

**Community Members' Experiences And Perceptions
In High Crime Apartment Complexes:
A Guidance Resource For Community Oriented Policing**

University of Utah Social Research Institute
February 1, 1999

Principal Investigator:
Russell K. VanVleet, M.S.W.
Assistant Research Professor
Graduate School of Social Work

Research Assistant:
Edward I. Byrnes, M.S.W.

Community Oriented Policing (COP) is an emerging approach to decreasing crime in many American cities. Community Oriented Policing has been identified as a key "pillar" of emerging criminal justice practice (Hahn, 1998)¹. The goal of Community Oriented Policing is to "return to the community responsibility that has been delegated to professionals and to involve communities in 'co-creating' order" (Thurman, 1995, p. 176)². Hahn (1998) also identifies community-based corrections and mediation rooted in restorative justice as vital components for addressing crime in the twenty-first century.

It has become clear that the practice of Community Oriented Policing must include individual communities perspectives. Providing community information is the purpose of this report. The report details responses to a survey of residents who are living in high-crime apartment complexes in Salt Lake City. Police officers' responses to similar questions are included to illustrate which themes the community and the police have in common. These results will be discussed in terms of prescriptions for Community Oriented Policing practices in these apartment complexes.

Survey Of Apartment Complex Residents

Method

There were 134 respondents to a July, 1998 survey of apartment complex residents. There were four complexes chosen because they had the highest numbers of calls for police service during 1997. The addresses for each resident of these four complexes were identified, and a total of 1,200 surveys were mailed to the addresses. This resulted in a 11.2 percent response rate. Respondents were asked to answer the questions based on their experiences during the past year. All of the data reported are based on the full sample of 134 respondents unless otherwise specified in the text. The survey instrument is included in Appendix A.

¹ Hahn, P.H. (1998). Emerging criminal justice: Three pillars for a proactive justice system. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

² Thurman, Q.C. (1995). Community policing: The police as a community resource. In P. Adams, and K. Nelson (Eds.), Reinventing human services: Community and family centered practice. New York: Aldine De Guyter.

The categories reported are derived from aggregations of raw survey responses. All of the survey items had a multiple response format, where respondents could choose more than one response to an item, so percentages will sometimes add up to more than 100 across items within categories. The terms acknowledge, report, cite, and indicate mean that a respondent reported that an event had happened, that they had knowledge of an event, or that they agreed with a statement. The term rate refers to the number of items in a response category that a respondent acknowledged, divided by the number of items within that category. This means that if a category had two possible items which could be acknowledged, and a respondent acknowledged one of them, the rate would be 0.50. Definitions for specific variables will appear where the variable is discussed in text.

This survey was used to determine what the experiences and perceptions of these apartment complex residents were, and how strong the relationship between experiences and perceptions was for these residents. Questions in the survey focused on respondents' experiences with crime, their sense of safety, and their perceptions of the police, their apartment complex management, and their own level of power to effect the rate of crime in their communities. Responses within these categories are the unit of analysis for this report.

Results

Respondents

Of the 134 respondents, 10 percent were from the Lexington Square (a.k.a. Ashford Chase) apartment complex. There were 32 percent from the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) apartments, 23 percent from the Cedar Pointe apartments, and 19 percent from the Hartland apartments. The remaining 16 percent of respondents did not identify their apartment complex, and their responses were not included in analyses involving apartment complex as a variable. Their responses were included in all descriptive statistics. The respondents had lived at their apartments for an average of 28 months, within a range from 1 week to 15 years. The distribution of respondents by apartment complex is displayed in figure 1.

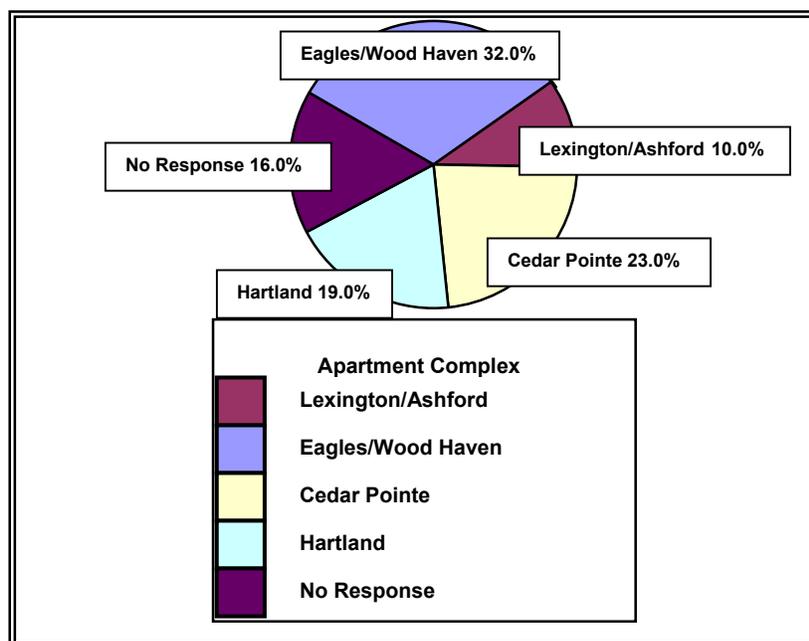


Figure 1 Distribution of respondents by apartment complex.

Residents' Experiences With Crime

The apartment complex residents were asked a number of specific questions about their experiences with crime. The specific questions (Appendix A) were condensed into response categories for analysis. Categories include experiential, observational or hearsay knowledge of crimes, relationship status between respondents and the crime victims that they know, perpetrators of crime, and root causes of crime. These categories proved more useful and informative in describing the respondents' experiences with crime.

Among the respondents, 55 percent had been personally victimized by a crime in their apartment complex. There were 63 percent who acknowledged having been victimized by a crime in general. These respondents include 60 percent who knew someone who had been victimized by a crime in their apartment complex. There were 70 percent who knew someone who had been victimized by a crime in general. There were no statistically significant effects across all of the apartment complexes with respect to reports of experienced, observed or hearsay crimes. Respondents' overall experiences with crime are displayed in table 1.

Acknowledged Experience	Type of Experience			
	Personally Victimized In General	Personally Victimized In Complex	Knows Victims In General	Know Victims In Complex
Yes	63%	55%	70%	60%
No	37%	45%	30%	40%

Table 1 Respondents' overall experiences with crime.

Among the respondents, 83 percent had observed a crime occurring in their apartment complex. There were 49 percent who had witnessed a crime against a person, 70 percent who had witnessed a property crime, 34 percent who observed an alcohol or drug crime, 48 percent who observed a public order crime and 19 percent who saw other crimes. There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes regarding frequencies of observed crimes.

Among the respondents, 83 percent had hearsay knowledge of a crime occurring in their apartment complex. There were 57 percent who had heard about a crime against a person, 71 percent who had heard about a property crime, 49 percent who heard about an alcohol or drug crime, 46 percent who heard about a public order crime and 13 percent who heard about other crimes. There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes regarding frequencies of hearsay knowledge of crimes. Percent of respondents' experienced, observed and hearsay crime reports are displayed in figure 2.

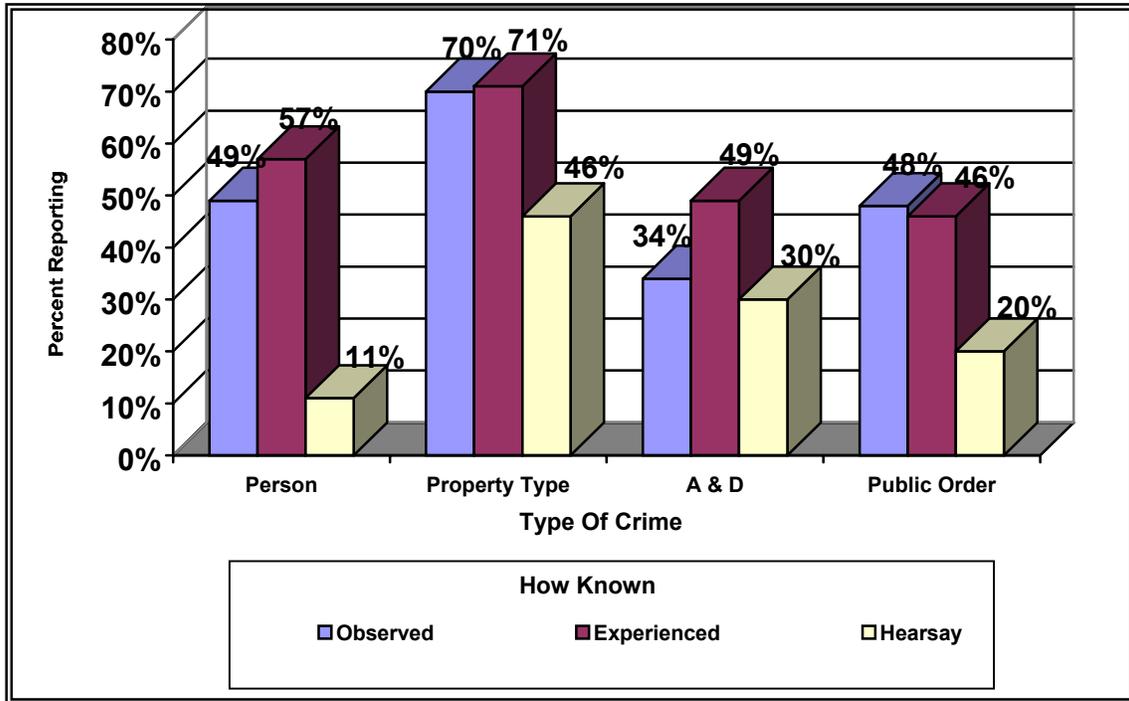


Figure 2 Percent of respondents' observed and hearsay crime reports.

It seems clear that while there are relatively equal levels of acknowledgment for observational and hearsay knowledge of overall crime in these complexes, the types of crimes that are observed or experienced and the types of crimes that are discussed among neighbors are somewhat different. As one can see from figure 2, the most frequently experienced, observed and discussed crimes in these apartment complexes are those against property. Crimes against persons are the second most frequently observed and discussed type of crime, but they are far less frequently experienced. The least frequently observed or experienced type of crime is alcohol or drug offenses, yet these are discussed nearly as often as crimes against persons, and more often than public order offenses. These findings indicate that crimes against persons are far more likely to be discussed than to be experienced or observed. While alcohol and drug crimes are routinely discussed among apartment complex residents, actual observations or experiences of alcohol and drug crimes are less frequent than is their discussion among complex residents.

Personal Knowledge of Crime Victims

Among the respondents, 72 percent personally knew people who had been victimized by crimes. Of the respondents, 25 percent had members of their immediate family victimized by crimes, and 7 percent reported having members of their extended families who were crime victims. There were 32 percent who reported having friends, 49 percent who had neighbors, and 35 percent who knew acquaintances and others who were crime victims. There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes for acquaintance with these categories of crime victims. The relationships between respondents and people they know who were crime victims are displayed in table 2.

Percent Reporting	Persons Known Who Were Victimized				
	Immediate Family	Extended Family	Friends	Neighbors	Others
Yes	25%	7%	32%	49%	35%
No	75%	93%	68%	51%	65%

Table 2 Relationships between respondents and people they know who were crime victims.

Perpetrators Of Crime

Among the 134 respondents, there were 58 percent who believed that residents of the apartment complexes were the perpetrators of most of the crimes within the complexes. There were 46 percent who believed that neighborhood residents were the perpetrators. There were 58 percent of the respondents who believed that youths were responsible for most of the crime in the complexes, while 43 percent perceived adults as responsible. Respondents indicated gangs as the perpetrators of crimes 40 percent of the time, and specific families 11 percent of the time. It appears that while the respondents viewed youths as the most frequent crime perpetrators, they did not indicate gangs nearly as frequently. It also appears that the residents of these complexes perceive other complex residents as the majority of criminal perpetrators in their apartment complexes. This means that a focus on non-gang youth within these complexes may be useful, and that trust between complex residents is likely to be low. The perceived perpetrators of crime in the apartment complexes by percent of responses are displayed in figure 3.

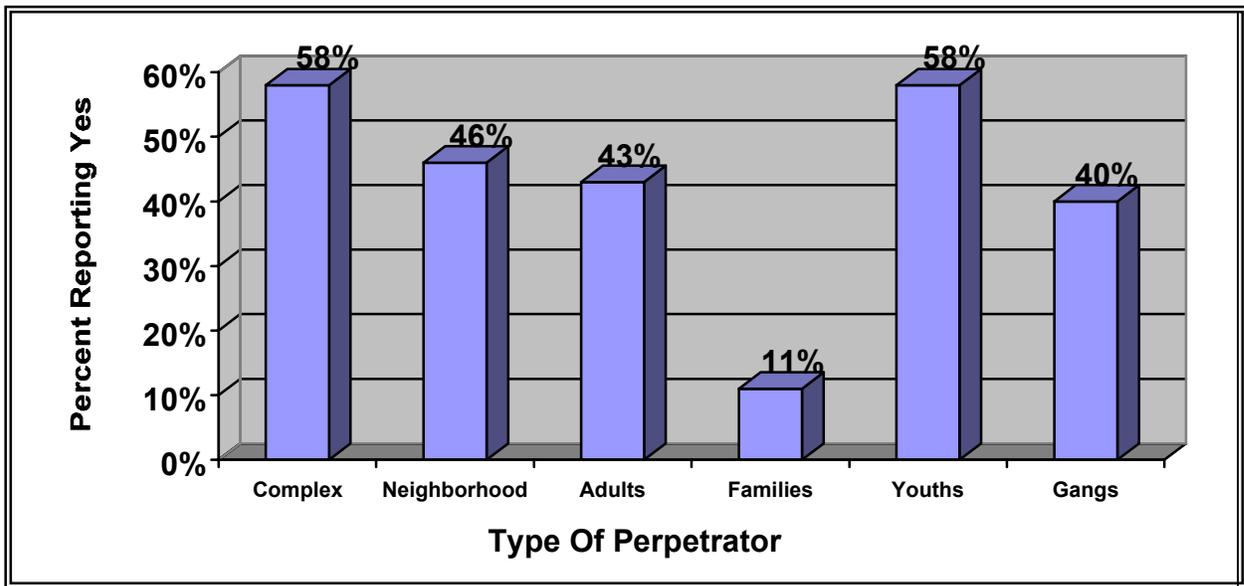


Figure 3 Perceived perpetrators of crime by percent citing group.

Root Causes Of Crime

Among the survey respondents, 84 percent cited neighborhood influences, and 58 percent cited socioeconomic factors as the root causes of crime. There were 58 percent each who cited peer influences and alcohol and drugs as the root causes of crime. There were 46 percent who believed that family factors were linked to crime, and 56 percent who cited characteristics of individuals as the root causes of crime. This means that most apartment complex residents who responded believe that their neighborhoods, poverty, peer influences, and alcohol and drugs are the root causes of crime. It appears that efforts at involving these apartment communities in crime fighting will have to at least acknowledge the social interactions between residents in these complexes. The perceived root causes of crime by percent of responses are displayed in table 3.

Percent Citing	Perceived Root Cause of Crime					
	Socio-economic	Family	Peers	Neighborhood	A & D	Individual
Yes	58%	46%	58%	84%	58%	56%
No	42%	54%	42%	16%	42%	44%

Table 3 Perceived root causes of crime by percent citing cause.

Residents' Sense Of Safety

The apartment complex residents were asked a number of specific questions about their subjective sense of safety. They were asked to use a ten-point rating scale in answering questions about safety, with 10 representing very unsafe, and 1 being completely safe. The specific questions (Appendix A) were condensed into response categories for analysis. Categories include safety in their apartments, in the outside areas of their complex, while using complex facilities, and in the neighborhood that surrounds their complex. The ratings of safety within apartments, outside areas of the complex, and complex facilities were combined and averaged to assess the respondents' overall sense of safety in their apartment complexes. These categories proved more useful and informative in describing and analyzing the respondents' sense of safety.

The average rating for safety inside of their apartments was 4.8, approximately halfway between safe and unsafe. The average rating for safety in the outside areas of their complex was 4.9, and was 4.8 for their complex facilities, also approximately halfway between safe and unsafe. The rating for the surrounding neighborhoods was 5.1, only slightly more unsafe than inside the complexes, and still approximately halfway between safe and unsafe. The respondents' overall sense of safety within their complexes was 4.8. This means that the respondents felt neither particularly safe nor unsafe in their apartment complexes, or in the surrounding neighborhoods.

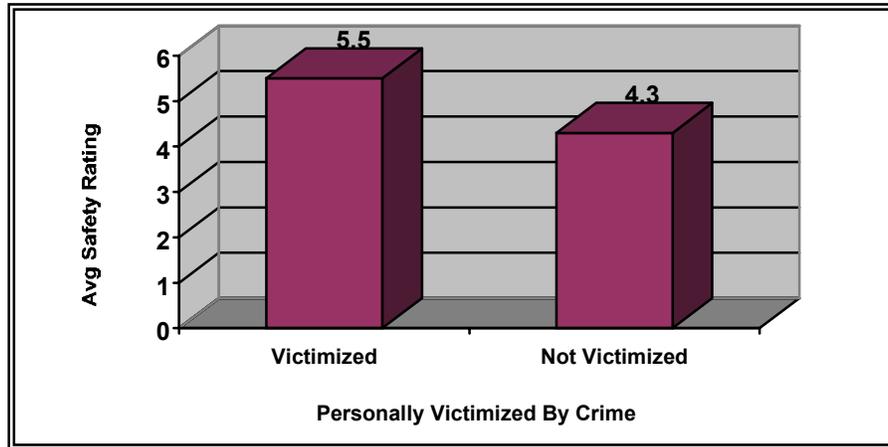


Figure 4 Ratings of overall safety in the complex by experience with crime in the complex.

There were no statistically significant differences between respondents on any of these safety variables, based on which apartment complex they lived in. One statistically significant³ effect on respondents' sense of safety was found within their experiences with crime. Respondents who had been personally victimized by a crime in their apartment complexes rated their overall sense of safety at an average of 5.5, towards the unsafe direction of the scale. Respondents who had not been personally victimized by a crime in their apartment complexes rated their overall sense of safety at an average of 4.3, towards the safe direction of the scale. This means that respondents who had personal experience with crime felt significantly less safe than those who did not have these experiences. Rating of overall safety in the complex by personal experience with crime in the complex are displayed in figure 4.

Residents' Perceptions Of Police, Complex Manager, And Resources

Percent Citing	Perceived Crime Fighting Resources				
	Police	Government	Community	Complex Managers	Self
Yes	71%	10%	60%	70%	36%
No	29%	90%	40%	30%	64%

Table 4 Perceived crime-fighting resources.

Crime Fighting Resources

As can be seen in table 4, these respondents largely believed that the police department (71%), and the complex managers (70%) were their resources for fighting crime in their apartment complexes. Fewer respondents (60%) perceived their community as a resource to combat crime. Very few (10%) perceived other government agencies as a crime fighting resource. Unfortunately, only 36 percent of the respondents viewed themselves as a resource for combating crime in their apartment complexes. There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes on respondents' perceived resources. The two

³ $F(1,86) = 7.68, p = .007$

crime experience variables that had an appreciable impact on perceived resource was whether an immediate family member had been victimized by crime, and whether a respondent had observed any crimes occurring in their complex. These had a statistically significant effect on whether or not a respondent saw the complex managers and owners as resources.⁴ While these residents perceive the police department as a major crime-fighting resource, efforts at generating individual residents' involvement in community policing may be challenging in these complexes.

Police And Complex Management

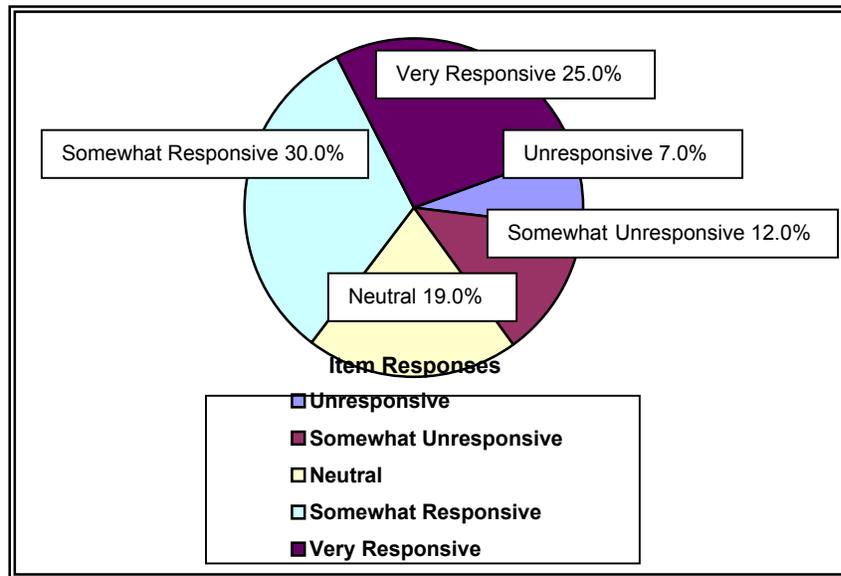


Figure 5 Responses within the item “How do you feel about the way the police respond to crime in this apartment complex?”

Respondents were asked, “How do you feel about the way the police respond to crime in this apartment complex?” Responses were fixed within a five-point scale. In this scale a rating of one corresponded with “unresponsive” and a rating of five corresponded with “very responsive.” The average response to this question on the initial survey was 3.6, between “neutral” and “somewhat positive”, with the most frequent response of “somewhat responsive” (30%). There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes on this item. The frequency of responses within this item are displayed in figure 5.

⁴ Chi-square(family member) = 9.01, df = 1, p = .003; Chi-square(observed) = 4.28, df = 1, p = .038

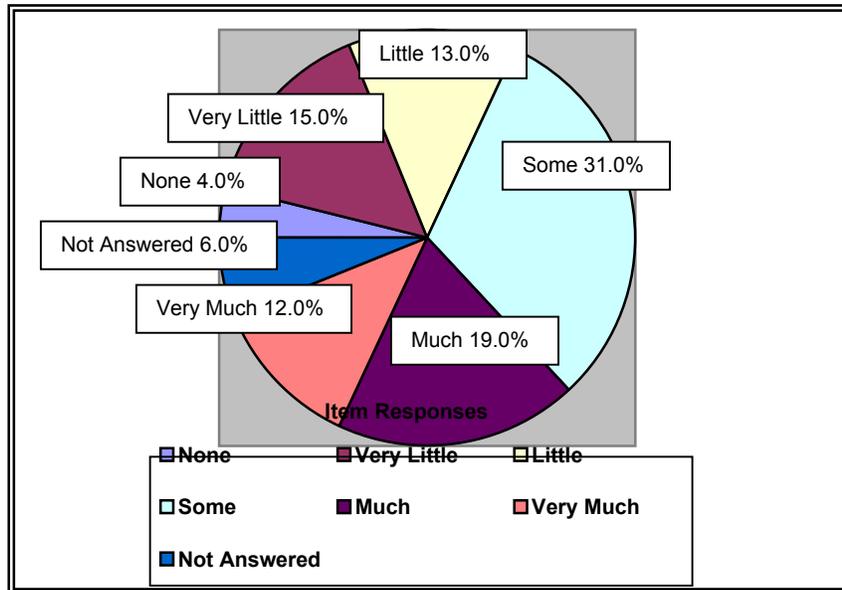


Figure 6 Responses within the item “How much interest do you think there is in the police department for making this apartment complex a better place to live?”

Respondents were asked “How much interest do you think there is in the police department for making this apartment complex a better place to live?” Responses were fixed within a six-point scale. In this scale a rating of one corresponded with “none” and a rating of six corresponded with “very much.” The average response to this question was 3.9, slightly below “some”, with a most frequent response of “some” (31%). There were no statistically significant differences between apartment complexes on this item. The frequency of responses within this item are displayed in figure 6.

Respondents were asked, “How much do you feel the complex managers or owners are doing to lower the amount of crime in this apartment complex?” Responses were fixed within a four-point scale. In this scale a rating of one corresponded with “nothing at all” and a rating of four corresponded with “a great deal.” The average response to this question was 2.7, slightly below “what they can”, with a most frequent response of “what they can” (46%). The frequency of responses within this item are displayed in figure 7. Residents of the Hartland apartments gave an average response of 2.4, and residents of the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) apartments gave an average response of 3.1. This difference was statistically significant.⁵ Average responses to this question by apartment complex are displayed in figure 8.

⁵ $F(3,104) = 2.87, p = .006$

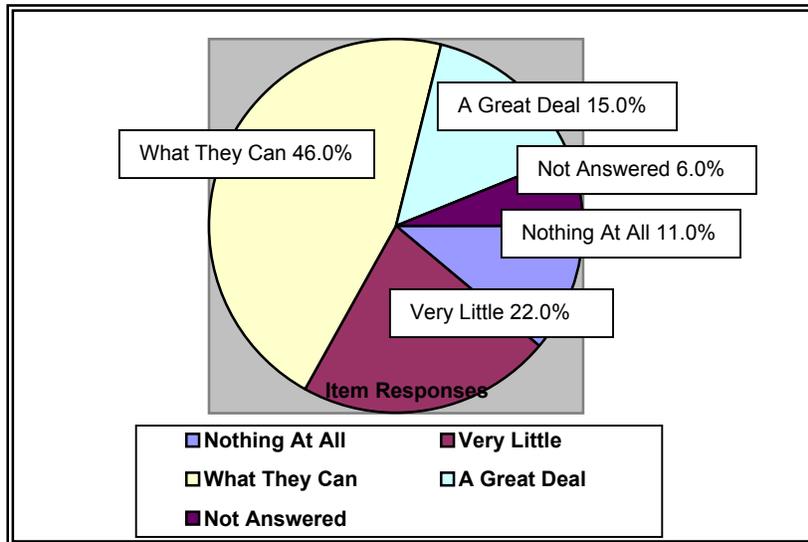


Figure 7 Responses within the item “How much do you feel the complex managers or owners are doing to lower the amount of crime in this apartment complex?”

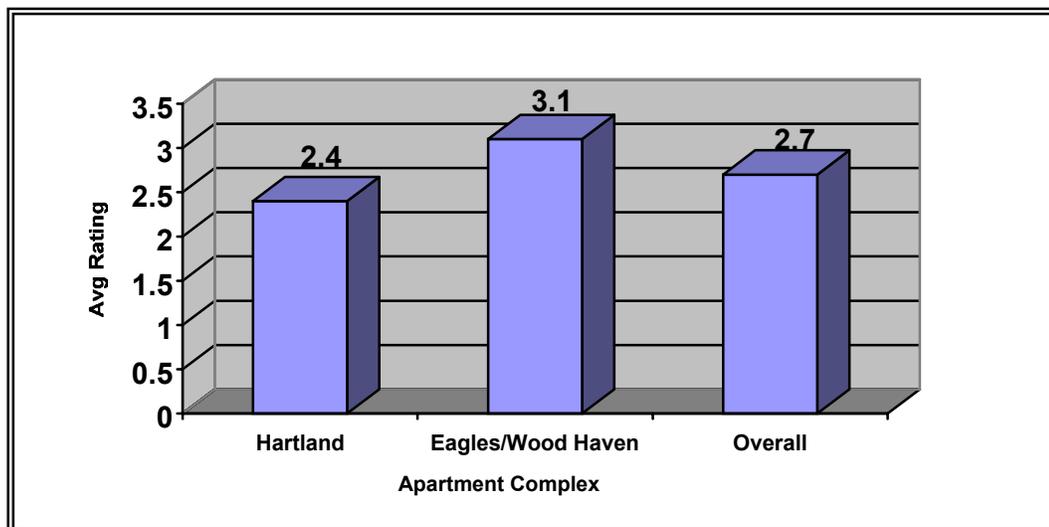


Figure 8 Average responses to “How much do you feel the complex managers or owners are doing to lower the amount of crime in this apartment complex?” by apartment complex.

Respondents were asked, “How committed do you think the complex managers or owners are to lowering the amount of crime within this complex?” Responses were fixed within a five-point scale. In this scale a rating of one corresponded with “not at all” and a rating of five corresponded with “completely committed.” The average response to this question was 2.8, slightly below “as much as they should be”, with a most frequent response of “not enough” (34%). The frequency of responses within this item are displayed in figure 9. Residents of the Cedar Pointe apartments gave an average response of 2.3, and residents of the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) apartments gave an average response of 3.3. This difference was

statistically significant.⁶ Average responses to this question by apartment complex are displayed in figure 10.

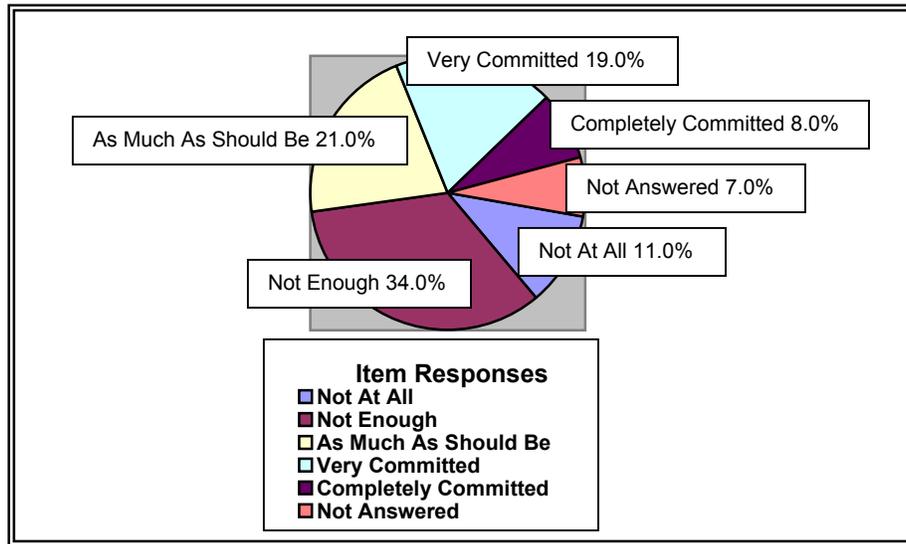


Figure 9 Percentage responses to “How committed do you think the complex managers or owners are to lowering the amount of crime within this complex?”

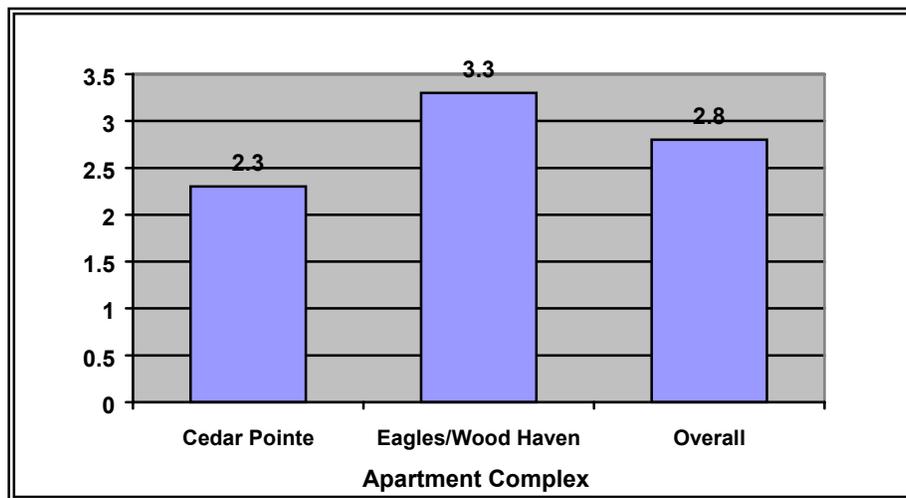


Figure 10 Average responses to “How committed do you think the complex managers or owners are to lowering the amount of crime within this complex?” by apartment complex.

There were no significant differences between apartment complexes on perceptions of the police. This means that the police are doing a uniform job in responding to crime and maintaining good community relationships across all of those complexes. There were significant differences between apartment complexes on perceptions of management and owners. The Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) apartments received the highest average ratings for both action and commitment. The Eagles Landing apartments can serve as a model for initial efforts at improving levels of cooperation between complex residents and managers or

⁶ $F(3,104) = 5.61, p = .005$

owners.

Crime Rates And Personal Power

Residents were asked to rate their perceptions of changes in crime rates in their apartment complexes, in Salt Lake City, and in the state of Utah. The ratings were fixed within a three-point scale, with one corresponding to “increasing”, two corresponding to “about the same”, and three corresponding to “decreasing.” This means that a higher average rating corresponds to a perception of improvement, and a lower one corresponds with a perception of deterioration.

The crime rate within apartment complexes had an overall average rating of 1.9, slightly below “about the same,” with a most frequent response of “about the same (44%).” The crime rate within Salt Lake City had an overall average rating of 1.4, between “increasing” and “about the same,” with a most frequent response of “increasing” (63%). The crime rate within the state of Utah also had an overall average rating of 1.4, between “increasing” and “about the same,” with a most frequent response of “increasing” (62%). This means that the majority of respondents believe that while crime rates are increasing in Salt Lake City and statewide, they perceive little change in the crime rate within their apartment complexes. This may be related to residents’ perceptions about their complexes already being neither safe nor unsafe places to live.

As one can see from table 5, there were differences between the apartment complexes on residents’ perceptions of the crime rates within their complex. Only 13 percent of the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) perceived the complex crime rate as increasing, as compared with a range of 23 to 46 percent for the other complexes. Correspondingly, the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) residents were the highest reporters of a decreasing crime rate at 33 percent, compared with a range of 7 to 23 percent for the other complexes. These differences were statistically significant⁷. This means that the residents of the Eagles Landing apartments have the best impression of their complex crime rate among all of the complexes. Considering the better perceptions that they have of their complex managers, it could be that the strategies which are employed by the Eagles Landing management warrant replication. Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven)

Crime Rate Perceived As	Apartment Complex			
	Lexington/Ashford	Eagles/Wood Haven	Cedar Pointe	Hartland
Increasing	43%	13%	46%	23%
About The Same	36%	54%	47%	50%
Decreasing	21%	33%	7%	27%

Table 5 Residents’ perceptions of crime rates by apartment complex.

The respondents were asked “On a scale of one to ten, with one being not at all, and ten being very much, how much is crime effecting the residents of this apartment complex?” They gave an average response of 5.3, indicating that crime was perceived to have a moderate effect

⁷ Chi-square = 13.61, df = 6, p = .034

on complex residents. The respondents were asked “If you knew what to do, how much power do you feel that you have as an individual to lower the amount of crime within this apartment complex?” Responses were fixed within a ten-point scale. In this scale a rating of one corresponded with “completely powerless” and a rating of ten corresponded with “completely powerful.” The average response to this question was 4.7, slightly below “neither powerful nor powerless,” indicating that respondents felt a moderate level of power to reduce crime in their apartment complexes. When asked “Are you planning on moving out of this complex within the next year as a direct result of crime within the complex?”, 38 percent of those responding said yes, and 62 percent said no.

Item Affected	Crime Observed In Complex?	Average Rating For Item	F	p
Effect of Crime On Residents	Yes	5.7	21.75	<.0001
	No	2.7		
Police Interest	Yes	3.8	5.10	.026
	No	4.5		

Table 6a Perceptions of crime if respondent has been observed crime in their complex.

Item Affected	Knows Crime Victims In General?	Average Response	F	p
Effect Of Crime On Residents	Yes	5.7	7.23	.008
	No	4.2		
How Police Respond	Yes	3.4	7.52	.007
	No	4.1		

Table 6b Perceptions of crime if respondent knows crime victims in general.

As tables 6a through 6e show, there were many aspects of the respondents’ knowledge of and experiences with crime that had statistically significant effects on their perceptions of the police, apartment complex management, and the effects of crime on their communities. Perceptions about the overall impact of crime on apartment complex residents were significantly effected by whether respondents had observed crime in the complex , knew others who were victimized by crime in general or in their complex, and had been victims of crime in general or in their complex. Perceptions about police responses to crime were significantly effected by whether respondents knew others who were victimized by crime in general or in their complex, and if a respondent had been victimized by crime in their complex. Perceptions about the level of police interest with lowering crime in their complex were effected by whether crimes had been observed, if the respondent knew others who had been victimized by crime in their complex, and if respondent had been a victim of crime in general or in the complex. Perceptions about the apartment complexes owners and managers commitment to reducing crime was

significantly effected by whether a respondent had been a victim of crime in general or in the complex.

Item Affected	Knows Crime Victims From Their Complex?	Average Response	F	P
Effect Of Crime On Residents	Yes	6.1	17.99	<.0001
	No	4.0		
How Police Respond	Yes	3.4	8.44	.004
	No	4.3		
Police Interest	Yes	3.6	7.45	.007
	No	4.3		

Table 6c Perceptions of crime if respondent knows crime victims from their complex.

Item Affected	Victimized By Crime In General	Average Response	F	p
Effects Of Crime On Residents	Yes	6.0	18.75	<.0001
	No	3.9		
Owners & Mgrs Commitment	Yes	2.6	5.07	.026
	No	3.1		
Police Interest	Yes	3.6	9.06	.003
	No	4.4		

Table 6d Perceptions of crime if respondent victimized by crime in general.

Item Affected	If Victimized By Crime In Their Complex?	Average Response	F	p
Effect Of Crime On Residents	Yes	6.1	16.94	<.0001
	No	4.2		
Owners & Mgrs Commitment	Yes	2.6	5.77	.018
	No	3.1		
How Police Respond	Yes	3.4	6.44	.012
	No	3.9		
Police Interest	Yes	3.6	5.54	.020
	No	4.2		

Table 6e Perceptions of crime if respondent victimized by crime in their complex.

Experiences With Crime As Predictors of Perceptions

Multiple regression analyses were used to determine which crime experience variables best predicted perceptions of the police, complex management, and resources for reducing crime. Rates of response for individual items within categories of crime experiences were used to test the relationships between predictive crime experiences and police, management, and resource perceptions. Rate here refers to the number of items in a crime experience category that a respondent acknowledged, divided by the number of items within that category.

Predictors of perceptions of police responses to crime included the rates at which respondents reported observing crimes against persons in their complexes, being victimized by crimes against their own persons in their complexes, knowing neighbors in the complex who were victimized by crimes, and having friends who were crime victims in or out of their complexes. All of these predictors had negative correlations with perceived police response. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment of these crime experiences increased, the respondents' perceptions of police responses became less favorable. Predictors of perceived police responses to crime are displayed in table 7.

Perceived Police Responses To Crime			
Predictor	Avg Reporting Rate	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Rate Of Observed Person Crimes In Complex	.122	-.275	.002
Rate Of Experienced Property Crimes In Complex	.128	-.358	.008
Rate Of Friends As Crime Victims In General	.159	-.322	<.0001
Rate Of Neighbors As Crime Victims In Complex	.398	-.385	.014

Table 7 Predictors of perceived police responses to crime.

Predictors of perceptions about police interest in improving life in the complexes included the rates at which respondents acknowledged observing alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes, being victimized by property crimes in their complexes, and knowing neighbors in the complex who were victimized by crimes. All of these predictors had negative correlations with perceived police response. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment for these crime experiences increased, the respondents' perceptions of police interest became less favorable. Predictors of perceived police interest in improving life in the complexes are displayed in table 8.

Predictors of perceptions about managers level of effort against crime in the complexes included the rates at which respondents reported observing alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes, and being victims of alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes. These predictors both had negative correlations with perceived management efforts. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment for these crime experiences increased, the respondents' perceptions of management efforts became less favorable. Predictors of perceived management effort against crime in the complexes are displayed in table 9.

Perceived Police Interest In Complex			
Predictor	Avg Reporting Rate	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Rate Of Observed Alcohol & Drug Crimes In Complex	.339	-.344	<.0001
Rate Of Experienced Property Crimes In Complex	.126	-.422	.003
Rate of Neighbors As Crime Victims In Complex	.402	-.214	.016

Table 8 Predictors of perceived police interest in improving life in the complexes.

Perceived Management Effort Against Crime			
Predictor	Avg Reporting Rate	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Rate of Observed Alcohol & Drug Crimes In Complex	.339	-.218	.014
Rate of Experienced Alcohol & Drug Crimes In Complex	.032	-.304	.014

Table 9 Predictors of perceived management effort against crime.

Predictors of perceptions about managers' level of commitment to reducing crime in the complexes included the rates at which respondents reported observing alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes, and having been victims of property crimes in their complexes. These predictors both had negative correlations with perceived management efforts. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment for these crime experiences increased, the respondents' perceptions of management's commitment to reducing crime became less favorable. Predictors of perceived management commitment to reducing crime in the complexes are displayed in table 10.

Perceived Management Commitment To Reducing Crime			
Predictor	Avg Endorsement Rate	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Rate Of Observed Alcohol & Drug Crimes In Complex	.339	-.213	.018
Rate Of Experienced Property Crimes in Complex	.127	-.278	.043

Table 10 Predictors of perceived management commitment to reducing crime.

Predictors of complex owners or managers being perceived as a resource for reducing crime included the rates at which respondents reported observing property crimes in their complexes, having acquaintances who were victimized by crime in their complex, and having immediate family members who were crime victims. These predictors all had positive correlations with management as a perceived resource. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment for these crime experiences increased, the respondents' perceptions of the management as a resource became more likely. Predictors of management as a perceived resource for reducing crime in the complexes are displayed in table 11.

Perceived Management As A Resource For Reducing Crime			
Predictors	Avg Endorsement Rate	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Rate Of Observed Property Crimes In Complex	.256	+.328	<.0001
Rate Of Immediate Family As Crime Victims In General	.076	+.184	.034
Rate Of Acquaintances As Crime Victims In Complex	.138	+.253	.042

Table 11 Predictors of management as a perceived resource for reducing crime.

The rate at which respondents reported observing alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes was the single predictor⁸ of government agencies being perceived as a resource for reducing crime. There was a positive correlation between government agencies as a perceived resource and the rate at which respondents acknowledged observing alcohol and drug crimes. This means that as the rate of acknowledgment for observing alcohol and drug crimes increased, the respondents' perceptions of government agencies as a resource became more likely.

While there were a number of predictors of perceptions about police and complex management, observed alcohol and drug crimes in their complexes repeatedly emerged as a significant predictor. Taken with the earlier findings about alcohol and drug offenses being widely discussed among complex residents, it appears that these offenses being widely discussed among complex residents, it appears that these offenses have an impact on community perceptions that it disproportionate to their frequency of occurrence. Given these community perceptions, community policing efforts will improve such perceptions about crime through attending to alcohol and drug crimes in these apartment complexes.

Police Officer Interviews

Method

Six Salt Lake City Police Department (SLPD) officers were asked questions that were similar to those posed to the apartment complex residents. As with the complex residents, they were asked to base their answers on experiences during the past year. The interview agenda is included in Appendix B. The size of the sample made the use of quantitative methods inappropriate. Additionally, the SLPD possesses volumes of quantitative information about their officers already, so these interviews were aimed at generating subjective responses from the officers. The officers' responses are reported as themes, which are derived from the frequency of a concept being discussed by the officers during the interviews.

⁸ $R(1,132) = .263, p = .002$

Results

These officers had at least a moderate level of familiarity with the apartment complexes where the surveys were mailed. They shared residents' perceptions about these complexes being neither safe nor unsafe. Their perceptions of crime rates were nearly identical to the survey respondents for Salt Lake City and Utah, but they were more likely to see the crime rates in these complexes as unchanged, where the residents would sometimes perceive them as decreasing. The officers were as likely as the residents to view the police department and the complex management as resources for lowering crime, and they believed that neighbors in the apartment complexes were a resource to a greater degree than the residents themselves did.

The officers cited property crimes as the ones that they were most likely to respond to, which corresponds with the observed crime data from the complex residents. They were most likely to hear about other officers' encounters with alcohol and drug crimes, which parallels the hearsay category data from the apartment complexes. The officers cited alcohol and drug crimes as the second most frequently occurring offense category that they respond to in these complexes. These interview findings give a context to the high level of impact that observed alcohol and drug crimes has on the residents'.

The first difference between the officers and the complex residents to emerge was that the officers who were interviewed had a more positive view of the residents' responses to crime and interest in reducing it than the residents had of the police in these categories. While the residents tended to see youths as the most frequent perpetrators of crime, the officers perceived adults living in the complexes as the most frequent and likely perpetrators. The officers cited neighborhood factors most frequently as a root cause of crime, with alcohol and drugs being the least frequently cited cause. This difference may come from the officers' broader experiences with a variety of crimes in these complexes, whereas the residents are more likely to see drug activity and perhaps not witness other types of crime as often.

In summary, the officers hold a more positive view of the apartment complex residents than these residents often have of the police. There are similarities in how these two groups perceive subjective safety, crime rates, and resources for decreasing crime. The differences between these groups include the officers adding neighbors to their perceived resources, and officers holding adults more responsible for the amount of crime in these complexes. Since the officers have the more positive view coupled with the broader experience with crime in these complexes, they are well-positioned to assume a leadership role in Community Oriented Policing.

Conclusions

Strengths And Weaknesses

The strengths of this study include a sufficient sample size to support statistical analyses which were satisfactorily powerful. Additionally, when individual item responses were condensed into categories, the categories did demonstrate discriminative and predictive capabilities. The apartment complex category, the sole pre-existing one, was less discriminative and predictive in many cases than many other categories.

There were 134 respondents out of a total of 1,200 mailed surveys, resulting in a 11.2 percent response rate. When response rates are low one must assume some degree of sampling error that could be attributed to self-selection effects. Questions in this survey, like all

surveys, addressed respondents' perceptions about crime. Responses were self-reported, and may be subject to systematic bias on the part of individual participants. Taken with the risk of self-selecting biases, these results may not represent the realities of most residents in these apartment complexes. As the surveys were written in English, they only measured the perceptions of the English-speaking members of these communities, and as a result may be biased either positively or negatively.

Of the respondents, representation of the four complexes varied between 10 and 32 percent, and 16 percent of respondents did not identify their apartment complex. The largest proportion of respondents were from the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Wood Haven) apartments, where residents gave the most positive ratings of the management and change in crime rate. This underscores the potential for the influence of participant bias in the results. That is, the respondent sample may have been biased towards those who had a more positive view of their apartment complexes. If this is the case, the average ratings near neutral in several responses may be the result of an inflation effect. This may have also interacted with the language bias which was described above.

Summary

The effects of which apartment complexes respondents lived in were minimal. There was no statistically significant apartment complex effects on acknowledgments for experienced, observed or hearsay crimes. Similarly, there were no statistically significant apartment complex effects for type of relationship with known crime, perceived crime-fighting resources, or on perceptions of the police. The only significant effects were on whether respondents perceived crime rates as increasing or decreasing, and on perceptions of complex management and owners.

That there were no significant differences between apartment complexes on perceptions of the police means that they are doing a uniform job in responding to crime and maintaining good community relationships across all of these complexes. The significant differences between apartment complexes on perceptions of the Eagles Landing (a.k.a. Woods Haven) residents, who reported the highest average ratings for both management action and commitment. The Eagles Landing apartments can serve as a model for initial efforts at improving levels of cooperation between complex residents and managers or owners.

The most frequently observed and discussed crimes in these apartment complexes are those against property. The least frequently observed type of crime is alcohol or drug offenses, yet these are discussed nearly as often as other crimes. Though there were a variety of predictors of respondents' views of the police and complex management, alcohol and drug activity observed in their complexes repeatedly emerged as a significant predictor. These offenses have an impact on community perceptions that is disproportionate to their frequency of occurrence. It appears that efforts at removing drug dealing, and reducing incidents of other drug and offenses such as public consumption or intoxication, may serve to quickly improve residents' perceptions of crime, the police, and their apartment managers.

Respondents who had personal experience with crime felt significantly less safe than those who did not have these experiences. Crime experience variables also had an appreciable impact on perceived resources, and on the perceived resources, and on the perceived adequacy of police and management efforts. Community policing endeavors which directly address ways to reduce experiences with crime may be the most fruitful in these complexes. Since property crimes were the most frequently experienced, observed and discussed crimes,

focusing on their prevention may quickly engage community members.

Most respondents believe that their neighborhoods, poverty, peer influences, and alcohol and drugs are the root causes of crime. Efforts at involving community members from these complexes in policing will have to address the social interactions between residents, and the possibility that the social norms may promote some types of criminal activities.

While the respondents cited youths as the most frequent crime perpetrators, they did not indicate gangs nearly as frequently. This indicates that a focus on non-gang youth and those who are peripherally gang involved may be useful. The respondents perceive other residents as the majority of criminal perpetrators in their apartment complexes. Community policing activities may need to assume some level of mistrust between complex residents.

Implications

Among the residents, four important findings emerge from the statistical data. First, alcohol and drug offenses being committed within their apartment complexes has a large and repeated impact on community members. Second, property crimes are the most discussed and observed crimes in these complexes. Third, youths were frequently identified as the perpetrators of most crime, but gangs were not identified as often. Fourth, other complex residents were often identified as the perpetrators of most within-complex crimes. Taken together, these findings indicate that community policing strategies will need to focus on non-gang youths, on eradicating drug and alcohol offenses, and on teaching residents how to prevent property crimes.

While the level of mistrust between residents in some of these complexes presents a challenge, attending to these main identified problems can serve to accelerate the development of a trusting community. The police officers who were interviewed had a relatively positive view of the complex residents, and this mind set will be likely to benefit them in meeting their Community Oriented Policing challenges.

APPENDIX A:

Community Policing Survey
Apartment Complex Resident Questionnaire

We are asking residents of this apartment complex about their experiences with crime. This questionnaire will take about ten to fifteen minutes of your time. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential, your answers will not be shared with your neighbors, or any agencies. No information which specifically identifies you will be kept. We do ask which apartment complex the completed questionnaires are from, to make sure that we have responses that represent your community. The completed questionnaires will be seen only by the University of Utah researcher who is in charge of the survey, and the interview records will be kept in a locked cabinet at their office. By completing this questionnaire you are helping improve the quality of life in your community, by giving the Salt Lake Police Department useful information for improving it's crime prevention efforts in this neighborhood. After you complete the questionnaire, please return it in the postage-paid envelope that we have included. Thank you for your participation.

Please complete the following information:

Your Apartment Complex _____ Today's Date _____

PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS BASED ON YOUR EXPERIENCES
DURING THE PAST YEAR.

1) On a scale of one to ten, with one being completely safe, and ten being completely unsafe, how safe do you feel inside of your apartment? Please write the number on the line next to the time.

- 1) In the morning? _____. 3) In the late afternoon? _____. 5) Late at night? _____.
2) During the daytime? _____. 4) At nighttime? _____. 6) At night? _____.

On the same scale, how safe do you feel walking in this apartment complex?

- 1) In the morning? _____. 3) In the late afternoon? _____. 5) Late at night? _____.
2) During the daytime? _____. 4) At nighttime? _____. 6) At night? _____.

On the same scale, how safe do you feel using the facilities (e.g.; laundry areas) in this apartment complex?

- 1) In the morning? _____. 3) In the late afternoon? _____. 5) Late at night? _____.
2) During the daytime? _____. 4) At nighttime? _____. 6) At night? _____.

On the same one to ten scale, how safe do you feel in the neighborhood surrounding this apartment complex?

- 1) In the morning? _____. 3) In the late afternoon? _____. 5) Late at night? _____.
2) During the daytime? _____. 4) At nighttime? _____. 6) At night? _____.

2) How long have you lived at your present address? _____.

3) What types of crimes have you personally observed in this apartment complex? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles
with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without
occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft
(e.g.: items taken from
laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe)
_____. |

4) What types of crimes have you heard about from others that have occurred in this apartment complex? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles
with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without
occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft
(e.g.: items taken from
laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe)
_____. |

5) What types of crimes have people that you know been victimized by? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles
with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without
occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft
(e.g.: items taken from
laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe)
_____. |

Were these victims (from question #5) your _____? Please circle the number next to the category of person or persons, and use the line provided to describe other people.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1) Children | 5) Friends | 9) Acquaintances |
| 2) Spouse | 6) Parents | 10) Neighbors |
| 3) Domestic Partner | 7) Siblings | 11) Other _____. |
| 4) Roommate | 8) Extended family | |

6) What types of crimes have people that you know been victimized by in this apartment complex? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft (e.g.: items taken from laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe) _____. |

Were these victims your _____? Please circle the number next to the category of person or persons, and use the line provided to describe other people.

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1) Children | 5) Friends | 9) Acquaintances |
| 2) Spouse | 6) Parents | 10) Neighbors |
| 3) Domestic Partner | 7) Siblings | 11) Other _____. |
| 4) Roommate | 8) Extended family | |

7) What types of crimes have you been personally victimized by? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft (e.g.: items taken from laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe) _____. |

8) Which crimes have you been personally victimized by in this apartment complex? Please circle the number next to the type of crime, and write in other types on the line provided.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1) Burglary of cars | 8) Robbery of persons | 13) Assaults without weapons |
| 2) Burglary of apartments | 9) Robbery of automobiles with occupants (car jacking) | 14) Assaults with weapons |
| 3) Drug sales | 10) Car theft without occupants | 15) Sexual assaults |
| 4) Prostitution | 11) Purse snatching | 16) Child abuse |
| 5) Property destruction | 12) Nonconfrontational theft (e.g.: items taken from laundry room) | 17) Domestic violence |
| 6) Graffiti being committed | | 18) Verbal harassment |
| 7) Graffiti present | | 19) Other (describe) _____. |

9) Who do you believe is committing most of the crimes in this apartment complex? Please circle the number next to the category of individual who you believe best answers this question.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) Youths living in the apartment complex | 7) Specific individuals in the apartment complex |
|---|--|

15) How much do you feel the complex managers or owners are doing to lower the amount of crime within the complex? Please circle the number of the answer that you believe is most accurate.

- 1) Nothing at all
- 2) Very little
- 3) What they can
- 4) A great deal.

16) How committed do you think the complex managers or owners are to lowering the amount of crime within this complex? Please circle the number of the answer that you believe is most accurate.

- 1) Not at all
- 2) Not enough
- 3) As much as they should be
- 4) Very committed
- 5) Completely committed.

17) How do you feel about the way the police respond to crime in this apartment complex? Please circle the number of the answer that you believe is most accurate.

- 1) Unresponsive
- 2) Somewhat unresponsive
- 3) Neutral
- 4) Somewhat responsive
- 5) Very responsive.

18) How much interest do you think there is in the police department for making this apartment complex a better place to live? Please circle the number of the answer that you believe is most accurate.

- 1) None
- 2) Very little
- 3) Little
- 4) Some
- 5) Much
- 6) Very much.

19) What do you think causes crime in this apartment complex? Please circle the number of as many answers that you believe are accurate.

- 1) Gangs
- 2) Drugs
- 3) Poverty
- 4) The complex manager(s)
- 5) The complex owners
- 6) Bad kids
- 7) Bad adults
- 8) Bad families
- 9) Specific youths
- 10) Specific adults
- 11) Specific families
- 12) Specific groups of individuals
- 13) People moving in and out
- 14) Poor policing
- 15) The surrounding neighborhood
- 16) Unemployment opportunity
- 17) Welfare
- 18) Poor opportunities
- 19) Lack of education/educational
- 20) Individuals committing crime are bad/lazy
- 21) Individuals committing crime don't know any better.

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions. Your effort, and the effort of community members like you, will contribute to improving our knowledge about crime and it's solutions in your neighborhood.

Notes:

15) In the State of Utah, do you believe that crime is...

1) Increasing

2) About the same

3) Decreasing

Notes:

16) What do you think are the root causes of crime in the (above named) apartment complex?

1) Socioeconomic Factors

2) Family Life

3) Peer Influences

4) Neighborhood Influences (e.g.; Gangs)

5) Substance Abuse

Notes:

17) Are there things that I have not asked about crime in the (above named) apartment complex that you think I should know?

“Thank you for taking the time to speak with me (today, this evening, this morning).”