research on sense of community and neighboring has been cross-sectional. Out of those cited above, only Semenza's (2006) study utilized a longitudinal design. Even though it was longitudinal, it has its limitations as well. As reported by the author, the results could have been affected by history, maturation, or selection effects (Semenza, 2006). Another limitation concerns

the fact that the above mentioned work was not conducted with apartment complex residents in particular. One of these studies intentionally left apartment units out of the sampling frame, Farrell, Aubry, and Coulombe (2004). Apartment units, along with temporary shelters and nursing homes, were excluded since the original purpose of the data collection was to understand residents' attitudes pertaining to living near people with mental illness. The authors believed that this issue was not relevant to these excluded populations. It is therefore difficult to assume that community building effects would extend specifically to apartment residents. Not only were apartment complexes not included in one of the studies, but some were conducted in different cultures leading to difficulty translating the results to the United States. For instance, Prezza et al (2001) and Farrell, Aubry, and Coulombe (2004) conducted their research in Italy and Canada respectively.

Another limitation in the above mentioned studies relates to the date of data collection. Many have used data collected quite a long time ago, having been collected decades ago. Indeed many cultural norms and behaviors have changed in the decades between data collection and now making it difficult to translate the effects of community building to present day. One final limitation with the above studies concerns the correlational nature of the studies. Because the past research is correlational, causal relationships cannot be presumed from the results.

Many of the correlations found in this research are somewhat low and inconsistent across multiple settings. For instance, Davidson and Cotter (1991) found that each of the three cities examined in their study had different correlations between sense of community and the outcomes for each of the cities, including differences in significance of those correlations. The same

inconsistency of correlation results occurred in the Prezza, Amici, Roberti, and Tedeschi (2001) research. These results could be indicative of a contextual influence on community building. For instance, the variance in community building or in the effects of community building such as sense of community and neighbor interaction could be influenced by community level factors such as the size of the community, norms and culture, or the homogeneity of the community. These contextual factors could then influence the link between community building or sense of community and neighbor interaction and the personal level outcomes.

#### *Locality Effects as a Result of Community Building*

At yet another level of analysis, community building has effects on the neighborhood. As with the personal effects of community building, it may have an indirect effect on outcomes. One specific indirect benefit is reduction in crime (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1997). Research has found that areas with large crime rates are lacking in resident involvement (Schindler, 1994). Variables that are the results of community building efforts such as social cohesion along with informal social control are associated with crime within a neighborhood. Social cohesion and informal social control are elements of sense of community which can be a result of community building efforts. Sampson and Raudenbush (1997) found that informal social control, social cohesion, and trust which were combined into a measure of collective efficacy had a significant negative relationship with perceived violence, violent victimization, and homicide. Over 8700 residents within 343 areas of Chicago were interviewed about informal social control, collective efficacy, violence, and demographics. Their results indicate that social capacity of neighborhoods is related to incidences and perception of crime. Higher levels of collective efficacy or the

combination of social cohesion and informal social control is associated with lower levels of violence in the neighborhood and victimization. Sampson and Raudenbush (1999) also found that social cohesion is significantly associated with signs of public disorder. The researchers used observation of urban neighborhoods along with a survey, police records, vital statistics, and census data to examine the relationship between social cohesion and disorder. Results showed that social cohesion is negatively related to both social and physical disorder, which influence crime and the image of a neighborhood. Basic participation in the apartment building has also been found to be negatively associated with crime (Saegert, Winkel, & Swartz, 2002). Theoretically, an apartment property manager could work to facilitate the development of social cohesion. This in turn could help reduce instances of crime and the perception of crime by both insiders and outsiders.

*Apartment Complex Effects as a Result of Community Building*

Potentially more important for apartment property managers are the impacts that community building can have on the entire complex. First, community building has the potential to help make the complex run more efficiently. For instance, those who participate in informal or formal activities in the complex are more knowledgeable of policies (Saegert & Winkel, 1996). Helping residents form connections with one another could help cooperative work because of enhanced communication channels that community building brings (Briggs, 1997). Alternatively, building a sense of community and resident interaction could have negative consequences for property managers. For instance, residents could become more effective in making demands on the managers.

Community building also has the potential for decreasing turnover rate. For instance, JD Power and Associates (2007) found that renters who plan on moving in the next six months will do so because of the cost of rent, noise of neighbors/neighborhood, and safety/security concerns (O'Dea Hein, 2007). Two of these problems have the potential to be reduced by community building. For instance helping residents get to know one another through social activities and networking could increase neighbors talking with one another about their concerns and may foster a greater sense of respect. Safety concerns might be alleviated through the same resident interaction as well as the formation of a community watch, institutionalizing youth activities, and fostering a general concern for others. Some industry professionals specifically state that building a sense of community is a tool for resident retention and that it should be planned and intentional instead of an afterthought (Babka, 2008).

In the mid-1980's, local management companies began using recreational programs to market their apartment communities at a time when there were more apartment units than renters to fill them. The recreation amenities included aspects of community building such as socials, after-school programs, family activities, and programs specifically for seniors (Day, 1988). Day (1988) evaluated the effectiveness of such programs for obtaining and retaining residents. After surveying 100 residents who participated in such recreation programs, she found that over half of the residents felt that the recreation programs were a factor in staying in the community and all of the respondents thought that the programs were worthwhile. However, results did not indicate that the programs were an effective marketing tool. The authors suggested that property managers be conscious of resident needs and demands and offer programs to meet those needs as a way to

decrease turnover. Although, in this study, the recreation programs might have had an impact on the residents, results were only analyzed as descriptive statistics and no correlation analyses or prediction models were used (Day, 1988).

Community building activities may be an “amenity” that fosters retention. They are part of the “little, unexpected touches that attract tenants to a property and help set it apart from its competition” (Smith & Knoll, 1987, p.14). It shows that property managers “care about [the tenants’] needs” (Pantzer, 1987, p. 31). Property managers are often focused only on filling vacancies and not necessarily on the little amenities that make a place a home (Mann, 1987). Executives in the apartment management industry have claimed that community building is an amenity that helps retain residents. For instance, a representative of a large management company reported increasing retention in using community building such as coordinating events at the complex such as pool parties or day trips to nearby attractions, publishing a regular newsletter, and giving tenants free flowers to decorate their balconies and patios (Pantzer, 1987). Another management executive reported that his experience has shown that the most common reason that residents leave an apartment complex is boredom. However, boredom can be easily fixed with little cost. He suggests programs that increase “excitement, participation, and interaction among residents” (Mann, 1987, p.29). However, this is merely his opinion based on his experience in the management industry, not empirical research. In the Institute for Real Estate Management President’s Letter, he explains that in order to lessen turnover rates and increase the satisfaction of renters the industry must offer the amenities that homeowners obtain. He stresses having more services to apartment renters like gardens, entertainment centers, and

grills (Bates, 1995). Community building could be an amenity offered by management companies to retain current tenants.

Community building could also be used as a marketing tool to attract new renters. For instance, the US Census Property Owners and Managers Survey (1995) found that over three quarters of respondents advertise their properties through word of mouth. Community building has the potential to increase this word of mouth advertising. For instance, if community building increases residents' quality of life and satisfaction with their complex they may be more likely to tell others about it and recommend it to others when vacancies arise.

#### *Instances of Community Building in Apartment Complexes*

Although the literature is sparse when it comes to community building in apartment complexes, there are a few studies that describe such efforts. Many studies that focus on any kind of community building are within college residence halls, public housing, or housing for the elderly. All of these are multi-family developments as are apartment complexes, yet somewhat different in their design and use.

One prevalent form of community building is resident management of public housing where groups of residents take leadership roles and direct the management duties of the complex. Some have succeeded and others have floundered but resident management rose to the national stage with the encouragement of public housing authorities and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (Koebel & Cavell, 1995). Some of the accomplishments of tenant associations include empowerment of residents, building a sense of community, forming partnerships with outside agencies, decreasing expenses through a



reduction in maintenance costs and turnover rate, increasing pride in the complex, and developing programs that benefit the residents such as workshops, trainings, and recreational activities (Koebel & Cavell, 1995).

Another instance of community building in multi-family developments comes from student housing. A student apartment complex was equipped with an online community where residents could connect with one another in order to develop a sense of community. In talking with management, researchers found that the idea of building community in the complex was appealing to the management in the hopes of adding value to the complex, promoting the complex to new tenants, and an increase in safety. Tenants participated in the development of the online network and agreed that it would benefit the residents, enhance the quality of life, and increase sense of community (Foth, 2004).

There are a few instances in the literature that make mention of community building activities specifically in apartment complexes. For instance, the *Journal of Property Management*, an industry publication for property managers, has encouraged professionals to look at community building efforts for the betterment of their properties and the residents within them. Schindler (1994) gives examples of community watch programs and their benefits. She argues that crime has grown to such a level that public safety officers cannot handle all the problems and the public should take the initiative to prevent crime in their neighborhoods. One such initiative is a community watch. She encourages property managers to embrace community watches as a way to reduce the effects that crime can have on turnover, resident injuries, and vandalism. Through community watches, residents can

help property managers care for the well-being of the complex and each other. Another article by Taylor (1999) in the same industry publication stressed the importance of community building for attracting new residents as well as retention. He gives examples of community building activities that go beyond the standard pool and pizza parties such as scavenger hunt, book clubs, community gardens, guest speakers, and charity work (Taylor, 1999).

One industry professional states that building a sense of community can be accomplished by the following techniques: “creating opportunities for shared experiences, helping residents grow roots by promoting social gatherings and other business networking opportunities, promoting events held on site that draw on common interests you have identified, offering renewal incentives like ‘help with your home or home office’, assisting with shelving and closet organizer enhancements, monthly drawings and promotions, occasional weekend and after 5 pm office hours.” (Babka, 2008, p.1)

Some residents may be resistant to community building endeavors out of fear of retaliation from the property manager such as eviction. At times these fears are well founded. For instance, one resident in an upscale New York apartment complex set up a social networking group on Google and made critical comments to fellow residents about such things as amenities, fees, rent increases, and problem behaviors in the complex. He and his wife were subsequently denied a renewal of their lease (Barnard, 2009). Although the above mentioned activities such as promoting social gatherings or monthly promotions are not necessarily threatening to property managers or warrant retaliation, community building

could bring residents into conflict with managers under some circumstances. For instance, if residents begin to interact more, they may decide to start a tenant association and make demands on the property managers. A community watch may bring to light certain crime problems, which could have negative consequences for marketing apartment vacancies.

Another reason renters may not be involved could be the lack of avenues for engagement available to renters. When compared to homeowners, renters are often less involved in their communities (Cox, 1982; Ditkovsky & van Vliet, 1984; Rohe & Stegman, 1994). A greater propensity to community involvement may not be the result of just being a homeowner. It may result from the opportunities provided homeowners yet not available to renters. Homeowners often have structures within the community where they live that facilitate social interaction and participation in organizations. They may have neighborhood or block associations or even a homeowners association that owners can join. Take for instance Rohe and Stegman's (1994) study that found that after having owned a home for a year and a half, residents participated in more organizations yet these were all neighborhood based organizations like homeowners associations and block groups. Those types of structures often do not exist in rental communities. Renters that live within mostly owner occupied neighborhoods also do not have to be invited to be a part of those groups. By definition, a homeowner's association is made up of anyone in the neighborhood who owns their home. Neighborhood associations are allowed to discriminate in allowing residents to participate including the ability to exclude people based on the amount of property they own (Nelson, 2004).

### *Roles of Residents and Property Managers*

Property managers may be in a position to provide opportunities for residents to build community in their complexes. Managers can provide ways for residents to get to know one another, and can provide structures similar to those present in owner-occupied neighborhoods that help with community building. They can provide leadership to the complex and thus are able to influence the behaviors of the residents. Leadership is important for social action within neighborhoods. For instance using logistic regression, Foster-Fishman, Cantillon, Pierce, and Van Egeren (2007) found that higher levels of neighborhood leadership was associated with higher levels of both individual activism and collective action. Leadership has also been identified as an important dimension of community capacity that can influence change (Goodman et al, 1998; Lempa et al, 2008). Interviews with community leaders used to develop a measure of the capacity of community-based initiatives revealed that leadership was an important factor associated with the success of community initiatives (Lempa et al, 2008). Many handbooks and resource guides on community building also emphasize not only the existence of leadership but the leadership qualities needed for community building endeavors to succeed (e.g. Borrup, 2006; Mattessich, Monsey, & Roy, 2004; Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993). In all, property managers have the potential to be leaders in the apartment complex and thus can influence community building efforts within the complex.

Managers do have a role in community building. Even the field of homeowner and condominium association management has stated that community building should be a focus of their profession. Industry professionals have claimed that association managers should

take a leadership role in building community in the neighborhoods they manage and that they should go beyond the day-to-day technical aspects of the job to serving the residents. They state that association managers are in a position to be not only a leader but also a teacher through educating residents about community building and encouraging them to volunteer to help with such efforts. The professionals claim that this refocusing comes from the fact that people want to live in neighborhoods where there is a sense of community and good neighbor relations (Overton, 2004).

Although association management refers to managers of homeowner or condominium associations, there are parallels between it and rental property management. Both are in the business of serving people, managing housing issues, and rule enforcement. Just like traditional neighborhoods, complexes could be seen as communities and property managers are in a unique position to organize residents, facilitate neighbor interaction, and build a sense of community in the complex. Property managers are also in a prime position for community building because of the amenities available. Some complexes have community spaces that would provide for resident interaction such as a clubhouse, pool, movie theater, playground, computer resource room. Others have some programs for their residents such as the occasional social event, movie rentals, and a community garden.

This study will attempt to address the question of whether property managers can be enlisted as allies in community building endeavors. It is not proposed that property managers should necessarily initiate all community building activities or bear the burden of constantly maintaining a sense of community and neighbor interaction within their complexes.

Traditionally community building is a grassroots effort, initiated by residents who want to better their own lives and their neighborhood. This should also be the case within apartment complexes. However, in the instance of apartment complexes, property managers often serve as gatekeepers, especially as it relates to available resources for resident activities. This study proposes that property managers can be leaders in the community building process by facilitating activities that help to build resident relationships. Managers may face some barriers to taking up such a role. For instance, without the support of the management company, managers may face some push back from the company for increasing the workload of the office. They may also have to take resources away from other responsibilities in order to facilitate community building.

Since little research has been done on community building in apartment complexes it is difficult to determine whether renters or managers want community building in their complexes. This study argues that apartment complexes should be treated no differently than traditional owner-occupied neighborhoods and that they should have the opportunities for community building that neighborhood associations and homeowner associations afford homeowners. However, there is some evidence that renters do want to foster a sense of community and resident interaction. Residents have reported that they will pay more for a sense of community and that the sense of community in a complex is important in determining satisfaction with their management (Perkins, 2008).

A 2007 J.D. Power and Associates survey of over 2,500 apartment residents found that out of six factors examined, sense of community had the most influence on resident satisfaction.

These six factors included amenities, condition of unit at move-in, rent/value, safety, sense of community, and service staff. Results indicated that residents reporting a higher sense of community are more satisfied with their management company (O'Dea Hein, 2007). Kingsley Associates have found that a community building technique, social activities, is related to resident satisfaction (O'Dea Hein, 2008). However, full reports were not available to evaluate the quality of evidence to support these conclusions. There is currently no empirical basis for renters' and managers' level of interest in community building. However, one function of this study was to address this question for managers.

Further research is needed to examine whether residents participate in community building, their level of interest in such endeavors, and what influences resident participation. Beyond these questions are the issues of the costs and benefits of participation, how residents evaluate each and decide to participate. All of these are beyond the realm of this study. The current study examined the role of the property manager in assisting with community building.

It must be noted that this research is not proposing that community building will be able to single-handedly move residents out of poverty or solve all community problems. Some of the literature on social capital can sometimes imply that building connections among people can solve any problem (DeFilippis, 2001). Community building often suffers from the same grandiose expectations. Community building can have the following limitations: it requires money, it can have negative consequences for some because it is sometimes initiated by an outside party, and gentrification is always looming when neighborhoods are improved (Fraser & Kick, 2005).

It is the intent of this study to claim that community building can make a difference in people's lives but it has its limitations. This study assumes that community building can enhance a person's quality of life and everyone should have the chance to experience it or at least have the choice to take part. We make the claim that community building is an important intervention and prevention tool; it has the possibility of enhancing the quality of life of residents; and it affords residents certain privileges typically only relegated to homeowners. If traditional owner-occupied neighborhoods have opportunities for residents to feel a sense of community and get to know one another so too should apartment complexes housing renters. With a lack of empirical evidence, it is difficult to determine the effect that community building will have on apartment complex residents but this study serves as a first step in empirical work on community building in apartment complexes.

It is also not our intention to claim that apartment property managers should be the only ones instigating and maintaining community building efforts. This is also the responsibility of residents as well as other external groups. However, property managers are in a unique position that allows them to help residents get started on the route to community involvement and improvement efforts.

### *Predictors of Community Building*

There has been little to no research conducted on the predictors of participation in community building endeavors. This study proposes four predictors of apartment property managers' participation in helping residents with community building. These include the (1) perceptions they have of renters, (2) the personal experiences they have with community building,



(3) the importance they place on community building, and (4) the organizational support they receive from the management company. The indicators are conceptually separated into individual and contextual factors. Analyzing both individual and contextual factors follows Lewin's (1935 as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979) equation for behavior,  $B=f(PE)$ . The equation states that behavior is a function of the interaction of the person and the environment. It emphasizes the importance of not only the individual but also the context in which an individual behaves. In this study we examined the individual factors of property managers' perception of renters, importance of community building, and personal experiences with community and the contextual factor of organizational support received from the management company. In order to follow Lewin's model we analyzed the interaction of the individual and contextual and their effects on property managers' participation in community building endeavors.

#### *Individual Level Predictors*

##### *Negative Stereotype of Renters*

One individual level predictor is the perception that property managers have of renters. Over the course of American history there has been a negative stereotype of renters. Since colonial times, property was the true measure of a man (Dreier, 1982; Krueckeberg, 1999). Owning property meant that you were hard-working and industrious and that you had achieved freedom and independence. Many settlers, fleeing the rule of the landlord, discovered that property was the only true currency. Take for instance the right to vote. Until 1860 only those who owned property could vote (Dreier, 1982; Heskin, 1981; Krueckeberg, 1999). Although renters have won suffrage since then, they are still treated as a different class. For instance certain tax incentives are only the

privilege of homeowners (Capek & Gilderbloom, 1992; Dreier, 1982; Krueckeberg, 1999; Perin, 1977). Also, in certain settings, homeownership seems to declare certain rights to speak not afforded renters because they make the claim that they are homeowners or the claim that they pay property taxes (Krueckeberg, 1999; Perin, 1988).

There is a long history of negative attitudes toward apartment complexes. NIMBYism (Not In My Backyard) is a typical problem with apartment complex developments. Negative perceptions of multi-family housing include: renters are less desirable neighbors; renters overburden the infrastructure; higher density development creates more traffic problems (National Multi-Housing Council, n.d. a); rental units decrease the resale value of single family homes (National Multi-Housing Council, n.d. a; Perin, 1988; 1977); and rental units destroy the character of single family neighborhoods (Perin, 1977; Perin 1988). Examination of pre-existing data sets has shown that each of these myths can be dispelled (Obrinsky & Stein, 2007; Urban Land Institute, nd; National Multi-housing Council, n.d. a).

Not only is there a negative stigma associated with apartment complexes, a negative stereotype of renters in general also exists. “The stigma of not owning property and its association with being poor, transient, politically suspect, and different persists in contemporary society, in community politics, in real estate markets, and in our tax structures” (Krueckeberg, 1999, p.26). One indicator of this stigma is the characterization of renters as second class citizens (Heskin, 1981; Perin, 1977), while homeownership is associated with terms such as “sense of responsibility, better citizen, and family oriented” (Dreier, 1982).

Even professionals in the housing and urban development field consider renters transient, apathetic toward their communities, and detrimental to neighborhoods. Perin (1977) conducted interviews centered on issues of land use and zoning with 26 development, planning, and real estate professionals involved with growth and development in Houston and Philadelphia. Interviews were conducted with executives involved in decision-making related to development. Results indicated that renters are perceived as a different class of people with different characteristics than homeowners. During the interviews most qualities of renters mentioned were negative, especially when juxtaposed against homeowner qualities. Examples of comments reveal that they are seen as less stable, not fiscally responsible, don't take care of their property, and mobile among many others. They have different motivations, different attitudes, and think differently than homeowners (Perin, 1977). It should be noted that a major limitation with Perin's (1977) study concerns the fact that it is over 30 years old. It is unclear whether these perceptions are relevant today given the substantive changes in American society over three decades.

Another indicator of the existence of this stigma is in the terminology of non-ownership. Apartment renters are often called tenants but homeowners are called residents or citizens. Renters live in units or apartments but homeowners live in homes (Michaux, 1996). Certain analogies and metaphors are used to speak about homeownership that uplift homeowners and degrade renters. When referring to homeownership, one study's participants used sayings referring to renters that equated renting with waste and homeownership as opportunity. The researchers found that the interviews with homeowners also contained a prejudice against renters where they were

characterized by a lack of pride in their property and a lack of self-respect interpreted by the participants through the upkeep of the property (Gurney, 1999).

The history of how renters are treated by governing structures is a final indicator of the negative stereotypes of renters. Case studies of local revitalization efforts in Minneapolis and St. Paul revealed during local hearings that neighborhood groups espoused beliefs that renters are transient and have no connection to the neighborhood and rental housing is detrimental to neighborhoods. As a consequence, renters were left out of decision making and revitalization efforts (Goetz & Sidney, 1994). In some municipalities renters are not always sent information concerning their neighborhoods such as notices of events or public hearings. They are often only sent to owners. Also, many landlords' main concern is profit and not their responsibility to their tenants (Capek & Gilderbloom, 1992).

The reason for the negative attitudes toward renters could be the result of the socialization process toward housing tenure in the US. The desire for homeownership and the perception of rental housing is socially constructed. From an early age, Americans are taught that anyone's dream should be a family, job and homeownership. Children believe that a "normal" life means that as you progress in life, you will no longer be a renter, you will own your own house, have a good job, and start a family (Rowlands & Gurney, 2001). This socialization can be seen in the homeownership campaigns in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. While trying to increase homeownership, it was portrayed as being patriotic and renting as un-American. In order to entice people to purchase homes, homeownership marketing strategies were used that equated homeowners with a "good class of people" (p. 944), patriotism, loyalty to the American

government in a time of anticommunist sentiments, masculinity, and solid family values. Renters, in turn, were portrayed as lacking loyalty to America and as detrimental to society (Lands, 2008). One wonders if these beliefs stem from the advertising campaigns of the past and not necessarily actual evidence. Although property managers may be more sensitive to the needs of their residents, they may have still been socialized to believe that homeownership is the end all be all of housing tenure and renting is temporary and somewhat undesirable for most (Flint & Rowlands, 2003). Property managers' views of renters could also stem from a possible connection between renting and social class. In all, their experiences with existing social norms will affect preconceived notions of a negative stereotype of renters.

It was hypothesized that if property managers have negative attitudes toward their renters that pertain to their responsibility and engagement, the managers would be less likely to help them with community building endeavors. If the managers feel that renters don't care about their apartments, don't want to be involved in community endeavors, or don't take responsibility for their actions, they may be less likely to help them become engaged in the community or improve the conditions of that community.

#### *Personal Experiences with Community Building*

Another personal factor proposed to be associated with community building is the property managers' experiences with community building. It was hypothesized that if residents have experiences in their own neighborhoods such as feeling a sense of community and interacting with their neighbors they would be more likely to initiate community building in their complexes.

Ouellette and Wood (1998) found that when past behavior is not a habit or must be applied to a different context than the one in which it was originally learned, the relationship between past behavior and future behavior is mediated by intentions to perform such behavior. Translating this into the context of property managers and apartment complexes, past experiences with community building in their own neighborhood builds a familiarity with neighboring, sense of community, and their positive outcomes which will increase the likelihood for intentions to behave in the same way in the complex, a different context than their own neighborhood. These intentions then result in participation in community building just as in their own neighborhoods.

Within the field of associational involvement, Hooge (2003) found that both the number of active voluntary association memberships and the number of memberships in voluntary associations individuals have ever had are positively significantly associated with neighborhood involvement. Past voluntary behavior leads to other voluntary behavior even in different contexts. The past experience did not need to be in a neighborhood context to influence behavior within a neighborhood.

The present study examined the neighboring behavior and sense of community of the property managers and the relationship between those constructs and community building activities in the complex. Neighboring is defined as “the social interaction and the potential exchange of goods and services with neighbors” (Unger & Wandersman, 1982, p.496). Sense of community is defined as “the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure” (Sarason, 1974, p.157). Past participation in their own

neighborhoods will reduce some of the barriers to understanding the impact of community building and the process of implementation. It will help the property managers understand what it means to feel a sense of belonging and how to interact with their neighbors which will make it easier for the property managers to understand how community building works.

### *Importance Placed On Community Building*

Apartment property managers may place little importance on community building seeing it as part of the periphery of their job instead of an integral part of their work. One property manager handbook states that property managers have the following duties: marketing, leasing, maintenance, grounds, fiscal control, budgeting, office management, rent collection, service of legal notices, staff supervision and training, and resident relations and retention. Community building could fall into the category of resident relations and retention. However, when explaining these duties, the authors emphasize four components. They state that in order to retain residents property managers must communicate the policies, be courteous, friendly, and professional, handle complaints and service requests, and maintain privacy and security. The authors briefly touch on social activities, stating that they could be used as a resident-manager relations technique. Social activities are the only community building technique mentioned and little attention is given to it beyond stating that it may be helpful for retention. Just from the property manager handbook reviewed here, one can see that little importance is placed on community building (Banner, 1992). Another industry publication, *The Landlord Kit*, a book of tools and forms also includes a small component of community building, welcoming new residents. They include a form to be completed by managers with information about the neighborhood and places and services that the

other residents like, such as their favorite restaurant and parks (Taylor, 2002). Although community building has not been found in many industry handbooks, there does seem to be at least a small emphasis placed on it. One of the aims of this study was to determine whether the importance that property managers place on community building affects the actual community building activities that they facilitate.

### *Contextual Factors*

#### *Organizational Support*

Another factor that has the potential of influencing community building is the organizational support provided to the property managers by the management company. The lack of organizational support or resources that the organization provides the management is also referred to as organizational constraints. This term has a more negative connotation yet carries the same meaning. Peters and O'Connor (1980) developed a typology of constraints that included the following categories: job-related information, tools and equipment, materials and supplies, budgetary support, required services and help from others, task preparation, time availability, and work environment. It has been hypothesized that employees may be willing and able to perform various functions of a job yet organizational constraints may keep them from performing at their potential. Therefore the level of support and resources that an organization provides its employees can affect task performance (Peters & O'Connor, 1980; Peters, O'Connor, & Rudolf, 1980).

Organizational support framed in terms of constraints is negatively associated with performance as well as goal commitment. Surveys with department of transportation work



crews revealed that constraints associated with equipment, materials, procedures, training, and staffing taken together are significantly negatively associated with overall performance of the road work crews. These constraints were also negatively associated with other measures of performance such as adherence to work schedules, problem management, effort, customer service, and crew cohesion (Tesluk & Mathieu, 1999). Another study examined the relationship between goal commitment and situational constraints by surveying salespeople within multiple levels of a retail organization. Within this organization, each level of the person's respective department had certain goals that must be met before moving up within the organization. The authors found that salespeople who perceived a greater amount of constraints were less likely to be committed to the goal associated with their level in their department (Klein & Kim, 1998). Margerum (2001) used interviews and surveys with environmental organizations to determine the influences and deterrents to participation in collaborative environmental management strategies. He found that constraints such as a lack of staff and training, costs of participation, and a lack of perceived relevance of the problem to the organization all contributed to the decision to not join the partnership.

It is hypothesized that organizational support will moderate the relationship between the dependent variable of community building and two of the independent variables, importance of community building and personal experiences with community building. It is hypothesized that an increased importance placed on community building may be associated with more community building activities but more so for those property managers who receive support from the management company for community building. It was also hypothesized that organizational

support would moderate the relationship between property managers' personal experiences with community building and community building activities in the complex. The more personal experiences the property managers have with community building, the higher the level of community building facilitation by the managers. However, just as in the previous hypothesis, this relationship will differ depending on the level of organizational support received.

#### *Other Factors Influencing Community Building*

There are other factors that have the potential to influence managers taking part in community building in apartment complexes. These include the average rent of the complex, the length of time the manager has been in the management industry, the age of the complex and the income of the residents. First, it was proposed that if the apartment complex is a higher income complex where residents have higher incomes and the average rent is higher, the manager will initiate more community building activities for the residents. These complexes may have more resources dedicated to community building. They also tend to be larger so may have space for activities as well as amenities built into the complex. Second, it was proposed that the longer the manager has been on the management industry the more likely he or she will be to help with community building. They may have had the opportunity to try community building throughout their career and know what brings residents together and what doesn't. Finally, age of the complex was proposed to be negatively associated with community building. Many of the newer apartment complexes are equipped with amenities not present in older complexes. Because of the potential for a relationship between these variables and community building, they were included in the hypotheses as covariates.

### *Measurement of Community Building*

One of the biggest gaps in the literature on community building concerns its measurement. For the purposes of this literature review two different databases were used for the initial search for measures, Google Scholar and Web of Science. Individual journals that have the potential to contain studies related to community building or housing were also explored including the Journal of Property Management, Housing Studies, Journal of Community Psychology, American Journal of Community Psychology, Housing Policy Debate, Urban Affairs Quarterly, and Urban Affairs Review. Search terms included but were not limited to such items as community building, community capacity, sense of community, neighboring, neighbor interaction, apartment, renters, housing, social capital, and neighborhood participation. The results of these searches yielded mainly measurement instruments for individual components of community building such as community problem solving or constructs that are the outcomes of community building such as sense of community and neighbor interaction. No instruments were found that measure a variety of community building activities.

Any literature at all that concerns potential community building activities and/or dimensions can be found in the resource books and guide books used by practitioners and community groups. However, none of these contained a validated measure. The measure used in this study was developed from those resources. With a lack of measures in the literature it was necessary to compile a list of possible community building activities then reduce it to the activities feasible for an apartment complex and a property manager to engage in. Using resource and guide books, one is able to develop a comprehensive set of items that represent community building.

There are limitations with developing a community building measure. First, there are limitations with self-report surveys versus observational measures. When asking managers to report activities having taken place over the last year, there may have been issues with accurate recall. Observation would allow for direct recording of activities that take place throughout the year. However, cost and time limitations make such techniques difficult to implement. With self-report there may also be issues with social desirability bias. If managers believe that reporting more community building activities is more socially desirable then they are more likely to report more activities. However, a social desirability scale was included in order to measure this bias and results indicated that social desirability was not a factor for community building. It was not found to be significantly correlated with community building.

Second, there are issues with using the perspective of managers. There may be community building activities occurring initiated by the residents about which the managers do not know. The managers may not be facilitating any community building but residents have taken it upon themselves to build sense of community and resident interaction. In theory, the apartment complex could have a high level of community building and get a great benefit out of it but the efforts are not lead by the manager. The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of community building that the managers partake in, not the overall community building that occurs in the complex. Since property managers can be seen as leaders, we examined their exercise of leadership in the complex through initiating community building.

Third, there are limitations with how to word community building response options. One problem concerns the heterogeneity of potential community building activities. For example,

providing space for residents to have meetings can occur constantly but helping residents with a community watch may only occur twice a year. Just because one occurs more often than the other that activity is not necessarily more meaningful or beneficial to the residents. This also makes finding response options that work for all items extremely difficult. Managers may also have had difficulty with accurate recall.

### *Gaps in the Literature*

There are a multitude of gaps in the literature when referring to both community building and apartment complexes. First, renters are often overlooked as a social category. They are not seen as social actors (Capek & Gilderbloom, 1992). In the social science we often categorize people by age, socioeconomic status, race, urban and rural. However, land use brings to the forefront another classification, that of renters versus owners. Renters and owners are not always seen as social categories. Renters have been a forgotten class in the community research literature (Dreier, 1982).

Second, besides renters, property managers are completely missing from the literature on communities. They are important actors in the lives of many residents, but their roles are neglected. The very few studies that examine the perceptions people have of renters, focus on the perceptions of the population in general or of professionals such as developers, municipal leaders, or real estate professionals. Although there are a few studies that examine the negative stereotype of renters with some professionals, it is unclear as to whether these perceptions are around today. At the very least, reports of a negative stereotype of renters is reported in the Gurney (1999) and

Goetz and Sidney (1994) studies, published each over 10 years ago. In addition, the Perin (1977) study was completed over 30 years ago.

Third, rental housing is a forgotten issue in the community building literature unless referring to public housing or senior housing. There is very little research on any rental characteristics especially with middle income apartment complexes. Although apartment complexes could be considered communities in and of themselves, geographic communities in the literature are most often neighborhoods. There are entire disciplines based on the study of communities but very rarely are apartment complexes included in their literature base.

Fourth, community building in apartment complexes is definitely a missing component in the literature on communities. There are a variety of examples of community building in traditional single family detached home neighborhoods or even multi-family public housing developments. However, the average large urban apartment complex is a different environment than either of those housing situations. Besides public housing, there is little community building research on multi-family rental developments in general.

One last missing element in the literature is that of measurement of community building and its effectiveness. It has been noted that there is a lack of research on the effectiveness of community building strategies and this gap will not be filled any time soon (Berkowitz, 2000). The majority of publications related to community building practice, putting aside the constructs of community capacity building and social capital, are handbooks and resource guides meant for residents and practitioners (e.g. Borrup, 2006; Chiras & Wann, 2003; Mattessich, Monsey, & Roy, 2004; Overton, 2004; Rogers, Frankfort, & McKay, 2002;

Shaffer & Anundsen, 1993; Walljasper, 2007). However, there is little empirical evidence of models of community building, effectiveness of the practices, and measurement of community building itself.

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between apartment property managers' perceptions, importance placed on community building, personal experiences, organizational support for community building, and community building activities facilitated by the property managers.

### *Research Questions*

Are property managers facilitating community building in their complexes? How are the individual perceptions that property managers have of renters, their personal experiences with community building, and the importance they place on it related to facilitation of community building for residents? Does the organizational support property managers are provided moderate these relationships. Appendix A illustrates the hypotheses examined in this study.

### *Hypotheses*

HYP 1: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the property managers' perception of renters will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. More positive perceptions of renters will be associated with higher levels of community building.

HYP 2: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the property managers' personal experiences with

community building will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. More personal experiences will be associated with higher levels of community building.

HYP 3: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the relationship between the property managers' personal experiences and the level of community building endeavors will be moderated by the organizational support the managers receive for community building. Personal experiences will be more strongly associated with community building when organizational support is greater.

HYP 4: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the importance that property managers place on community building will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. Higher levels of perceived importance will be associated with higher levels of community building.

HYP 5: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the relationship between importance property managers place on community building and level of community building endeavors will be moderated by the organizational support the managers receive for community building. Perceived importance will be more strongly associated with community building when organizational support is greater.



## METHODS

### *Setting*

This study took place in North Carolina, a state ranked 13<sup>th</sup> of all 50 in the number of apartments. Eight percent of the total population lives in apartments specifically (National Multi-Housing Council, n.d. b). Given that the sample was drawn from online apartment search engines and many of the apartment complexes on those websites house a large number of people, most were located in urban or metro areas.

### *Respondents*

Online apartment search engines were used to develop the sampling frame for the study. Apartments.com, Apartmentguide.com, forrent.com, and move.com were used. These are all online marketing tools for apartment owners and managers to find tenants. They provide a listing of apartments across the United State where prospective residents can search for properties by name, location, or characteristics. They are then provided with a listing of properties with contact information, photos, rates, amenities, and a general description of the property. First, the complexes on Apartments.com were used to develop the initial list. The other apartment websites were used to cross-check to determine if any were missing from the original list obtained from apartments.com. Searching for North Carolina apartment complexes on these online search engines yielded a list of approximately 1200 apartment complexes across the state. A random sample of 800 was pulled from the sampling frame of 1200. Data available for each apartment differed by website. So, it was not possible to compare demographic information for the entire sampling frame or the sample.

Participants were apartment property managers from large apartment complexes across North Carolina. Descriptive analyses of the demographic variables obtained from the survey revealed the following about the property manager respondents: the average age is approximately 37 years old, 88% are female, 33% rent and 21% live in an apartment on the apartment complex site, about half make \$59,000 or less, the majority of respondents are Caucasian (89%), and the average length of time they have been in the industry is about 10 years. Table 1 illustrates the means for the variables in the study that measured information about the complexes. These represent the means of complex information provided by respondents.

Table 1. Apartment Complex Information from Respondents

Variable	Mean	N
Average Rent	\$756.62	129
Average Size (sq ft)	974.25	127
Age of Complex (years)	17.15	129
Average Household Income	\$38,371.78	99
Number of Apartments (units)	256.51	125
Length of Stay of Tenants (years)	2.87	120

#### *Response Rate*

There were 133 respondents out of the 800 sampled. This yielded a response rate of approximately 17%. Out of 800 managers asked to participate, 18 asked to be removed from the study.

*Comparison of Respondents and Non-responders*

Four variables were used to compare the respondents to non-responders. Overall, the differences between these groups were minimal. These included minimum and maximum rent and square footage, each of which was obtained from the online apartment search engines used to obtain the sampling frame. Comparison across these variables found a significant difference between the respondents and the non-respondents on minimum price. The mean minimum price for respondents and non-respondents were 605.58 and 630.82, respectively. However, the effect size ( $\eta^2$ ) of completing the survey was extremely small at .005. The difference between respondents and non-respondents was not significant for the other three variables, which included maximum price, minimum square footage, and maximum square footage. The means for each of the three variables are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Means for Respondents and Non-respondents

	Non-responders	Respondents	F	P	Eta <sup>2</sup>
Minimum Price	\$605.58	\$630.82	3.888	.049	.005
Maximum Price	\$958.77	\$1029.52	3.572	.059	.005
Minimum Square Footage	731.02	740.76 t	.327	.568	.000
Maximum Square Footage	1247.83	1265.78	.442	.506	.001

### *Procedure*

A confidential internet survey was used to assess the community building activities of the property managers and the link between those activities and their perceptions of their residents. The survey and informed consent form were placed on a website. Typically, to increase response rate one would use Dillman's (2000) design which includes sending a prenotification letter, the survey, and at least two follow-ups. However, cost prohibited fully undertaking Dillman's design. In this study the techniques used to increase response rate was two follow-up letters, a follow-up phone call, and an incentive.

The following procedure was implemented for data collection:

- 1) A small group of apartment managers were asked to review the survey for clarity and readability. They were not asked to provide data.
- 2) A list of complexes with corresponding addresses and phone numbers was obtained from the online apartment search engines listed above. The searches yielded a total of approximately 1200 apartment complexes for the sampling frame. A random sample of 800 complexes was drawn from this sampling frame.
- 3) The initial letter was sent to those 800 apartment complexes. The letter, addressed generically to "apartment property manager", introduced the study, informed them of the incentive, and provided the link to the informed consent form and survey. When clicking on the link, participants were first taken to the informed consent form then to the survey.

- 4) Two weeks after the initial mailing, another mailing was sent to non-respondents. The letter was again addressed to “apartment property manager.” The letter reminded them of the survey and the incentive and provided the link to the informed consent form again.
- 5) While sending the letters, 19 were returned because of a wrong address. Nineteen more complexes were pulled from the original sampling frame to take the place of these with wrong address. Eighteen managers asked to be removed from the study.
- 6) A few weeks after the second mailing, all of the non-respondents, excluding those with wrong addresses and the refusals, were called. Phone calls were used to remind the managers of the survey and see if they had any questions about the study. Three attempts were made to either reach a person or leave a message. For those who were reached in person, the phone calls revealed that many of the managers didn’t remember receiving either of the letters. They were asked if they would like another copy of the letter and were subsequently emailed or faxed the letter, whichever was the manager’s preference.
- 7) Approximately two weeks after the phone calls were complete, all of the non-respondents, excluding those with wrong addresses and the refusals were sent another follow-up letter.
- 8) Approximately two weeks after the final letter was sent, a random drawing was used to identify two winners for the two \$100 gift cards to Target. All respondents were included in the drawing.

### *Measures*

The survey used in this study measured four independent variables, one dependent variable, and four covariates. A measure of social desirability was also included since the perception of renters and community building variables could be prone to social desirability bias. The survey in its totality is represented in Appendix B. The variables and corresponding measures are as follows.

#### *Independent Variables*

The four independent variables were the property manager's perception of the renters, the property manager's individual experiences with community building, the importance property managers place on community building, and the management company's organizational support for community building.

- 1) Perception of Renters: This variable was measured with 12 items that assessed the perception that the property managers had of renters, including how the renters treated each other, their care for their apartment and the complex, and their behaviors within the complex. Each item was measured on a 4 point agree/disagree scale (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). All items were developed by the researcher using Perin's (1977; 1988) and Krueckeberg's (1999) descriptions of statements of professionals working in housing, planning, and real estate industries. Examples of items included "They respect others in the complex" and "They maintain their apartments." The reliability for all 12 items was  $\alpha=.875$ .

2) Personal Experiences: This variable was measured with nine items that addressed the extent to which property managers feel a sense of community and interact with their neighbors in their own neighborhood. The construct of personal experiences with community building was intended to include both experiences of sense of community and neighbor interaction. Many scales of sense of community seemed too long for the purposes of this study. Others did not seem to provide a comprehensive set of items that cover personal experiences with community building. Still others separated sense of community and neighbor interaction and used different response scales which make developing a composite score of personal experiences difficult. Measures examined for use in this study included Buckner (1988); Weenig, Schmidt, Midden (1990); Peterson, Speer, & McMillan (2008); Prezza, Amici, Roberti, & Tedeschi (2001); and Tartaglia (2006). The purpose of the development of a new scale was to provide a wide snapshot of personal experiences with sense of community and neighbor interaction within one scale.

The items measuring personal experiences were taken from Buckner (1988), Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2008), and one was developed by the researcher. Items 1-4, 8, and 9 were taken from Buckner's (1988) neighborhood cohesion scale. Item 7 is a modified version of Buckner's scale (1988). Item 5 was taken from Peterson, Speer, and McMillan (2008) and item 6 was developed by the researcher. Response options for all items were on a 4-point Likert agree-disagree scale. Examples of items included "I feel like I belong in my neighborhood," "I visit with my neighbors," and "I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency." The reliability for the whole 9 item scale was  $\alpha=.896$ .

- 3) **Importance of Community Building:** This variable measured the importance that property managers place on community building. The construct was measured using nine items developed by the researcher. Each of these items was rated along a 4 point agree/disagree response format (1=strongly disagree, 4=strongly agree). The items measured such aspects of importance as whether community building fits into their roles as managers, how essential it is for their job and how important sense of community and neighbor interaction are for apartment residents. Two examples of items were “Community building fits into my role as a property manager” and “Community building takes away from necessary parts of my job.” The reliability for the 9 item scale was  $\alpha=.884$ .
- 4) **Organizational Support for Community Building:** This was measured with eight items that examined whether the managers are provided with the following resources for community building; money, time, buy-in from management, network of other professionals, authority over decision making, staff support, training, and management policies for community building. Peters and O’Connor’s (1980) dimensions of situational resource variables were used to develop the organizational support items. These dimensions include job-related information, tools and equipment, materials and supplies, budgetary support, required services and help from others, task preparation, time availability, and work environment. As appropriate for this situation, an item was developed for each dimension. Each item was measured on a scale of one to four (1=not at all, 2=a little, 3=a moderate amount, 4=to a great extent). All items were developed by the researcher. Examples of specific items included “Funds from the management



company to devote to community building” and “Time on the job to devote to community building.” The reliability for the 8 item scale was  $\alpha=.893$ .

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable included the specific community building activities that the property managers undertake. They are ways that the property managers can facilitate community building for the residents.

This variable was measured with 19 items highlighting a variety of options that property managers have for helping residents build community. Examples include providing space for the residents to meet, organizing special events, mediating conflicts, and maintaining public spaces. All items were developed by the researcher. Many activities were included in the measure since community building may manifest itself in a variety of ways. In addition, activities and resident responsiveness may vary across settings. For instance, a survey of student apartment residents revealed that residents were evenly distributed when it came to a preference for certain community building activities including movies nights, barbecues, team sports, social outings, study groups, and food buying groups. Some residents were interested in some activities while others were interested in other activities (Foth, 2004).

Respondents were asked first to indicate whether they have ever done any of the activities on a dichotomous response option. Next they were asked how often they have done each of the activities in the last 12 months, resulting in a ratio scale. The dichotomous response option was used for analyses since the item that asked how many times in the last

12 months was found to be problematic. Only 62% respondents provided codable data for these items. Too many of the managers responded with text such as “all the time,” “sometimes,” with a description of the activity, or with a range such as 5-10, 30-40 times a year. Others left the item blank and it was impossible to determine whether not answering should be coded as 0 or missing.

Community building was considered an index made up of the sum of the 19 items rather than a latent construct. Therefore conducting an exploratory factor analysis was not appropriate. Reliability for the 19 item scale was  $\alpha=.82$ .

#### *Covariates*

The following covariates were added to the hypotheses because of their possible influence on both the independent and dependent variables: average rent, age of complex, average income of residents, and the length of time in management. Each was measured with an individual item developed by the researcher.

- 1) Average Rent: Rent was measured with one item asking “What is the average rent of your apartments?” Response option was open-ended. Any participant who responded with a range such as \$700-750 were converted to a single dollar amount by computing the average, or in this example \$725.
- 2) Age of Complex: This variable was measured with one item, “How long has the complex been in existence?” Response option was open-ended. Responses were converted to numeric responses with a metric of one year. For instance, any response in a month metric such as 4 months was converted to years, or .33 in this example.

- 3) Average Income of Residents: Income was measured with one item, “What is the average household income of your tenants?” Response option was open-ended. Any participant who responded with a range such as \$30,000-40,000 were converted to a single dollar amount by computing the average, or in this example \$35,000.
- 4) Length of Time in Management: One item was used to measure how long the property manager has been in the industry. The question asked, “How many years have you been in the apartment management industry.” The response option was open-ended. Responses were converted to numeric responses with a metric of one year. For instance, any response in a month metric such as 6 months was converted to years, or .5 in this example.

#### *Social Desirability*

Since property managers’ perception of renters has the potential for a high social desirability bias, social desirability was measured using Reynold’s (1982) short form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. The scale includes 13 items with a true/false response format. Reynolds (1982) found a reliability of  $\alpha=.76$ .

#### *Analyses*

Exploratory factor analyses were performed to analyze scale characteristics. The relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable were computed using a hierarchical linear regression in SPSS. Individual regressions were performed for each hypothesis. Covariates were entered into the model first followed by the main effects in the

second step, and the interactions in the third step. Exploratory factor analyses were performed on each of the composites using SPSS.

## RESULTS

### *Missing Data*

There were problems with the community building items asking participants to respond with the number of times in the last 12 months they have done each of the activities. For the 12 month items, many of the managers left the item blank and it was difficult to determine whether not answering should be coded as 0 or missing. If managers responded with a no to the lifetime item and didn't respond to the 12 month item, the 12 month item was coded as 0. It was inferred that if they indicated they had never done that community building activity, then the number of times they did it over the last 12 months would have been 0. If respondents indicated they had ever done an activity and didn't respond to the 12 month item, the 12 month item was coded as missing. This left too many missing items for the composite. Approximately 37% had missing data. Therefore the items with a dichotomous response option that asked participants to indicate whether they had ever done any of the activities in their lifetime were used to compute the community building composite.

There are tradeoffs in either of the variables. When using the lifetime items, the relationships between community building and the predictors becomes more complicated. For instance, community building was measured over the lifetime asking if the managers had ever done the activities and organizational support is measured in the present tense asking if

the managers currently receive certain supports from the management company. However, there are also problems with using the 12 month items. The composite score results in a large number of missing items, with over 37% missing, compromising the power of the analyses.

The bivariate correlation analyses revealed a correlation ( $N=83$ ) between the two community building composites as  $r=.97$ . Regression analyses using the 12 month and the lifetime composites demonstrated a very similar pattern of relationships. Based on the bivariate correlation between the two composites and that each resulted in the same relationships with the predictors, we were confident in using the lifetime items for the community building composite.

The other variables including perception, importance, experience, organizational support, number of apartments, age of complex, and average rent had minimal missing data. The number of missing responses ranged from 0 to 8.

#### *Exploratory Factor Analysis and Composites*

An exploratory factor analysis was performed for each of the four independent variables. Composites for each of the variables were computed based on the results of the EFA's. Examination of the eigenvalues and the scree plots determined the number of factors retained. Factors with eigenvalues over 1.0 were retained. Items that loaded .3 and above on a given factor and that did not load above .3 on another factor were retained. Items retained from each EFA are represented in Appendix C. Reliabilities for each of the composites are represented in Table 3. The results of each of the EFA's were as follows:

*Importance of Community Building*

A promax rotation yielded the simplest pattern, yet two factors were extracted. Two items, #6 and #9, loaded on the second factor. Both of these were the negatively worded items. Only one factor was retained in the analyses. The first factor seemed conceptually coherent and the items that loaded on the second factor didn't seem to add anything unique to the scale. The Importance composite was computed using the mean of all 7 items on that one factor. If more than one item was missing, the composite was not calculated and a missing value code was entered.

*Perception of Renters:* A quartimax rotation yielded the simplest pattern. Three factors were extracted. Items #2, 4, 10, and 11 were complex items and crossloaded above .3 on two factors so they were removed from final analyses, leaving one factor with 8 items. The composites represented the mean of the 8 items. If more than 2 items were missing, the composite was not calculated and a missing value code was entered.

*Personal Experiences:* The EFA for personal experiences extracted one factor with all items loading above .3 on that factor. All 9 were kept for final analyses. The composite was the mean of all 9 items. If more than one item was missing, the composite was not calculated and a missing value code was entered.

*Organizational Support:* The EFA for organizational support extracted one factor with all items loading above .3 on that factor. All 8 were kept for final analyses. The composite was the mean of the 8 items. If more than 2 items were missing, the composite was not calculated and a missing value code was entered.

*Community Building:* Since the community building variable was conceptually designed to be a sum of the items instead of an underlying construct, an EFA was not performed on this variable. The composite was the sum of all 19 dichotomous items. If more than 2 items were missing, the composite was not calculated and a missing value code was entered.

*Social Desirability:* The social desirability variable was also designed to be a sum of the items. Therefore, an EFA was not performed on the variable. The Social Desirability composite was computed by summing all 13 items. However, it was not significantly correlated with any of the independent variables or the dependent variable, so it was not included in further analyses. It also had a reliability of .64.

Table 3. Reliabilities

Variable	Number of Items	Chronbach's Alpha
Importance of Community Building	7	.90
Perception of Renters	8	.84
Personal Experience	9	.90
Organizational Support	8	.89
Community Building	19	.82

### *Correlations*

The bivariate correlations for the four independent variables, one dependent variable, and four covariates were examined. Table 4 illustrates the correlations for the original variables.

Table 4. Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Community Building	1										
2. Importance	.353**	1									
3. Perception	.103	.264**	1								
4. Personal Experience	.134	.240**	.242**	1							
5. Organizational Support	.524**	.314**	.084	.186*	1						
6. Social Desirability	.015	-.004	.018	-.008	.062	1					
7. Rent	.189*	.125	.092	.000	.229**	-.080	1				
8. Age of Complex	-.230**	-.135	.037	.011	-.148	.055	-.460**	1			
9. Income of Residents	.101	.044	.061	.124	.214*	-.163	.718**	-.401**	1		
10. Length of Time in Industry	.158	.008	.030	.169	.125	.145	.044	-.035	.046	1	
11. Number of Apartments	.214*	.094	-.104	.090	.152	.309**	.047	-.150	.151	-.018	1

\*p< .05, \*\*p< .01

Note: N for each of the variables ranged from 99 (income of residents) to 133 (community building).

Other variables that measured demographic and apartment complex characteristics were also examined. These included manager's age, gender, income, race/ethnicity, and tenure; whether the manager lives in an apartment and in an apartment onsite; average size of the units; number of apartments; and the length of stay of residents. However, the only one of these that was significantly associated with community building was number of apartments, with a correlation of  $r=.21$  ( $N=125$ ). This variable was subsequently included in further analyses and included in the correlation table above. Covariates that were not significantly associated with community building were removed from further analyses. These included average household income of residents and the length of time the managers have been in the industry.



### *Descriptive Statistics*

The descriptive statistics for all the independent variables, dependent variable, and covariates are listed in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
Importance	130	3.55	.47	1.00	4.00	-1.57**	5.033**
Perception of Renters	130	2.88	.41	1.62	4.00	-.62	1.15
Personal Experience	129	3.03	.49	1.89	4.00	-.008	-.223
Organizational Support	128	2.76	.72	1.00	4.00	-.29	-.41
Community Building	133	12.29	3.82	1	19	-.437	-.204
Average Rent	129	756.62	247.72	150.00	2480.00	2.87**	17.65**
Age of Complex	129	17.15	12.23	.33	46.00	.56**	-.74
Number of Apartments	125	256.51	175.36	24.00	1692.00	4.60**	35.63**

\* $p < .01$

Descriptive analyses revealed that there was significant ( $p < .01$ ) skew for importance, average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments. There was also significant ( $p < .01$ ) kurtosis for importance, average rent and number of apartments. In order to determine significance, the z score was computed for the skew and for the kurtosis and was compared to the normal curve probability table. The variables with significant skew were transformed, which included importance, average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments. The transformed variables were entered into the regression and compared to the regressions with the untransformed variables. The pattern of results were similar except for the variable number of apartments. The

transformed variable (i.e. log10 of number of apartments) was used in the regression equations employed to test the hypotheses.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

Together, the hypotheses state that, after controlling for the covariates, the importance placed on community building, the property managers' perception of renters, the managers' personal experiences with community, and the organizational support provided to the managers would be significantly positively associated with community building endeavors. It was also hypothesized that organizational support would moderate the relationship between importance and community building and between personal experiences and community building. Based on the significant correlations found in earlier analyses, only covariates significantly correlated with community building were included in the regression analyses. That left two out of the four originally hypothesized covariates, age of complex and average rent of complex. Number of apartments was also included as a covariate due to its significant correlation with community building in bivariate correlations in this sample. Each hypothesis is tested with a hierarchical regression below. Due to the somewhat small sample, adjusted  $R^2$  estimates are reported below in order to avoid overestimating the variance explained by the predictors.

*HYP 1: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments), the property managers' perception of renters will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. More positive perceptions of renters will be associated with higher levels of community building.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear regression was performed. A total of 124 of the 133 cases had enough data to be included in the analysis. The following variables were included in the hierarchical regression: Average Rent, Age of Complex, Log 10 of Number of Apartments, Perception of Renters, and Community Building. Table 6 illustrates each step of the regression with both betas, standard errors and adjusted  $R^2$  statistics.

*Step 1:* The covariates of average rent, age of complex, and log10 number of apartments were added to the model in the first step. Together, these variables accounted for 11.3% of the variance in community building, which was significant,  $F(3,124)=6.27, p=.001$ . The largest contribution to the amount of variance explained came from the number of apartments, which was significant,  $sr^2=.255$ . This was the only covariate significantly related to community building,  $t(124)=3.01, p=.003$ .

*Step 2:* The predictor of perception of renters was included in the second step. The amount of variance explained increased by .2%. This increase in  $R^2$  was not significant,  $p=.27$ . The overall model remained significant,  $F(4, 124)=5.02, p=.001$ . However, perception of renters was not significantly associated with community building,  $t(124)=1.11, p=.27$ . Number of apartments remained significant. This hypothesis was not supported by the results.

Table 6. Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 1

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error
Average Rent	.088	.001	.078	.001
Age of Complex	-.149	.030	-.151	.030
Number of Apartments Log10	.261**	1.224	.270**	1.227
Perception of Renters			.095	.809
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.113**		.115**
$\Delta$ Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.000		.009

\*p< .05, \*\*p< .01

*HYP 2: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments), the property managers' personal experiences with community building will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. More personal experiences will be associated with higher levels of community building.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear regression was performed. A total of 123 of the 133 cases had enough complete data to be included in the analysis. The following variables were included in the hierarchical regression: Average Rent, Age of Complex, Log 10 of Number of Apartments, Personal Experience, and Community Building. Table 7 illustrates each step of the regression with both betas, standard errors and adjusted R<sup>2</sup> statistics.

*Step 1:* The covariates of average rent, age of complex, and log10 number of apartments were added to the model in the first step. Since step 1 is the same as that tested in hypothesis one, the results are almost identical. As in the previous regression, these variables accounted for 11.3% of the variance in community building, which was significant. The largest contribution to the

amount of variance explained came from the number of apartments, which was significant,  $sr^2 = .255$ . As in the previous analysis, this was the only covariate significantly related to community building.

*Step 2:* The predictor of personal experience was included in the second step. The amount of variance explained increased by .5%. This increase in  $R^2$  was not significant,  $p = .206$ . The overall model remained significant,  $F(4, 123) = 5.11$ ,  $p = .001$ . However, personal experience was not significantly associated with community building,  $t(124) = 1.27$ ,  $p = .206$ . Number of apartments remained significant. This hypothesis was not supported by the results.

Table 7. Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error
Average Rent	.089	.001	.088	.001
Age of Complex	-.141	.030	-.146	.030
Number of Apartments Log10	.264**	1.253	.249**	1.260
Personal Experience			.109	.629
Adjusted $R^2$		.113**		.118**
$\Delta$ Adjusted $R^2$		.000		.012

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

*HYP 3: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments), the relationship between the property managers' personal experiences and the level of community building endeavors will be moderated by the organizational support the*

*managers receive for community building. Personal experiences will be more strongly associated with community building when organizational support is greater.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear regression was performed. A total of 121 of the 133 cases had enough complete data to be included in the analysis. The following variables were included in the hierarchical regression: Average Rent, Age of Complex, Log 10 of Number of Apartments, Personal Experience, Organizational Support, Interaction of Personal Experience and Organizational Support, and Community Building. Personal Experience and Organizational Support were centered at a mean of 0 to reduce collinearity. Table 8 illustrates each step of the regression with both betas, standard errors and adjusted  $R^2$  statistics.

*Step 1:* The covariates of average rent, age of complex, and log10 number of apartments were added to the model in the first step. Since step 1 is the same as that tested in hypotheses one and two, the results are almost identical. These variables accounted for 11.8% of the variance in community building, which was significant. As in the previous analyses, number of apartments was the only covariate significantly related to community building.

*Step 2:* The predictors of personal experience and organizational support were included in the second step. The amount of variance explained increased by 17.9%. to 29.7% This increase in  $R^2$  was significant,  $p=.000$ . Personal experience was not significantly associated with community building; however, organizational support was  $t(121)=5.47, p=.000$ . Number of apartments also remained significant.

*Step 3:* In this step, the interaction of personal experience and organizational support was added to the regression to test the hypothesized moderation. This change was not significant. The

interaction was not significant,  $t(121)=-.395$ ,  $p=.694$ . Both organizational support and number of apartments was significant. This hypothesis was not supported by the results.

Table 8. Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 3

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error
Average Rent	.081	.001	-.012	.001	-.012	.001
Age of Complex	-.156	.031	-.141	.028	-.144	.028
Number of Apartments Log10	.264**	1.258	.183*	1.146	.181*	1.155
Personal Experience			.033	.582	.033	.584
Organizational Support			.446**	.420	.444**	.422
Exp x Org Supp					.031	.816
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.118**		.297**		.292**
$\Delta$ Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.000		.186**		.001

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

*HYP 4: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, age of complex, and number of apartments), the importance that property managers place on community building will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors. Higher levels of perceived importance will be associated with higher levels of community building.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear regression was performed. A total of 122 of the 133 cases had enough complete data to be included in the analysis. The following variables were included in the hierarchical regression: Average Rent, Age of Complex, Log 10 of

Number of Apartments, Importance, and Community Building. Table 9 illustrates each step of the regression with both betas, standard errors and adjusted  $R^2$  statistics.

*Step 1:* The covariates of average rent, age of complex, and log10 number of apartments were added to the model in the first step. Since step 1 is the same as that tested in previous hypotheses, the results are almost identical. As in the previous regression, these variables accounted for 11.4% of the variance in community building, which was significant. As in the previous analysis, number of apartments was the only covariate significantly related to community building.

*Step 2:* The predictor of importance was included in the second step. The amount of variance explained increased by 5.4%. This increase in  $R^2$  was significant,  $p=.004$ . Importance was significantly associated with community building,  $t(122)=2.95$ ,  $p=.004$ . Number of apartments remained significant. This hypothesis was supported by the results.

Table 9. Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 4

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error
Average Rent	.087	.001	.063	.001
Age of Complex	-.155	.030	-.140	.029
Number of Apartments	.260**	1.232	.235**	1.200
Log10 Importance			.248**	.658
Adjusted $R^2$		.114**		.168**
$\Delta$ Adjusted $R^2$		.000		.059**

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$



*HYP 5: Controlling for the covariates (average rent, length of time in management, age of complex, and income of residents), the relationship between importance property managers place on community building and level of community building endeavors will be moderated by the organizational support the managers receive for community building. Perceived importance will be more strongly associated with community building when organizational support is greater.*

In order to test this hypothesis, a hierarchical linear regression was performed. A total of 120 of the 133 cases had enough complete data to be included in the analysis. The following variables were included in the hierarchical regression: Average Rent, Age of Complex, Log 10 of Number of Apartments, Importance, Organizational Support, Interaction of Importance and Organizational Support, and Community Building. Importance and Organizational Support were centered at a mean of 0 to reduce collinearity. Table 10 illustrates each step of the regression with both betas, standard errors and adjusted  $R^2$  statistics.

*Step 1:* The covariates of average rent, age of complex, and log10 number of apartments were added to the model in the first step. Since step 1 is the same as that tested in hypotheses one and two, the results are almost identical. These variables accounted for 11.9% of the variance in community building, which was significant. As in the previous analyses, number of apartments was the only covariate significantly related to community building.

*Step 2:* The predictors of importance and organizational support were included in the second step. The amount of variance explained increased by 18.9%. to 30.8% This increase in  $R^2$  was significant,  $p=.00$ . Importance was not significantly associated with community building;

however, organizational support was  $t(120)=4.93, p=.001$ . Number of apartments also remained significant.

*Step 3:* In this step, the interaction of importance and organizational support was added to the regression to test the hypothesized moderation. The interaction was also not significant,  $t(120)=-.629, p=.531$ . Both organizational support and number of apartments were significant. This hypothesis was not supported by the results.

Table 10. Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 5

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error	Beta	Std Error
Average Rent	.078	.001	-.016	.001	-.031	.001
Age of Complex	-.170	.030	-.145	.027	-.151	.027
Number of Apts Log10	.261**	1.236	.173*	1.116	.171*	1.120
Importance			.135	.631	.121	.658
Organizational Support			.408**	.431	.412**	.433
Interaction					-.050	.922
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>			.119**		.308**	
Δ Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>			.000		.196**	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the following questions. Are property managers facilitating community building in their complexes? How are the individual perceptions that property managers have of renters, their personal experiences with community building, and the importance they place on it related to facilitation of community building for residents? Does the

organizational support property managers are provided moderate these relationships? Appendix A illustrates the hypotheses examined in this study.

Overall, property managers facilitate a variety of community building activities. Out of 19 community building activities listed, on average, the respondents indicated that they had ever done about 12 of those activities. The majority of activities (15 out of 19) had over 50% of respondents indicating that they had done those activities. The most frequently selected items were publicize information about the complex, organize informal get-togethers to allow residents to get to know each other, and try to mediate conflicts among residents. The percentage of managers who had done these activities was 94%, 91%, and 91% respectively. The least frequently selected activities were set up exchanges for residents, organize ongoing programs for residents, and provide activities specifically for youth. The percentage of managers who had done these activities was 18%, 22%, and 29%, respectively.

Most property managers indicated that these activities were consistent with their roles. Over 86% of property managers agreed that community building makes sense for their complex and over 82% agreed that they plan on instituting community building initiatives in the future. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide an example of their efforts to build community over the past year. Eighty-three percent of the managers gave examples of community building at their complex. These examples included typical community building activities such as socials, holiday parties, potlucks and food available in the clubhouse, yard sales, community crime watch, fundraising for charity, pool or pizza parties, and providing garden space. These examples fell in line with the categories of activities measured for the community building measure.

Community building seemed fairly prevalent with the complexes in the survey. However, there are barriers to implementing community building. Participants were given the opportunity to list their top three barriers to community building. Eighty-one percent of the managers responded with examples of barriers. The most frequently mentioned by managers were a lack of time (for both staff and residents), money, and resident participation. Other barriers included: a lack of space such as a clubhouse or community building, having a diverse community, not having support from the management company, and high turnover. From this preliminary analysis it seems that there are particular barriers that could be influenced by the management company such as the managers' workload, money, and space.

As will be noted later, there are several factors that may limit the generalizability of these findings such as bias in the sampling frame, response bias in the sample, and low response rate.

#### *Predictors of Community Building*

At the descriptive level, all of the hypothesized predictors of community building were somewhat high. For instance, the mean for perceived importance was 3.55 on a 4-point scale, which indicated that managers felt that community building was important and made sense for their complex and their role as managers. The mean for perception was approximately 3 on a 4-point scale meaning that on average, managers agree that renters are responsible and engaged. The same can be seen for personal experiences, indicating that on average the property managers feel a sense of community and interact with neighbors in their own communities. Organizational support was slightly lower with a mean of 2.8 on a 4-point scale, yet still indicative of a relatively high

level of support provided to the manager from the management company as will be discussed later.

Analyses of the bivariate correlations revealed significant relationships between each of the predictors and community building for five out of the ten predictors, and a few significant relationships among the predictors. Most correlations were small,  $r < .3$ . Both importance and organizational support were moderately associated with community building. However, subsequent regression analyses revealed multicollinearity between these two predictors. Once the effect of organizational support was controlled for, importance was no longer significantly associated with community building. Once shared variance was parsed out, the relationship was no longer significant. Bivariate correlations did show that these two variables had a moderate relationship ( $r = .314$ ).

Other moderate correlations included those between age of complex and rent ( $r = -.460$ ), age of complex and income of residents ( $r = -.401$ ), and rent and income of residents ( $r = .718$ ). The relationships between the covariates revealed that newer complexes have higher rent and residents with higher incomes.

#### *Perception of Renters*

Perception of renters was not significantly associated with community building. Bivariate correlations revealed a very small and nonsignificant correlation between the two variables ( $r = .10$ ) and regression analyses showed that after controlling for the covariates of age of complex, income of renters, and number of apartments, perception was not significantly related to community building. This hypothesis was based on the assumption that a negative stereotype of renters would

influence community building activities. However, there was no evidence that these property manager also hold these negative perceptions existing in the general population. Descriptive analyses showed that their perception of renters was generally positive. Their work with renters on a daily basis may have positively influenced their perceptions of renters. They have chosen a profession involving daily work with renters, so their notions of renters and renting could be more positive than before their entering the industry. This lack of a relationship between perception and community building could also be the result of community building being a part of their job and the managers' perception of renters does not interfere with performing that part of their job.

#### *Personal Experiences*

Personal experience with community building was also not significantly associated with community building in apartment complexes. This could be due to the measurement of personal experiences. Personal experiences was measured with items related to sense of community and neighbor interaction within their own home neighborhood. The community building measure is asking about the leadership role managers play in community building while their participation in their home neighborhood activities may have been more passive. Previous experiences may need to be more directly tied to what is being measured in the community building scale. For instance, personal experiences may be more highly related to community building if the measure included specific community building activities in the neighborhood or measured the leadership roles a manager takes on in his/her own neighborhood. This nonsignificant result could also be the result of a disconnect between the context of their experience at home and behaviors at work. There may be too much difference between the home and work environment for the past behaviors in

the home to be significantly related to the behaviors in the work environment. The discrepancy between the timing of the lifetime community building measure and personal experiences could also be a factor.

### *Importance*

The regression analyses revealed that importance was initially significantly associated with community building, supporting hypothesis 4 (i.e. that the importance that property managers place on community building will be significantly associated with the level of community building endeavors.)

However, when organizational support was added to the regression analysis (see Table 9), importance was no longer significant. This is due to the multicollinearity of importance and organizational support. They were found to be significantly correlated at  $r = .314$ . Therefore, when the effect of organizational support was controlled in subsequent analyses, importance was no longer significant. This relationship could be in either direction. Property managers may see community building as important simply because they are encouraged by the organizational context. The management company could provide an expectation that community building would occur and provide resources for such activities. Conversely, property managers may be the source of the relationship. Property managers who value community building may select employment in apartment complex settings where community building is already valued. Alternatively, property managers who value community building may have an impact over time in influencing the commitment of apartment complex owners and management. It is also possible that all of these scenarios may be true to some extent.

### *Organizational Support*

There were a variety of types of organizational support examined in this study including funding, time, buy-in, other professionals, authority to make decisions, staff, training, and policies. In general, property managers perceive management companies as supportive of community building and supplying the needed resources to implement it.

The positive association between received organizational support and community building indicates the potential importance of the management company when instituting community building. While it seems that personal experiences and perceptions or attitudes would dictate behaviors, one must remember that property management is a job and community building is part of that position. So, constraints of the job may dictate performance of job-related tasks such as community building.

Hypothesis 3 (i.e. that the relationship between personal experiences and community building endeavors will be moderated by organizational support) and Hypothesis 5 (i.e. that the relationship between importance and community building endeavors will be moderated by organizational support) were not supported by the results. Both of these interaction terms were not significantly associated with community building. In these analyses, only the main effect of organizational support was significantly associated with community building.

### *Covariates*

Several covariates were not significantly associated with community-building at the bivariate level (i.e. income of residents, length of time in management industry) and were dropped from further analyses. Community building was significantly associated with age of complex



( $r=.230$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and rent ( $r=.189$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Community building is higher when the complex is newer and the rent is higher. However, when entered into the regression analyses neither accounted for a significant amount of variance in community building.

Another covariate was added to the analyses after finding that it was significantly correlated with community building. Complexes with a higher number of units were associated with a higher level of community building reported by the manager. Number of apartments was added to the analyses, which found that it accounted for a significant amount of variance in community building in all of the hierarchical regressions. This result could be due to the fact that larger apartment complexes tend to have more places for community building such as a clubhouse, pool, recreation center, computers, and many other amenities. These amenities could make it easier to accomplish some community building activities. Another important aspect of the relationship between the covariates and community building pertains to the finding that income of residents is not significantly related to community building. The variance of the resident income variable was somewhat high with a standard deviation of \$19,950. Property managers facilitate community building no matter the income of the residents.

### *Strengths of the Study*

This study has several strengths. First, this study attempted to create a measure of community building. Much of the community building literature regarding apartment complexes is made up of tips, guides, and steps to community building and a lack of actual measurement of these activities. A measure was developed for this study by taking those various community building handbooks, guides, steps, and tips and paring them down to major activities or themes.

The resulting measure showed moderate internal consistency, despite the presence of dichotomous items. Not all possible activities are included in this measure; however, it provides a first step toward measurement.

Second, the study brings attention to certain populations for social inquiry. For instance, renters have received little attention in the social science literature regarding their characteristics as a community (Capek & Gilderbloom, 1992). While this study does not examine attitudes or behaviors of renters directly, it does provide a worldview that community building can be a construct for both renters and owners. Although renters don't own their home, they have the potential to be just as engaged in their community as those who do. Property managers are also an often forgotten population of inquiry. However, as leaders in various renter communities, they have the potential to influence the community building endeavors within that community. They have access to not only resources but also the residents. This study is an attempt to begin the conversation with property managers of their role as leaders within renter communities and how they can influence community building.

Finally, this study was a way to begin to examine potential predictors of community building. Currently, the literature is lacking when it comes to the factors that influence community building in apartment complexes. All but one of the predictors included in this study was related to community building. However, the results revealed the importance of organizational support from the management company as a significant factor in community building in apartment complexes. This result demonstrates that both individual and contextual factors should be considered in community building.

### *Limitations*

#### *Measurement of Community Building*

There are several potential limitations with the efforts of measuring community building in this study. These include: heterogeneity in community building and the difficulty associated with generating common response options; limitations of self-report data; and the use of a lifetime prevalence measure as a response to missing data in the sample.

All of the scales in this study rely on the self-report of property managers. This seems quite appropriate for measuring personal attributes of property managers (e.g. perceptions of renters.) Property managers' assessments of community building may be inflated by social bias, although there was no association between community building and the social desirability score. Moreover, residents may perceive the degree of community building activities occurring in the apartment complexes quite differently than property managers. Residents may view specific property manager activities differently, or may view the property managers' actions as only one element of a broader set of community building possibilities. A more valid comprehensive assessment of community building should involve the assessments of property managers and residents and an exploration of the circumstances in which their perceptions converge and diverge.

Another potential limitation is that community building activities are quite heterogeneous, presenting difficulties for the formulation of response options that maximize respondents' valid recollection of the intensity of the behavior. For example, providing space for residents to have meetings can occur constantly but helping residents with a community

watch may occur twice a year. A response option that asked about the frequency of a behavior potentially occurring weekly might seem appropriate for an activity that might occur only once or twice a year. This also makes finding response options that work for all items extremely difficult. Therefore, respondents were asked whether they had ever conducted an activity (i.e. yes/no) and how many times in the last 12 months they had completed each of the activities. The latter would have resulted in a ratio scale.

However, a number of respondents either (a) inserted a range of values in indicating completion of the activity in the last 12 months, (b) inserted an example of a community building activity, or (c) left it blank. Did the presence of a blank item indicate missing data or an indication that one had not done the activity in the last 12 months at all? It is difficult to determine, so all such blank response were coded as missing. This decreased the sample to 83 respondents. As a result of the lost power, it was decided to use lifetime prevalence in completing the activity as the dependent variable in this study. There are two problems with this choice. One limitation is the inability of the dichotomous response options to measure intensity or variations in community building activities. There may be relationships between predictors and community building that are obscured by the loss in variability. The other limitation is the temporal relationship between the composite using the lifetime items and the predictors. Organizational support is assessed with regard to the current context in which the property manager is located, but reports of lifetime community building could theoretically refer to property manager activities in previous settings.

### *Measurement of Organizational Support*

Another limitation of the study concerns the measurement of organizational support. The items asked respondents to indicate the extent to which certain resources are available to them for community building. Response options were not at all, a little, a moderate amount, and to a great extent. These response options were not behaviorally defined. Therefore, participants may have different perceptions of what each means, making it difficult to judge a true level of organizational support. There could be quite a bit of variance in organizational support if measured more precisely.

### *Sampling Frame*

There are also limitations with sampling in this study. First, there could have been potential for biases in the sampling frame because it is not an exhaustive list of all apartment complexes in the state. It is a marketing tool, so those complexes with the resources to devote to such a tool were included. More resources may mean that these properties will likely take on more community building activities than ones who do not have the money to devote to marketing in such a way. Some cities do maintain a list of property managers because of a registration requirement placed on landlords, but many do not. The apartments found on the online search engines could be biased. These websites have costs associated with them, so only those complexes willing and able to pay those costs will be listed. This makes for a sample of apartments that can afford to be on the lists, which might mean they also have resources for community building. They could be larger and have more amenities, making

facilitating community building easier. This sampling frame could be biased toward community building from the beginning.

*Sample Response Bias and Response Rate*

Another limitation may be response bias. The managers who responded to the survey may be people who are especially interested in the topic, creating an overestimation of community building and an underestimation of the variance in community building. More could have been done to follow-up with nonresponders to determine if there are differences between those who responded and those who didn't. A small sample of nonresponders could have been selected for more intensive follow-up specifically around community building. However, this takes more resources than were available for this study.

In addition, the response rate was low at approximately 17%. Given a power level of .80 and moderate effect sizes, approximately 113 responses were needed. Although there were enough respondents to perform the necessary statistical procedures, the response rate was lower than what would have been ideal. This has a potential to compromise the power. It is possible that the small effect size of some of the variables made the response rate insufficient.

In retrospect, there were some ways in which resources may have been used differently to increase the relatively small response rate. The procedure in this study consisted of mailing a letter to the property managers, mailing a follow-up letter, making follow-up phone calls, and mailing a third letter in that order. However, when calling the property managers we discovered that many of the managers either did not receive the letters

or did not remember receiving the letters. In this instance it would have been beneficial to include a prenotification. This could have been implemented through a mailing or a phone call. Cost was also a limitation. The researcher could not complete more than two mailings because of the costs associated with postage and materials. Given both of these limitations, a replication of this study would be well advised to make phone calls as a prenotification and then obtain an email address or fax number. The letter containing an introduction to the study and the link to the website could be sent through email or fax. This revised procedure has the potential to increase the response rate by ensuring that the letters are not lost in the mail or treated as junk mail.

#### *Directions for Future Research and Practice*

Given both the strengths and limitations of this study, there are many implications for future research and practice. First, there needs to be further development of a community building instrument. This was a first attempt at measurement of community building from the perspective of the managers and was based not on pre-existing measures but on practice manuals and guidebooks. More research needs to be done with managers to determine the different types of community building activities that make sense for apartment complexes. Also, managers may have inaccurate recall of activities or may over-estimate what they did because of a social desirability bias. Further research could examine scale characteristics that were most strongly related to accurate recall by property managers. Although more labor intensive, daily diaries and real-time prompts with smartphones could be used to capture data that might serve as a “gold standard” for paper and pencil measures leading to better recall.

There is also the need to develop measurement techniques and scales for both managers and residents who may think about community building differently, one in the context of work or job performance and the other in the context of their home and daily living. More work should be done on what community building means for both managers and residents and the implications for both when these activities are in place. There are not current indices of what constitutes more or less overall community building, what is expected of both parties, and if there is a threshold level of community building for positive outcomes for managers, complexes, and residents.

The scales for the other variables should also be developed further. There were no preexisting measures for many of the variables so they were developed by the researcher. The reliabilities for the final composites were relatively high; however the initial structure of both importance and perception did not hold up in the exploratory factor analysis. Each of the variables was expected to be a single factor.

Second, there should be more surveys of residents about their participation in community building activities. Many of the property managers indicated that a barrier to community building is a lack of participation among residents. Future research could focus on the participation of residents by examining barriers and mechanisms to enhance participation in community building. For instance, are residents not involved because a lack of trust of the management company, lack of time for participation, other competing priorities, lack of knowledge of the activities, perceived short term nature of apartment living? Could managers' perceptions of lack of interest be a self-serving attribution relieving them of responsibility of engaging in such activities?



Third, there needs to be further research with property managers concerning their community building, organizational support provided to them, and barriers to community building in order to inform practice. The more practitioners know about these aspects of implementation, the more responsive they may be to assist both property manager and management companies. The property managers who responded to the survey were found to be a fairly heterogenous group and none of the demographic variables were related to community building. Future research should examine more of the contextual factors that might be significantly associated with community building in order to determine potential practice implications.

Fourth, there is a potential for work with management companies and property managers on implementation of community building endeavors. Since it was found that organizational support is related to community building, practitioners would be well advised to free up some of those constraints by offering assistance to the managers in making the most of their time, money, and effort. They could also consult with the management company on the importance and effects of community building for the success of residents and the complex.

### *Conclusion*

One of the major gaps in the community building research deals with that of community building in apartment complexes and rental properties in general. Although renters make up a large and growing population in American society, they are often a forgotten class of social actors. This study attempted to fill those gaps by examining community building in apartment complexes and made the claim that renters deserve the same community experiences as homeowners in traditional neighborhoods. It was the

purpose of this study to evaluate the relationship among individual characteristics of the property managers, the contextual environment of the management, and community building endeavors. It was proposed that if property managers accept the prevalent negative stereotype of renters or if they have no personal experiences with community building or don't place importance on community building they will be less likely to help their residents with community building. Results found that only the contextual factor of organizational support was related to community building. This finding allows for future work with property managers and management companies to alleviate any constraints on community building endeavors. Further development of community building within apartment complexes helps to equate rental housing with owner-occupied neighborhoods and enhance the quality of life of the renters.

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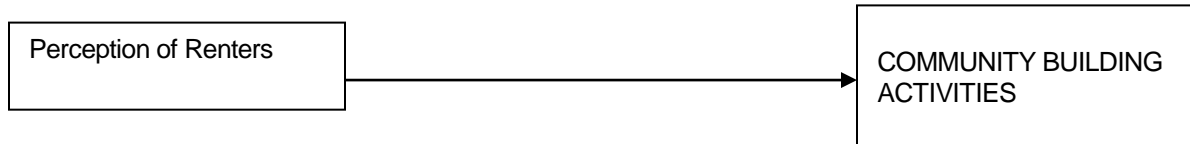
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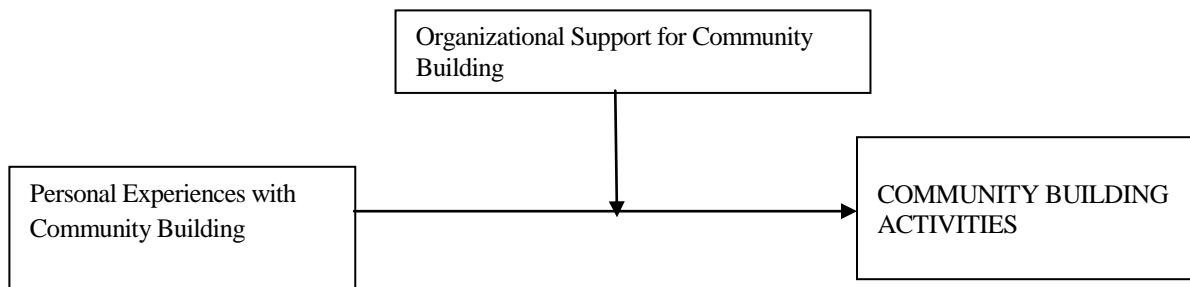
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Model for Hypothesis Testing

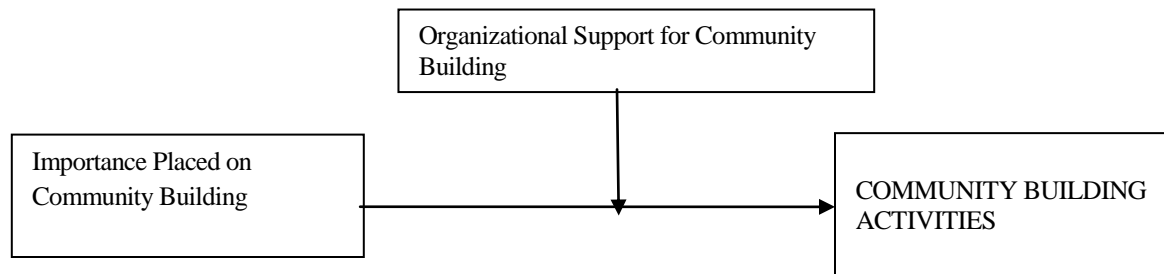
Hypothesis 1



Hypotheses 2 and 3



Hypotheses 4 and 5



OTHER VARIABLES (CONTROLS):  
 Length in the management industry  
 Average rent  
 Age of complex  
 Income of residents



## Appendix B: Apartment Property Manager Survey

This study examines the community building activities that you coordinate in the apartment complex you manage. I know that community building is not typically thought of as part of a property manager's role; however, I am interested in investigating whether managers partake in any of these activities and how they might fit into the manager's job duties.

Apartment Complex Name	
Apartment Complex Address	

First, I would like to know about community building in your complex and how it relates to your role as a property manager.

### I. SPECIFIC COMMUNITY BUILDING

**For the following items please indicate whether you have ever done any of the activities listed and how often you have done them in the last 12 months.**

	Have you ever done the following?		How often have you done the following in the last 12 months?
	YES	NO	
1. Provide space for residents to have meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Help residents with a community watch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Publicize information about activities in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Publicize information about residents (e.g. a resident has furniture they would like to donate to someone, a resident can provide guitar lessons to other residents; celebrating resident achievements)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Organize informal get-togethers to allow residents to get to know each other (e.g. pizza parties, pool parties)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Provide residents with information about local resources such as Laundromats, leisure activities, social services, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Organize special events (e.g. donation drives, yard sales, movie nights)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Support ways to welcome all new residents (e.g. welcome kits/bags/baskets, welcome committee, new neighbor activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Organize ongoing programs for residents (e.g. classes, workshops, book clubs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Organize holiday activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Survey residents about their needs or concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Try to mediate conflicts among residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

13. Provide a forum for residents to air their concerns about the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14. Bring people together to solve common problems in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15. Maintain public spaces for interaction such as a garden, bench, etc. so that people are likely to use them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16. Set up exchanges for the residents (e.g. recipes, plants, tools)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Provide activities specifically for youth (e.g. mentoring, tutoring, carnivals)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18. Provide entertainment resources (e.g. video rentals, games, books)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19. Talk with residents and encourage them to be involved in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## II. IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY BUILDING

**I understand that community building is not part of every apartment management job. I would like to know how important it is to your job. In thinking about the activities in the previous questions and how they relate to your job, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following items.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Community building fits into my role as a property manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If residents came to me and wanted to enhance the complex in some way, I would likely be involved with those activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Community building is important to my role as a property manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I think of this complex as a community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Community building takes away from necessary parts of my job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Community building conflicts with my essential duties as a property manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Community building is a part of my job that I enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. It is one of my goals to build a sense of community in this complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. It is important for residents to interact with one another	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## III. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

**Next, I would like to know about the general characteristics of renters. As a professional who works with renters on a daily basis I would like your opinion about renters. Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements. Think about renters in general not necessarily the renters in your complex.**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. They respect others in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. They maintain their apartments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. They don't care about the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. They value the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. They don't take pride in their apartment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. They are civically responsible (e.g. vote; participate in political or social causes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. If given the opportunity, they would not participate in community activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. They care about their neighbors in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. They move a lot so are not attached to the community of people in the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. They help each other when necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. If given the opportunity, they would volunteer to help with improvements to the complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. They do not have a concern for the welfare of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1-5 responsible dimension, 6-12 engaged dimension

#### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT**

**Next I would like to know about the organizational support your management company provides you. To what extent are these resources available to you for community building?**

	Not at all	A little	A moderate amount	To a great extent
1. Funds from the management company to devote to community building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Time on the job to devote to community building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Buy-in from management company concerning community building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Network of other management professionals to talk to about community building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Authority to make decisions about supporting community building projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Help for community building from other staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Training for community building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Policies, rules, or procedures for community building from management company				

#### V. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES WITH COMMUNITY BUILDING

What kind of experiences have you had with community building in your home community? Please rate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel like I belong to my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I would be willing to work together with my neighbors on something to improve my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If I needed advice about something, I could go to someone in my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. If there was a serious problem in my neighborhood, the people here could get together to solve it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Overall, I feel a sense of community in my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I visit with my neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Buckner (1988) items 1-4 and 8-9, 7 is a modified version of Buckner's, Peterson et al item 5, item 6 developed by the researcher

#### VI. APARTMENT COMPLEX INFORMATION

I would like to know more about your apartment complex. Please provide a numeric response for the following questions.

	Response
1. What is the average rent of your apartments?	
2. What is the average size (sq ft) of your apartments?	
3. How long has the complex been in	

existence?	
4. What is your annual percentage of vacancies?	
5. What is the average household income of your tenants?	
6. How many units are in your complex?	
7. On average, how long do your tenants stay in your complex?	
8. Is there a management office onsite?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

## VII. DEMOGRAPHICS

**Please tell me a little more about yourself.**

	Response
1. What is your age?	
2. What is your gender?	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
3. Do you own or rent your home?	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Rent
4. Do you live in an apartment complex?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
5. Do you live in the apartment complex that you manage?	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$20,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000-39,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000-59,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000-79,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000-99,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Over \$100,000
6. What is your annual household income?	<input type="checkbox"/> African American/Black <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Native American <input type="checkbox"/> European American/Caucasian/White <input type="checkbox"/> Other
7. How would you describe your race/ethnicity?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
8. How many years have you been in the apartment management industry?	

## VIII. SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

**Next, I would like to know a little more about you. Please indicate whether the following statements about you are true or false.**

	True	False
1. It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. There have been time when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## IX. OTHER COMMUNITY BUILDING

### 1. How do you communicate with your residents concerning news about the complex?

	YES	NO
Bulletin board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listserv	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flyers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: Please specify:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If Other, please specify:		

Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following items.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
2. Community building activities make sense for my complex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I plan on instituting community building initiatives in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What percentage of your time do you spend on community building activities?
5. Can you provide an example of one effort to build community in your complex over the last year?
6. What would you say are the top three barriers to doing any community building in your complex?
7. How do you find out the concerns of your residents?

## Appendix C. Retained Items from EFA

Table 1. Importance EFA Results

Items	Factor Loading	Percent of Variance
<i>Factor 1</i>		50.12%
1. Community building fits into my role as a property manager	.89	
3. Community building is important to my role as a property manager	.89	
8. It is one of my goals to build a sense of community in this complex	.79	
2. If residents came to me and wanted to enhance the complex in some way, I would likely be involved	.69	
4. I think of this complex as a community	.69	
9. It is important for residents to interact with one another	.68	
7. Community is a part of my job that I enjoy	.64	

Table 2. Perception of Renters EFA Results

Items	Factor Loading	Percent of Variance
<i>Factor 1</i>		39.05%
12. They do not have a concern for the welfare of others	.785	
8. They care about their neighbors in the complex	.715	
3. They don't care about the complex	.707	
9. They move a lot so are not attached to the community of people in the complex	.672	
1. They respect others in the complex	.660	
7. If given the opportunity, they would not participate in community activities	.646	
4. They don't take pride in their apartment	.554	
6. They are civically responsible (e.g. vote; participate in political or social causes)	.487	



Table 3. Personal Experiences EFA Results

Items	Factor Loading	Percent of Variance
<i>Factor 1</i>		50.52%
6. Overall, I feel a sense of community in my neighborhood	.83	
7. I visit with my neighbors	.82	
1. I feel like I belong to my neighborhood	.81	
3. If I needed advice about something, I could go to someone in my neighborhood	.69	
9. I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighborhood	.69	
5. If there was a serious problem in my neighborhood, the people here could get together to solve it	.68	
4. I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency	.62	
2. I would be willing to work together with my neighbors on something to improve my neighborhood	.61	
8. I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors	.59	

Table 4. Organizational Support Results of EFA

Items	Factor Loading	Percent of Variance
<i>Factor 1</i>		51.62%
3. Buy-in from management company concerning community building	.81	
7. Training for community building	.77	
5. Authority to make decisions about supporting community building projects	.76	
2. Time on the job to devote to community building	.74	
1. Funds from the management company to devote to community building	.71	
8. Policies, rules, or procedures for community building from management company	.66	
6. Help for community building from other staff	.64	
4. Network of other management professionals to talk to about community building	.62	