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Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Housing Crisis in the Private Rental Sector:
Explaining Tenants' Actions and Decisions When Facing Housing Challenges

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

by

Edith Daisy Medina Huarita

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Victoria Basolo, Chair
Associate Professor Walter Nicholls
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2021

DEDICATION

To all my former clients at BASTA, Inc. and the tenant participants in this study,
I took your stories and struggles with me to fuel and motivate me to tell your stories and
countless others like you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The page of where each abbreviation or acronym is defined or first used is given.

Abbreviation	Meaning	Page
AGGLA	Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles	116
AO	Advocacy organization	50
EDN	Eviction Defense Network	88
ICLC	Inner City Law Center	89
LACHS	Los Angeles County Health Survey	7
LAHCID	Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department	45
LARSO	Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance	68
LATU	Los Angeles Tenants Union	99
PADM	Protective Action Decision Model	22
PILO	Public interest law organization	51
PMC	Property management company	111
PMT	Protective motivation theory	17
POT	Political opportunity theory	53
PrE	Person-relative-to-Event model	18
PRS	Private rental sector	2
RMT	Resource mobilization theory	55
SAJE	Strategic Action for Economic Development	97
SMO	Social movement organizations	50

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VITA

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Huarita, E., Sanchez-Hall, M., Dr. Hinojosa, R. 2021. Resident Survey and Suggestions for Creation of "City Homelessness Plan" for the Los Angeles Homelessness Services Authority. Professional Report, City of Pico Rivera, California

Guerrero, J., **Huarita, E.**, Ramirez, D. 2015. Water Conservation Efforts: An Evaluation of the "Cash for Grass" Turf Replacement Rebate Program in Los Angeles City Council District 3. Professional Report, Department of Public Policy, University of California, Los Angeles

CONFERENCES

"Illuminating the Housing Crisis: Understanding Housing Outcomes of Lower Income Renters in Los Angeles." Annual Conference of the Association of the Collegiate Schools of Planning, Virtual Conference, 2020

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Illuminating the Housing Crisis in the Private Rental Sector:

Explaining Tenants' Actions and Decisions When Facing Housing Challenges

by

Edith Daisy Medina Huarita

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy

University of California, Irvine, 2021

Professor Victoria Basolo, Chair

Low-income residents in the City of Los Angeles are currently struggling with steep rent increases. In addition, their lack of resources and the complexity of landlord-tenant regulations in the city have been obstacles when navigating their housing concerns, and for some, could lead to homelessness or living in intractable poverty. This study sought to: a) understand how low-income tenants in the city of Los Angeles perceive threats to their housing conditions, and b) explore various factors to distinguish individual protective actions they take when faced with such threats. The study adapted the protective action decision model (PADM) as the theoretical framework for the analysis of tenants' decision-making about their housing concerns. PADM considers environmental cues, social cues, information sources, and individual characteristics as predictors of individuals' protective actions. In addition, the study considers the types of resources and strategies advocacy organizations (AOs) and Public Interest Law Organizations (PILOs) utilize, which allowed the study to explore factors that might play into the tenants' decision-making process when they use AOs and PILOs' resources and strategies to address their housing issues. The study

used qualitative data from semi-structured interviews with tenants, staff from AOs and PILOs, and landlords as well as observational and archival data. Results of the study evaluated the adaptability of the PADM theory in the context of landlord-tenant relationships and provided insights into tenants' perceptions about their housing issues in the private rental sector.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The city of Los Angeles is currently in the middle of a housing crisis. This urgent situation in Los Angeles, as well as many parts of the United States, demands that housing scholars focus more on finding solutions to address the crisis, and most specifically, to assist low- and middle-income families, who are spending exorbitant portions of their incomes on rent and utilities. Matthew Desmond (2016), who wrote the bestselling book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, sounded the alarm about America's housing crisis through his extensive ethnographic work. In his book, he discusses that many low-income families who get evicted soon fall into intractable poverty. In an interview with National Public Radio, Desmond succinctly explained why eviction rates are high:

Incomes have remained flat for many Americans over the last two decades, but housing costs have soared. So, between 1995 and today, median asking rents have increased by 70 percent, adjusting for inflation. ... [W]e might ask ourselves: Wait a minute, where's public housing here? Where's housing vouchers? Doesn't the government help? And the answer is, it does help, but only for a small percentage of families. Only about 1 in 4 families who qualify for housing assistance get anything. So when we picture the typical low-income American today, we shouldn't think of them living in public housing or getting any kind [of] housing assistance [from] the government, we should think of folks who are paying 60, 70, 80 percent of their income and living unassisted in the private rental market. That's our typical case today (Desmond, 2018).

Given the fact that 25% of qualified families receive government assistance (Desmond, 2016), this suggests that the U.S. relies mostly on the private rental market to house the poor. This puts the landlord-tenant relationship at the crux of many tenant struggles.¹ Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the state of the nation's

¹ This relationship is different from tenants in subsidized housing, who not only must deal with a landlord but also with an agency that processes their housing vouchers.

housing crisis. The situation demands that policymakers, leaders, organizations, and scholars respond by finding and implementing solutions to address the dire circumstances of the housing crisis.

What tenants do when confronting housing issues is an important area of study that has been growing steadily over the past few years, largely thanks to Desmond and his colleagues,² whose work paved the way for other researchers to follow. Unpacking the tenant struggle and how tenants navigate their problems, especially those who are low-income residents of the City of Los Angeles, is the central theme of this dissertation.

Landlord-Tenant Relationships

Generally speaking, landlord-tenant relations are unique because these relationships have two types of exchanges. Firstly, in its most simplistic form, landlords and tenants form a contractual relationship: the landlord agrees to rent an apartment to the tenant with a set of rules that both agree to, which is typically established in the form of a legal document, a lease. Secondly, the landlord-tenant relationship is also a producer-consumer relationship, in a manner of speaking, landlords “produce” rental units, and tenants “consume” them by paying regular rental payments. However, this particular producer-consumer relationship is unique in the private rental sector (PRS),³ since renters do not actually own the product being consumed. Thus, this kind of relationship is prone to conflicts. Disagreements can arise when expectations are not met from either side, the

² See Appendix A for a select list of his notable works on tenants.

³ This study focuses on low-income tenants who live in housing units in the private rental sector (PRS) and falls under the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance (LARSO). This excludes tenants who live in subsidized or public housing or have a housing voucher. Although the landlord-tenant relationship might be similar in subsidized housing, the dynamics and policies that structure the relationships have some differences, such as personal rental payments instead of subsidized rental payments.

landlord or the tenant, or when the product (the rental unit) is not delivered in an acceptable condition according to the renter. If we temporarily put aside the concept of supply and demand, a consumer would normally expect that the quality of paper towels they buy will be better when they are asked to pay more. Yet, as it concerns the PRS, the expectation that the product delivered is of higher quality is rarely applied when an owner increases the rent; often, tenants expect a better apartment quality after a rent increase, but in reality, rental units depreciate over time, whether through inadequate maintenance or just normal deterioration.

Another reason landlord-tenant relationships are prone to conflict is that such interactions are regulated differently by region, although most U.S. locales follow roughly similar contractual laws and dynamics. Perhaps the differences in how landlord-tenant relationships are regulated can help explain why these interactions are severely understudied, especially in the United States.⁴ Thus, one of the main reasons that could help explain the lack of U.S. studies on this subject might be because regulations can differ across jurisdictions, or even within the same jurisdiction under different state, county, and city laws, let alone that these regulations can sometimes contradict each other (Hatch, 2017).

In fact, one would not be wrong to state that landlord-tenant relationships in the specific context of Los Angeles are unique and quite complex. For example, within Los Angeles County, the ways in which tenants can address their landlord-tenant issues differ by jurisdiction, and tenants confronting serious issues must navigate a chaotic regulatory

⁴ Studies on landlord-tenant relations outside the United States have increased since the early 2000s, especially in England, New Zealand, and Canada. See Chapter 2, page 31 to 33, for a brief discussion on these international studies.

structure (Huarita & Basolo, 2019). For instance, some city or county agencies that were put in place to help tenants with their issues will sometimes refuse to get involved because the building in which a particular tenant lives is not strictly within the agency's jurisdiction (i.e., jurisdiction overlaps). Furthermore, within Los Angeles, landlord-tenant relationships are also influenced by distinct social and economic forces, such as the area's demographics, lack of affordable quality housing, and public health problems.

Beyond the complexity of jurisdictional boundaries and socioeconomic factors, for researchers working on the topic of landlord-tenant relations, there is often a lack of detailed data that could help track these relationships, such as tenure, types of leases signed, or eviction data.⁵ As scholars, we are tested when trying to comprehend landlord-tenant relationships because the laws that govern these relations create methodological and research design challenges. However, studying the mechanisms that tenants use to address their housing issues, as well as why they choose to act on them, is crucial because these are the social behaviors that can provide insights into how regulations and landlord-tenant situations influence behaviors.

Ultimately, the overriding goal of this dissertation research was to uncover how all of the various forces and regulations together influence landlord-tenant relations and tenant behavior in the City of Los Angeles. In addition to adding to the scholarly literature, a goal of this research is to elucidate and clarify the problems faced by low-income tenants in the PRS and to share this knowledge with decision makers who can take concrete actions to improve the housing situation of low-income tenants in Los Angeles and beyond.

⁵ Thanks to the efforts spearheaded by Dr. Matthew Desmond, eviction records at the national level continue to be assembled. See <https://evictionlab.org>.

Problem Statement

For over 30 years, California has been dealing with a housing crisis stemming from an astounding housing shortage. This has been especially pronounced in the San Francisco Bay and Los Angeles Metropolitan Areas. A 2015 report produced by California's Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) titled *California's High Housing Costs: Causes and Consequences* found that over the last three decades, California has not been building enough housing units to keep pace with the state's growing population, especially in California's coastal areas (Alamo et al., 2015). According to the report, there are multiple reasons for California's massive housing shortage, including: 1) communities resistant to new developments; 2) city and county agencies reviewing new development proposals guided by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA),⁶ which often end up denied; 3) cities offering higher fiscal incentives for building nonresidential developments; and 4) a general scarcity of vacant land to be developed (Alamo et al., 2015, p. 15). In Los Angeles County, the rate of housing units needed to build between 1980 and 2010 to meet residential demands calculated by the LAO was far worse compared to other counties in the state. As a result of this undersupply, Los Angeles's housing costs for renters and owners are quite high, resulting in residents having to spend a considerable proportion of their monthly incomes on housing. One result of this problem is that the City of Los Angeles has low homeownership rates; about 67% of households cannot afford to purchase local homes (Woetzel et al., 2016). This circumstance exacerbates the problems (supply and cost) in the rental market.

⁶ The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local agencies in California ensure that proposals for private and public projects follow protocols that protect the environment.

Los Angeles renters are particularly cost-burdened, resulting in the city having the highest rentership rate of all major U.S. cities, being at 52%, compared to, for instance, New York City's 49% (Joint Center of Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2017). In a study, it was estimated that approximately 56% of the Los Angeles region's renter households earning between \$45,000 and \$75,000 were rent-burdened in 2018, versus 38.3% in 2006 (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2020). This same study found that among Los Angeles's lowest-income households, where 71.6% of household renters earning between \$15,000 and \$29,999 were found to be rent-burdened. Of several serious issues, one result of the housing situation in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area has been the high overcrowding rates among renters, especially among Hispanic households (Alamo et al., 2015).

This high degree of housing unaffordability and overcrowding has also produced an eviction epidemic. Over the past several decades, there has been a rise in serial eviction filings, where landlords are legally allowed to evict a tenant for nonpayment of rent, as well as to use the court's eviction process to collect rent and late fees, thereby adding it to the tenants' financial burdens. Such procedures also compromise a renter's ability to lease a future home because an eviction has been placed on their housing renting record (Leung et al., 2020).

The eviction epidemic has contributed to housing inequality, where Blacks and Latinos face the highest rates of rent burden among all racial groups (Montejo et al., 2018). Recent studies of the Los Angeles region have shown that the highest eviction rates were in some of Los Angeles' most impoverished neighborhoods—primarily affecting racial minorities, especially Blacks—as well as in regions experiencing rapid neighborhood

change from quickly rising rents (Lens et al., 2020). Given this epidemic, recent policies have been put in place to curtail the high number of evictions, including “just cause” eviction laws that limit the reasons that landlords can use to evict a tenant⁷ (Cuellar, 2019). Nevertheless, because such a large proportion of Los Angeles households are renters, and because conflicts frequently arise during the eviction process, studying landlord-tenant relationships is critical for understanding how L.A. government regulations, economic factors, and social forces affect tenant behavior.

In addition to the housing crisis and the eviction epidemic, Los Angeles also currently faces another significant issue—substandard (or “slum”) housing, which has officially been identified as a city health crisis (Lowe & Haas, 2007; Huarita & Basolo, 2019). Substandard housing affects the physical and mental health of those living in the city’s dilapidated buildings. Consistently, public health researchers have correlated poor housing conditions to poor physical and mental health among vulnerable populations (Bashir, 2002; Krieger et al., 2000; Nielsen, 1989; Welch & Kneipp, 2005). However, there has been limited research and data on the true extent of this problem, nor any evaluation of the systems in place that organizations and city agencies might use to address it. That said, there are survey data that shed some light on the effects of poor housing conditions on the tenants health. For example, the 2011 Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS), which was analyzed and reported in 2015, showed that 220,000 households were worried about mold in their homes, 368,000 households were concerned with pests like cockroaches or mice, and 116,000 households did not have adequate heat or hot water (Los Angeles

⁷ California’s AB 3088 and SB 91 and Los Angeles’ local temporary eviction moratoriums are new policies that passed during the pandemic to curtail evictions during the pandemic.

County Health Survey, 2015). Additionally, researchers analyzing this survey found that 671,000 households were at risk of exposure to lead paint because their units had been built before 1978. Another report that used data from the 2019 American Housing Survey estimated that within the Los Angeles and Long Beach Metropolitan Areas, approximately 217,700 housing units had moderate to severe housing-health related problems (United States Census Bureau, 2019).⁸ In another study, produced by the nonprofit organization Strategic Actions for a Just Economy, the authors estimated that approximately 48,000 people in Los Angeles were living in “extreme” substandard housing (Lowe & Haas, 2007).

Slum housing has been cited as a significant stressor for individuals already living “at the margin” (Leavitt & Lingafelter, 2005). As mentioned, research has demonstrated that blighted housing affects the physical and mental health of those living in it (Huarita & Basolo, 2019) and it contributes to larger, notable social inequalities. Low-income Latino immigrants and African American households are the most affected by unhealthy housing in Los Angeles (Los Angeles County Health Survey, 2015). Such inequalities have a cascading effect. For example, unhealthy housing has been negatively associated with children’s ability to concentrate (and possibly permanent brain damage) due to lead exposure (Blue Ribbon Citizens’ Committee on Slum Housing, 1997).

Slum housing and related neighborhood effects also have economic implications. For instance, tenants face an array of economic consequences, such as paying for fumigation to rid their home of pests and replacement of food that has been infested with

⁸ The American Housing Survey considers a unit to have a severe problem if it has at least one of eight structural problems, including exposed wiring, insufficient hot or cold running water, serious problems with a bath, shower, toilet, or plumbing, inadequate heating, or other particular types of structural issues (United States Census Bureau, 2019).

insects or contaminated by vermin. Also, many low-income individuals must spend more money on medications to treat breathing problems exacerbated by the presence of cockroaches (Camacho-Rivera et al., 2014).⁹

Low-income tenants face many housing challenges. Tenant-landlord relations and housing costs can be major problems triggering numerous issues for tenants. In response to these challenges, a tenant may opt to manage their housing problems on their own, seek guidance from a social contact, and/or ask for assistance from (or join) a collective aimed at mobilizing and representing tenants. The actions of tenants in addressing their housing problems, especially why they choose a particular strategy, are understudied in the housing literature and without this knowledge, it is difficult to formulate effective public policy. In this study, I investigate the ways these tenants address housing issues with their landlords and the reasons for their decision to take these actions.

Study Objectives and Aims

This investigation followed a qualitative method approach. Dozens of interviews with low-income tenants, members of nonprofit organizations—specifically, advocacy organizations (AOs) and Public Interest Law Organizations (PILOs)—and landlords were completed. In addition, the interviews, observation of pertinent events, both in-person and virtually, and conducted content analysis of relevant newspaper articles, as well as websites sponsored by various organizations, including LATU. The data from these different sources were then analyzed and triangulated. This methodological approach is based on five bodies of literature, as discussed below.

⁹ Cockroaches have been cited repeatedly as a cause of asthma (see Camacho-Rivera et al., 2014).

This research used elements from Protective Action Decision Model (PADM) theory, found in the risk perception literature; political opportunity theory (POT), drawn from the advocacy organization literature; and resource mobilization theory (RMT), discussed in the social movement literature. PADM helps explain how people process the problems they face and how they choose to react to them. POT and RMT are theories that focus on organizations, specifically AOs, including PILOs and social movement organizations (SMOs). POT guided my understanding of how organizations assess political opportunities. RMT allowed me to comprehend the types of resources organizations provide to tenants as they help them advance their agendas. Primarily, I used PADM theory to help me understand tenants' perspectives on their housing issues and to consider various factors, such as the housing conditions in which they live and the resources they have available, to explain the perspectives of the tenants and the accompanying actions they take individually. Secondarily, I evaluated AO strategies and resources to understand which tactics tenants use when they act collectively to address their landlord-tenant issues.

I also used PADM as the overarching theoretical framework for this work. PADM, from the risk perception literature, is concerned with explaining human decision-making and actions. PADM models how an individual processes a perceived threat and their protective action response, as guided by environmental and social cues. PADM has been applied and tested often in the environmental hazard literature, especially in studies seeking to understand how some communities react to environmental threats differently from others. In the literature review chapter, I also discuss protective motivation theory (PMT), which is a theoretical model that has been heavily tested empirically in public health studies. There, I review the Person-relative-to-Event (PrE) model, which is an

extension of PMT. Following these discussions, I examine PADM as an alternative theory to both PMT and PrE.

The four main bodies of research described above—the risk perception, advocacy organization, social movement, and landlord-tenant literature—that guided this research were used to create a synthetic theoretical model. This model enriched the study’s methodological design. The model allows us to understand the protective actions of tenants in Los Angeles. Furthermore, in addition to the main bodies of literature, I also utilized literature on eviction and landlord-tenant relations, which guided the analysis of my data collection.

Research Questions

Given the synthesis of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of this study, I approached the topic in a manner unlike any previous work. Currently, there is virtually no theoretically-integrated research explaining what leads tenants to act, whether individually or collectively, and voice their housing concerns.¹⁰ From the outset, this research was intended to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the organizational strategies and structure employed by public and nonprofit organizations—specifically AOs and PILOs—to assist tenants with their actions?

RQ1A. What are the resources AOs and PILOs use to address tenants’ agendas?

¹⁰ One study by Heskin (1983) focused on tenant movements. In this research, two surveys of tenants in Los Angeles and Santa Monica were distributed and analyzed. The surveys focused on “tenants’ consciousness,” a concept developed by the author. However, scholars since have criticized that “consciousness” is too vague and difficult to conceptualize (Snow & Soule, 2010).

RQ1B. How do AOs and PILOs influence tenants to act on their landlord-tenant issues?

RQ1C. What is the social movement structure for tenant rights in California?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do landlords and property management companies approach landlord-tenant issues?

RQ2A. What are landlords and property management companies' approaches to landlord-tenant issues?

RQ2B. What resources do landlords and property management companies use to help them navigate their concerns?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do low-income tenants in Los Angeles perceive threats, whether explicit or implicit, in landlord-tenant relations?

RQ3A. What are the tenants' approaches to perceived threats?

RQ3B. What resources do the tenants use to help them navigate their housing concerns?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): From the analysis of the data, what explains how tenants respond to landlord-tenant issues?

RQ4A. What explains how landlords and property management companies influence how tenants act on their housing concerns?

RQ4B. When tenants do act, how do they use the resources and strategies from AOs to address their housing concerns?

RQ4C. What explains why some low-income tenants act individually versus collectively on landlord-tenant issues in the City of Los Angeles?

Specific Aims

In pursuing the research questions above, my specific aims were as follows:

Aim 1: To understand what is the organizational infrastructure and the resources that are available for low-income tenants in Los Angeles and how these play a role when tenants act on their housing issues, individually or collectively.

Aim 2: To understand how the landlords' approaches to their tenants impact how tenants act on their housing issues.

Aim 3: To understand the environmental and social factors, as well as the individual characteristics, associated with tenants' actions on landlord-tenant issues, both individually and collectively.

Aim 4: To understand the perceptions and decision-making processes of tenants dealing with housing issues.

This study helps elucidate the events and problems that tenants face when dealing with their housing concerns, as well as explores the factors that explain why some tenants choose to participate in collective action. Moreover, this research provides insights into how other factors like language, citizenship status, and relationships with family, friends, and neighbors influence the actions of renters when housing issues arise.

The knowledge produced from this research will contribute to the scholarly literature on low-income tenants and their ways of coping with housing problems and inform decision makers charged with designing and implementing public policies aimed at improving housing conditions for low-income renters.

Given that this study was completed partly during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to mention how it impacted low-income renters and exacerbated their housing concerns, adding to their physical and psychological distress. In addition, the pandemic has led to an increase in housing insecurity; approximately 62% of Los Angeles renter households have experienced a loss of employment income since March 2020, and about 16% are behind on housing payments (Reid & Heisler, 2020). In a study by the Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies titled *COVID-19 and Renter Distress: Evidence from Los Angeles*, the authors estimated that about one in five renters is struggling to pay rent, terming it an “income crisis” (Manville et al., 2020). However, in response to the pandemic, federal, state, and local moratoriums have been put in place temporarily to help tenants stay in their homes and not be evicted due to nonpayment of rent. Later in this thesis, I explore how tenants have been navigating these moratoriums during this particularly stressful time.

In sum, the housing and health crises in Los Angeles, the related mental and physical health impacts from living in properties with substandard conditions, and the socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic have combined may continue produce low-income renters living in extremely stressful situations. This study’s objectives aims to understand, through the tenants’ words, their housing conditions and their capacity to address housing issues. Knowledge on the barriers to, and effectiveness of, various tenant actions can assist in the formulation of better public policy and improved housing conditions.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a review of the literature related to this study. In the first part of the chapter, I present protective action theories taken from the risk-perception literature, which form the theoretical framework for my investigation. Next, I discuss previous research concerning landlord-tenant relationships in order to outline and categorize the issues that are raised about these relationships, as well as to discuss my own methodological approach. I then discuss various relevant tenant movements. Lastly, I focus on the literature discussing AOs, PILOs, and SMOs by reviewing both the POT and the RMT to underscore what previous researchers have discovered about the strategies and tactics AOs and SMOs have used to achieve societal or policy changes. Each section of this literature review highlights the definitions and operational concepts, theories, and variables used in this work while also providing an overview of how the data for this research were empirically gathered and tested.

Risk-Perception Literature

To determine why and how low-income tenants address environmental and contextual issues with a tenant's housing from their perspective, I propose to use the PADM, which has previously been applied to understand how people perceive environmental threats and identify which factors motivate them to act on those perceived threats (Lindell & Perry, 2012). I will discuss PADM after giving a brief explanation of both the PMT and the PrE model because both theories overlap PADM while being distinct enough to compete with it. Importantly, PADM addresses limitations of PMT and PrE. Next, I describe PADM in detail, along with how the theory has been applied, the research designs employed to test it, and how the theory's variables—specifically, its independent

variables—can be appropriately applied to the context of landlord-tenant issues in Los Angeles.

Protection Motivation Theory and Person-relative-to-Event Model: A Brief Review

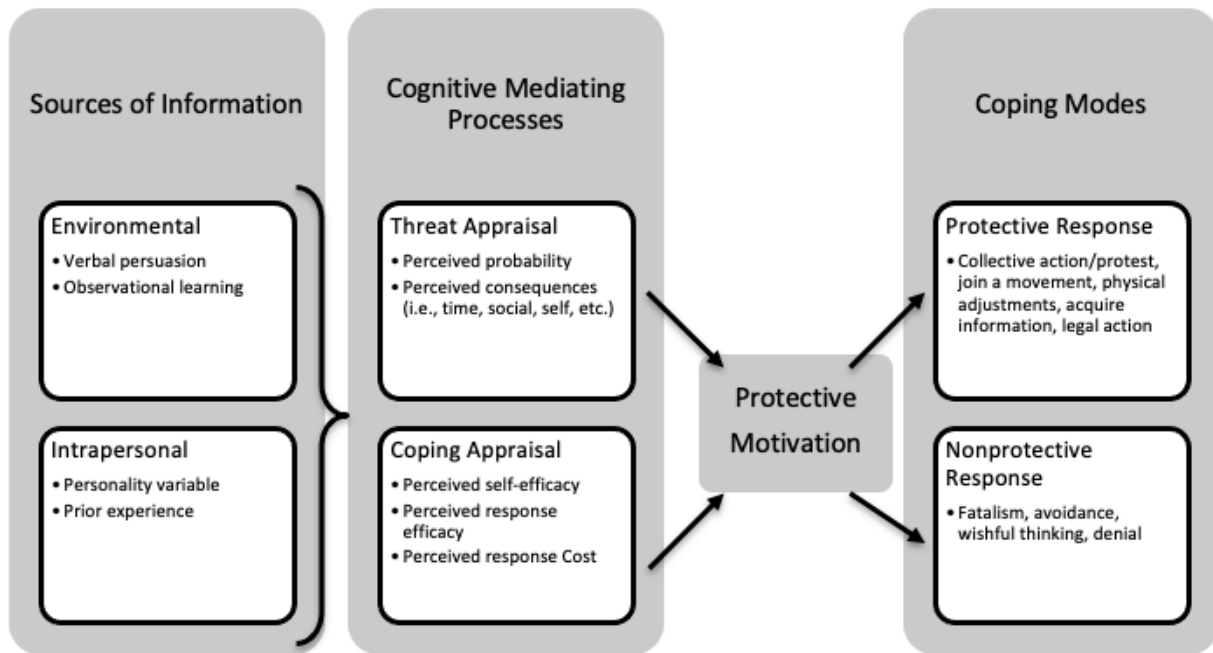
First proposed by Rogers (1975), PMT was an attempt to organize a theoretical schema from expectancy-value theories after observing that earlier studies proved that fear appeals¹¹ covaried with several dependent variables, such as persuasion, the severity of the event that occurred, the perceived vulnerability of the threat, and concern over a threat. Rogers (1975) postulated that fear appeals are multifaceted stimuli and intervening motivational variables because fear is "inferred from stimulus conditions and response variables that motivates an organism to escape or avoid a noxious event" (Rogers, 1975, p. 95). Thus, PMT captures both the fear stimuli from the environment and how that emotional stimuli produces personal action to change the environment that is causing the fear. For instance, when a man is in the middle of the forest, and he hears a bear roar, the roaring stimulates fear, which, in turn, pushes him to act on his fear and flee the scene, which is the effect produced by the fear—the intervening variable.

Rogers (1975) concluded that there are three motivating components of fear appeals: "it arouses, sustains, and directs activity" (p. 98). These three variables are what Rogers then referred to as cognitive processes and protective motivation, rather than seeing fear simply as an emotion (p. 100). In other words, PMT is a theoretical model that integrates both social and cognitive processes, such as attitude and cognitive dissonance. Figure 2.1 on the next page is an illustration of the PMT model.

¹¹ A strategy or message that arouses people to fear.

Figure 2.1

Protective Motivation Theory



Note. From Rogers, 1975.

In the last four decades, the PMT model has had many applications and improvements, especially in the fields of public health, environmental hazards, and cybersecurity studies, and changes continue to this day. Earlier PMT applications measured the effects of fear upon individuals and their attitudes toward behavioral intentions (Lindell & Perry, 2003; Maddux & Rogers, 1983; Rippetoe & Rogers, 1987; Rogers & Deckner, 1975; Rogers & Mewborn, 1976). Later studies shifted from the emphasis on fear appeals to how degrees of threat communications impact coping response appraisals. These kinds of applications became extensive in public health and medical science to address and improve interventions for health prevention (Devlin & Dillard, 2016; Floyd et al., 2006; Greening, 2006; Milne et al., 2010; Taylor & May, 1996). Additionally, recent

applications of PMT have extended to cybersecurity, criminology, and environmental threats, such as climate change (Cates et al., 2003; Cismaru et al., 2011). Further, PMT has also been applied to studies on environmental risk communication, such as communicating the risk of hurricanes, where studies have been linked to risk-perception and protective-action adoption (Lindell & Perry, 2000; Marceron & Rohrbeck, 2018).

However, PMT has also had its limitations in these applications because it is unclear how the key variables produced the behavioral changes (Neuwirth et al., 2000, as cited in Lindell & Perry, 2004). To address this limitation, the PrE model was developed by Duval and Mulilis (Duval & Mulilis, 1999; Mulilis & Duval, 1997). The PrE model estimates the individual's behavior as relative to the level of the threat and their personal resources (Lindell & Perry, 2003). Thus, the PrE model is an extension of PMT, adding capacity and perceived responsibility to protective action. While the PrE model has often been employed to explain disaster-related situations, it has also been applied to non-disaster-related situations, such as college examinations (Mulilis & Duval, 1997). At other times, studies on risk perception and preparedness have considered a combination of the variables explaining empirically-observed behavior from both PMT, PrE, and other theories to see which variables¹² correlate to their dependent variables (Basolo et al., 2008; Shapira et al., 2018; Wirtz & Rohrbeck, 2017).

Both the PMT and PrE models are useful in understanding how people engage in self-protective behaviors, as they distinguish how individuals appraise a threat and their evaluations of their resources, such as response-efficacy and self-efficacy (Shapira et al.,

¹² In these studies, the variable “self-efficacy” has routinely correlated with a range of behaviors.

2018). However, people responding to a threat may have several choices of protective actions, and knowing other key variables, such as the kinds of information received about the threat and where it comes from, might also be helpful to understand how and why individuals choose a particular course of protective action. In the following section, I review the literature concerning PADM, a theory that overlaps with other models, such as PMT and PrE, but has a different origin.

Protective Active Decision Model (PADM)

The formulation of PADM is the result of research on disasters and is influenced by emergent norm theory (Turner & Killian, 1972),¹³ as well as by general systems theory (Lindell & Perry, 2003; Tierney et al., 2013).¹⁴ PADM asserts that the responses to risk communication are influenced by a combination of environmental and social characteristics and an individual's characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Mayhorn, 2005). PADM is different from either PMT or PrE because both these models look at efficacy differently, both of the latter theories assert that an individual's coping mechanism is based on both personal efficacy and response-efficacy, as well as the response costs associated with performing a particular act (Terpstra & Lindell, 2012). On the other hand, PADM looks at the efficacy of each individual protective action that an individual makes. PrE is different from PADM in that the "environmental demands are defined in terms of the probability, magnitude, and immediacy of an event, and personal resources are defined by self-efficacy and response-efficacy" (Lindell & Perry, 2000, p. 486).

¹³ Emergent norm theory hypothesizes that new behaviors emerge when people gather together in response to a crisis.

¹⁴ Generally speaking, general systems theory attempts to combine both passive and active processes into a one-dimensional application that can be utilized to examine dynamic behaviors.

Ultimately, both PMT and PrE are more interested in the characteristics of the individual and the individual's self-efficacy, as well how the two relate to the particular response that the individual takes, while PADM is focused on the relationship between individuals and the responses they take on a threat, based on pre-decisional processes. These processes are described in more detail below.

The advantage of PADM is that it helps assess which actions individuals are likely to take, and this is useful when devising protective actions, such as, better and more innovative evacuation plans for earthquakes. Nevertheless, PMT's focus on personal self-efficacy is useful when determining one single protective action (e.g., quitting smoking cigarettes) compared to tasks (e.g., resource requirements for PADM), where one would have to choose from multiple protective actions (Lindell & Perry, 2012). In the case of my research, a tenant would have to determine multiple protective actions for one or several threats (Lindell & Perry, 2012; Terpstra & Lindell, 2012). For example, an eviction is a threat, and thus the tenant would have to consider multiple protective actions, such as hiring an attorney, complaining to the city, or putting together a rent strike.

Thus far, PADM has been applied in three areas of studies on environmental hazards and risk communication: "risk communication programs, evacuation modeling, and long-term hazard adjustment" (Lindell & Perry, 2012, p. 626). PADM becomes a useful theory to test and model decision processes in such studies because the model is flexible enough to adapt to different situations. In some cases, PADM has been applied to household responses to hazards, such as floods, hurricanes, toxic chemical releases, wildfires, earthquakes, volcanic activity, and tsunamis (Kuligowski, 2013; Lindell, Mumpower, et al., 2015; Lindell, Prater, et al., 2015; Lindell & Hwang, 2008). Other studies have applied

PADM to develop evacuation models for a particular risk, to comprehend hazard adjustment, and to understand at-risk communities and their perceptions of risk (Lindell & Perry, 2011; Mayhorn, 2005; Shih-Kai et al., 2017; Terpstra & Lindell, 2012). Yet, to date, there have been no applications of PADM to landlord-tenant relationships and responses to related threats. Applying PADM toward landlord-tenant relationships may prove fruitful, not only for better analysis in this area but also for predicting problems, developing protective actions, and, ultimately, preventing disruptive actions for numerous at-risk tenants.

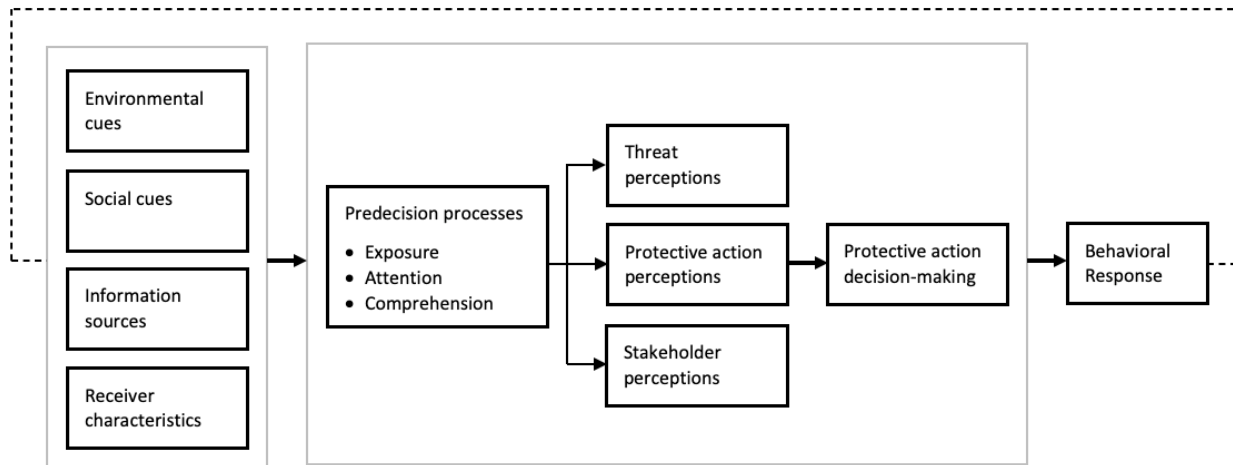
While PADM emerged from a long history of research on disasters (Lindell & Perry, 2004), the variables that the theory assigns can be applied to landlord-tenant relationships to evaluate how tenants perceive housing threats and what actions they may take based on their threat perceptions. According to Lindell and Perry (2004), people who are at risk "will either resume normal activities, seek additional information, pursue problem-focused actions to protect people and property, or engage in emotion-focused actions to reduce their immediate psychological distress" (p. 46). Similarly, tenants who perceive that they are at risk of being evicted might, for instance, seek additional information about the eviction process or hire an attorney. Figure 2.2, on the next page, is an illustration of PADM, from the work of Lindell and Perry 2012).

As seen in Figure 2.2, the model subscribes to the idea that environmental cues, social cues, information sources, and receiver characteristics—from both environmental and social contexts—initiate a "series of pre-decisional processes that, in turn, elicit core perceptions of the environmental threat, of alternative protective actions and of relevant stakeholders" (Lindell & Perry, 2012, p. 617). Depending on how an individual perceives

these threats, that person must decide whether a real threat actually exists, determine the need for protective action, and consider the available protective action options (Lindell & Perry, 2004, 2012).

Figure 2.2

Protective Action Decision Model Theory



Note. From Lindell and Perry, 2012.

The exact stages of the PADM can vary, as part of its flexible nature allowing adjustment situationally. Overall, the stages are: 1) the environmental and social context, 2) psychological processes, 3) situational impediments and facilitators, and 4) feedback (as shown by dotted line in Figure 2.2 above). Lindell and Perry (2004) describe PADM as a "block model," where "each box contains a collection of variables that represent the possible mechanisms of action for that block" (p. 47). This block model allows for a broader mechanism to influence decisions, with each of the variables listed in each block as a variable in the broader concept that comes into play during each stage of the decision-making process (Lindell & Perry, 2004). In the following section, I explain each of these

variables and discuss how I will be adapting these variables to the landlord-tenant relationship.

Environmental Cues

According to Lindell and Perry (2012), environmental cues are “sights, smells, or sounds that signal the onset of a threat” (p. 617). These are cues that are observed or felt through our senses which prompt a series of pre-decisional processes (along with other socially-transmitted warnings, as explained below). Hazard study research has analyzed how cues in the physical environment, such as the smell of burning (e.g. fire), can prompt an individual to act. In the case of landlord-tenant relationships, the environmental cues consist of indoor environmental cues, such as the sight of cockroaches or mold on the wall, the smell of garbage in common areas, or a pipe burst. This study took these cues into account when analyzing the actions that some tenants take.

Social Cues

Social cues “arise from observations of others’ behavior” (Lindell & Perry, 2012, p. 617). They are based on a six-component communication model: source, channel, message, receiver, effect, and feedback, with the first being crucial for understanding social cues overall (McGuire, 1985). Here, a source signifies observations on how individuals transmit information about a particular hazard and the protective actions they take. In the case of tenants, their friends, neighbors, or coworkers might inform the individual about the appropriate course of action to take for the landlord-tenant problem they are facing. For this study, social cues consider all kinds of sources and channels such as the ones described above.

Information Sources

The source of information can also come from news media or the authorities. In the case of hazard warnings, Lindell and Perry (2012) stated that these sources inform one about an environmental threat and the possible protective actions. From the six-component communication model mentioned earlier, channels have been identified by Lindell & Perry (1992) as media, whether electronic or printed, and face-to-face discussions. Channels for tenants could include information about an attorney they hear on the radio or a community meeting they attend in their neighborhood. In addition, a tenant might receive information about a tenant union through a Facebook posting, for instance, or by gathering information heard through the radio about possible organizations that might be able to help them with their eviction cases. While sources can overlap with social cues, described above, the difference lies in the emphasis that is placed on identifying the different sources from which the information comes. In the case of tenants, information sources can consist of the radio, word of mouth, the internet, postal mail, and others.

Receiver Characteristics

Lindell and Perry (2012) have discussed receiver characteristics as those that include an individual's "physical (e.g., strength), psychomotor (e.g., vision and hearing), and cognitive (e.g., primary and secondary languages as well as their mental models/schemas) abilities as well as their economic (money and vehicles) and social (friends, relatives, neighbors, and coworkers) resources" (p. 617). Socioeconomic dimensions are also included in various studies applying the PADM theory, such as race, age, and income (Lindell & Perry, 2004; Lindell & Hwang, 2008; Mayhorn, 2005). In this study, I examined

the economic, social, and psychological characteristics of tenants, including how language may impact how warning messages are perceived.

Pre-decisional Processes: Exposure, Attention, and Comprehension

PADM focuses on decision-making processes, but in order to do so, the above-mentioned environmental and social cues need to occur to prompt pre-decisional processes, which are: exposure, attention, and comprehension (Lindell & Perry, 2004). How individuals receive and process a threat differs from one person to the next, but all three need to occur for a necessary protective action to take place (Lindell & Perry, 2012). Comprehension of the cues is key, since how an individual perceives a threat impacts the protective action she or he takes. For instance, tenants may be exposed to a “pay rent or quit premises” notice, and then pay attention to the threat by taking the notice to a lawyer, but they may understand the threat differently than how the attorney perceives and discusses the tenant’s situation. A tenant, particularly if English is their second language, might misinterpret the “pay rent or quit premises” notice as an immediate eviction notice, even if the lawyer explains it as a somewhat lesser threat. The present study takes note of these processes to understand if any of the three—exposure, attention, or comprehension—help explain what prompts tenants to make a protective action decision. These concepts were measured by asking how the tenant was notified of the threat (exposure/attention), and how she or he perceives the threat (comprehension).

Perceptions of Threats, Protective Actions, and Stakeholders

PADM theorizes that how an individual understands and perceives the social and environmental cues depends on their interpretation of the threat, the options of actions that can be taken, and the stakeholders involved in the process.

Threat Perceptions

Threat perceptions, which are also known as perceived risks in the natural hazard literature, are people's perceptions of an environmental threat utilizing probability and consequences. In disaster relief studies, perceived risk entails "people's expectations of the personal impacts from an extreme environmental event," such as "... death, injury, property damage, and disruption to daily activities such as work, school, and shopping" (Perry & Lindell, 2012, p. 620). In the case of landlord-tenant relationships, a tenant's perceived risk might differ significantly from a landlord's intent. For instance, a tenant might perceive an imminent eviction threat from their landlord, when the landlord is simply doing her job to remind the tenant to pay their rent by posting a three-day notice to pay or quit on the tenant's door. In this qualitative study, coding techniques was conducted to understand how a threat is perceived by a tenant and if this perception is viewed as harming themselves or other tenants in their unit or apartment building.

Protective Action Perceptions

Recent studies on environmental hazards have sometimes termed protective action perceptions as perceptions of hazard adjustments. The perception of a protective action is as important as the perception of the hazard because an individual's attitude toward the efficacy of an action will impact the decision the individual makes regarding her or his choice of protective action (Lindell & Perry, 2012). In the case of tenants dealing with landlord-tenant issues, the tenant might perceive that mobilizing a tenant union to protest has better efficacy than hiring a lawyer. Through data analysis, all kinds of perceptions of protective actions in relation to a tenant's housing issue were considered as well as how they perceived how the action they took or could take will unfold.

Stakeholder Perceptions

According to Lindell and Perry (2012), stakeholders are characterized as "authorities (federal, state, and local government), evaluators (scientists, medical professionals, universities), watchdogs (news media, citizens', and environmental groups), industry/employers, and households" (p. 620). Perceptions of stakeholders, and one's relationship to them, are based on French et al.'s (1959) concept of the power bases that stakeholders have (e.g., expert, information, referent, and legitimate power), which, upon receiving a hazard adjustment from a stakeholder, makes an individual voluntarily adopt the protective act. Some tenants might act differently than others when hearing from stakeholders. For instance, a tenant might rely on the expertise of a lawyer to handle their landlord-tenant issue, without the need to know how the landlord might have violated their legal rights. The present study considered this perception by examining the tenant's perception on how an AO, lawyer, or city agency will help with the threat.

Protective Action Decision-Making

In the subsections below, I provide descriptions of the stages an individual would typically take, which comprise the core of PADM. These are steps taken after an individual has gone through both the aforementioned three pre-decisional processes and the three types of perceptions (Lindell & Perry, 2012). These stages were used as a guide to the study in order to interpret the stages that tenants go through.

Risk Identification

Risk identification is where the individual assesses whether there is a real and immediate threat that demands one's attention and possible action. This step is where the individual appraises the threat. The increasing level of belief that the threat is severe and

immediate is positively correlated with a proportional hazard adjustment response (Lindell & Perry, 2012).

Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is the step where the individual assesses the personalization of the risk, which, in turn, provides a protective motivation to act on the risk. Lindell and Perry (2004) observed that previous studies showed positive correlations to protective actions when individuals recognized personal consequences from the threat, such as the probability and consequences of the threat, as well as the immediacy of the threat. The question asked here is, "Do I need to take protective action?"

Protective Action Search

Once the individual has decided that they need to take protective action, that person will then need to assess what action to take. At this stage, the question is, "What can be done to achieve protection?" As explained above when discussing environmental and social cues, people search for protective action options from personal knowledge or experience, observations from their neighbors or friends who have faced a similar threat, or by hearing from the media or the authorities.

Protective Action Assessment and Selection

During the protective action assessment and selection stage, the question asked is, "What is the best protective action?" This stage will vary, since the individual may choose one protective action, a number of actions, or strategize a set of actions.

Protective Action Implementation

Once the individual has chosen on a plan, in the next stage of protective action implementation, the question posed is, "Does protective action need to be taken now?"

Sometimes plans do not need to be implemented immediately, so the individual can proceed with their daily activities and take action at a later, appropriate time.

Information Needs Assessment

Sometimes a person proceeding through the stages outlined above might pause and find that they have insufficient information about the warning or require additional information about a protective action. This is the stage called information needs assessment. At this stage, one asks, "What information do I need to answer my question?"

Communication Action Assessment and Selection

If additional information is needed, the person will need to assess and identify where they can obtain information. This is the communication action assessment and selection stage, in which the person asks, "Where and how can I obtain this information?"

Communication Action Implementation

Finally, there is the communication action implementation stage. This is the stage in which a person determines if the information is needed urgently or later. In this stage, a person would ask, "Do I need the information now?"

Situational Facilitators and Situational Impediments

PADM recognizes that the action an individual takes in response to a threat not only depends on the processes above but also on the physical and environmental conditions that could either facilitate or impede the individual toward action (Lindell & Perry, 2012). Many factors could facilitate or impede, ranging from an individual's disability to a person's environmental surroundings.

Table 2.1 on the next page summarizes the stages described above.

Table 2.1

Warning Stages and Actions

Stage	Activity	Question	Outcome
1	Risk identification	Is there a real threat that I need to pay attention to?	Threat belief
2	Risk assessment	Do I need to take protective action?	Protection motivation
3	Protective action search	What can be done to achieve protection?	Decision set (alternative actions)
4	Protective action assessment and selection	What is the best method of protection?	Adaptive plan
5	Protective action implementation	Does protective action need to be taken now?	Threat response
6	Information needs assessment	What information do I need to answer my question?	Identified information need
7	Communication action assessment and selection	Where and how can I obtain this information?	Information search plan
8	Communication action implementation	Do I need the information now?	Decision information

Note. From Lindell and Perry, 2004.

Landlord-Tenant Relationships

In this section, I begin with the historical roots of landlord-tenant relationships and review what has been found about these relationships thus far. I then delve into how different regulations have framed these relationships, as well as how they have been defined in the literature. This section concludes with a discussion of the general problems that arise in landlord-tenant relationships.

Historical Roots of Landlord-Tenant Relationships

In a journal article that suggests how to teach landlord-tenant law to law students, Bjorklun (1991) wrote about the genesis of the relationship between the two:

The beginning of the landlord-tenant relationship can be traced to feudal times in England during the Middle Ages. In those days, only the king owned land. Various lords, however, were permitted to hold parts of the land. These lords could rent their land holdings to other people in exchange for money, food, or other services. Obviously, this is the source for the term *landlord*. Those who rented from the landlords were called *tenants*. (p. 159)

As understood from this brief comment on the origins of landlord-tenant relationship, historically speaking, English common law was skewed toward landlords, with tenants having little power to exercise within the relationship (Schaffzin, 2009; Schill, 2003). Laws that favored the landlords meant that tenants received no protections or remedies against any wrongful actions on the part of the landlords (Schaffzin, 2009). Eventually, this system laid the groundwork for American laws several centuries later. Eventually, by about the 1960s and '70s, landlord-tenant laws in the United States had evolved to become commercial arrangements or business-to-business transactions. From this period forward, agreements between landlords and tenants were viewed as contracts, which provided a better balance of power between a landlord and their tenant.¹⁵ Scholars have discussed that when the landlord-tenant power arrangements were regarded more equitably, tenant rights were transformed, which especially took place in the 1980s (Bejrum & Jaffe, 1989). It was at this point that tenants gained greater legal rights, including “the nonwaivable warranty of habitability, the illegal lease doctrine, and the invalidation of landlord exculpatory clauses” (Schill, 2003, p. 503).

Previous Studies: A Summary

Landlord-tenant relationships and behaviors have been a largely understudied area, particularly in the United States. Of the work that has been done on this subject, the majority has mostly been conducted in Europe. In summary, the various published studies have examined 1) how young people manage landlord-tenant relationships in the private

¹⁵ In an article comparing landlord-tenant laws between the U.S. and Sweden, Bejrum and Jaffe (1989) argued that tenants in both countries have been given more rights in the last half a century.

rental sector in the U.K. (Lister, 2004); 2) mediating agencies that help resolve landlord-tenant situations (Somerville & Steele, 1996); 3) rent regulations or different lease structures that shape landlord-tenant relationships and the rental supply in European countries and in New Zealand (Haffner et al., 2008; Halvitigala et al., 2011; Kettunen & Reunavaara, 2020); 4) how some tenants play more significant roles in landlord-tenant relationships and the reasons why (Flint, 2004; Gruis et al, 2005); 5) tenants' perspectives on being a "good tenant" while living in insecure tenure in Sydney, Australia (Power & Gillon, 2020); 6) historical observations and changes to landlord-tenant relationships in Ethiopia (Bogale, 2017); 7) how utility policies, such as those concerning electricity, affect the landlord-tenant relationship in Germany and the country's energy efficiency (Braeuer et al., 2019; Petrov & Ryan, 2020) different landlord types, as well as the different ways landlords exercise control over their tenants, thus affecting tenant behavior (Bierre et al., 2010; Byrne & McArdle, 2020; Dunne, 2020; Green et al., 2016; Otter, 2018) the likelihood that tenants in the private U.K. rental sector will recommend their landlords to others (Sanderson, 2018); and lastly, 10) how tenants have responded to substandard housing across Australia, the U.K., New Zealand, and the U.S. (Chisholm et al., 2020).

Although each of these studies provided significant information, very few social scientists have examined the relationships or behaviors of landlords and tenants in the U.S. until quite recently, mostly just in the last several years. Possible reasons for this situation might include a lack of data—or at least, a lack of consistent, reliable data—and the fact that regulations for landlord-tenant relationships often vary by state, county, and city.

How Regulations Define the Relationship

Perhaps one of the strongest motivators for social science researchers to have investigated landlord-tenant relationships and behaviors in Europe comes from how differently property is viewed on the continent, as opposed to the United States. For instance, Bejrum and Jaffe (1989) found that the U.S. has a different model of landlord-tenant contracts compared to those in Sweden, and that each has different repercussions for landlord-tenant behavior; briefly put, the general U.S. model is one where housing is considered private property, whereas the Swedish model is one where housing is considered a social entitlement. While Bejrum and Jaffe (1989) analyzed distinctions between the two countries in terms of landlord-tenant behavior, ultimately, the two different models suggest different concepts of renting: rent as a bargain in the U.S. context, and rent as a nationally negotiated price in the Swedish context. In the U.S. rental context, Bejrum and Jaffe examined three distinct conditions that make renting housing as a commodity rather than as a social entitlement: 1) tenants' right of use, 2) landlords' right of exclusion of individuals who are not signatories on a rental contract, and 3) the right of landlords to transfer their rights to a tenant. These aspects are different from how housing is considered a social entitlement in Sweden, where the concepts of social justice and housing rights impact landlords' and tenants' respective approaches to fair housing. However, landlords in the United States have had an increasing number of obligations when renting premises to tenants, and the application of consumer protection laws has resulted in the complex development of contractual policies between landlords and tenants.

In other research, Hatch (2017) used cluster and discriminant analysis and created a typology of current state-level landlord-tenant policies in the U.S.,¹⁶ classifying them into three types: 1) protectionist, where states adopt policies that are pro-renter; 2) pro-business, where policies are pro-landlord; and 3) contradictory, where states have both pro-renter and pro-landlord regulations on their books (p. 98). Hatch organized these categories by clustering the number of landlord-tenant laws existing in a given state,¹⁷ with each law considered a proxy for being pro-renter; thus, the greater the number of pro-renter laws, the more pro-renter the state is considered. For example, Hatch’s analysis categorized California as protectionist, since the state has adopted numerous pro-renter policies over the years, including “prorenter landlord repair and charge; nondiscrimination...; quiet enjoyment; security deposit interest; and rent control policies” (p. 110). Knowing what typology California falls under provides us a general guide and understanding of how landlord-tenant relationships are regulated.

In line with my research questions and aims, and following Hatch’s (2017) interpretation of California as “protectionist,” my study discusses how the state of California, Los Angeles County, and the City of Los Angeles, with their various regulations, govern the landlord-tenant contractual relationship. Thus, I operationalize a landlord-tenant relationship as a contractual relationship, oral or written, between a landlord and a renter in the City of Los Angeles. Of course, as Hatch (2017) noted, jurisdictions can easily

¹⁶ The LawAtlas Project is another organization that monitors laws and policies on public health from across the United States. On their website, located at lawatlas.org, one can view maps of where government housing policies and laws regarding eviction, city nuisance property, local inclusionary zoning, just cause eviction and retaliation, fair housing protections, and landlord-tenant laws are in place. See also Moran-Mcabe, et al. (2020).

¹⁷ Hatch (2017) used 22 of the most common state policies and excluded all others, including eviction procedures.

overlap, and one district's regulations can contradict those of another. The overlapping jurisdictions and laws have effects, for example, when a landlord chooses to pursue evicting a tenant or not depending on whether the property falls under the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles Rent Stabilization Ordinance (LARSO).¹⁸ (Appendix B lists the jurisdictions for rental contracts in the City of Los Angeles.)

Issues Between Renters and Landlords

Chisholm et al. (2017) discussed how landlord-tenant relationships might highlight conflicts between the two parties because of the insecure nature of renting. Guided by the themes outlined in their qualitative research, I provide below a list of the issues that can arise.¹⁹ Any one of the following comes into play with low-income tenants in the City of Los Angeles—the population of the present study.

Insecure Tenure

A tenant does not know when a landlord will want to evict them from the property, which is the case even when a tenant lives peacefully in their rental unit. When a Los Angeles tenant's unit is not subject to LARSO, they can be given a "60 Day Notice to Quit" notification from the landlord without any precipitating reason. This can become a real problem for a tenant because 60 days might not be enough time for them to find alternative housing elsewhere, which can especially be the case for low-income families who have children.

¹⁸ LARSO allows landlords to evict tenants for just 14 reasons; see Appendix C for the full list.

¹⁹ It is important to note that this list is not a comprehensive. Moreover, although this is a compiled list of problems found by the researchers for a small population of renters in New Zealand, my personal experience working with tenants in the City of Los Angeles over the course of five years, including conducting interviews with various nonprofit organizations, confirms that I have seen and heard about these specific issues between landlords and tenants in my own study area, as well.

Lack of Affordable Housing

When a tenant struggles to pay their rent, conflicts easily arise because the landlord relies on that rent for the maintenance of the property, for taxes and other associated costs, and to make a profit. Since good housing is largely unaffordable to low-income families in Los Angeles—and in California, in general—many tenants face tough financial pressure to pay their rent in order to remain in a healthy home. Yearly rent increases from landlords can exacerbate this situation, which, again, is especially the case when the tenants are low-income or fall under the U.S. poverty line. This issue can also lead to overcrowding, which can then create additional problems, such as when a landlord becomes aware that there are additional unsanctioned individuals living in a unit.

Lack of Knowledge of Rights

Tenants and landlords might not be fully aware of their rights. This lack of knowledge creates the potential for abuse, where one party takes advantage of the other's lack of knowledge. Such problems are often seen when tenants must deal with problems concerning the conditions of their homes (Chisholm et al., 2020), as well as when tenants receive eviction threats.

Lack of Autonomy

A renter often cannot make their home their own in terms of interior painting, making home repairs, owning pets, and so forth unless their landlord explicitly permitted them to do so. Conversely, a landlord cannot legally enter a rental unit without cause or any time they wish, for instance, to show the unit to others, unless they provide the tenant with sufficient notice (Chisholm et al., 2020).

Poor Housing Conditions

Poor housing can develop due to a building's age, normal wear and tear, a lack of regular maintenance—whether by the landlord or the renter—or overcrowding. For these reasons, California has a policy called the “Warranty of Habitability,” which obligates landlords to maintain their premises in compliance with health and safety codes. In their work, Chisholm et al. (2017) highlighted the fact that this regulation “relies on tenants reporting problems to the Tenancy Tribunal” (p. 99); in Los Angeles, a tenant would first have to report an issue to their landlord, and if there was an inadequate response, then to either the Health Department or the Housing Department.²⁰

Lack of Assertiveness

An insight gleaned from the interviews in Chisholm et al.'s (2017) study was how housing “legislation depends on you being quite assertive... It relies on you” (p. 99). Further, in other research by this same group of authors, Chisholm et al. (2020) argued that there is an invisible power at play in terms of assertiveness, for instance, the fact that regulations that exist to prevent substandard conditions rely on tenants to be the ones to take action, and some tenants will not be substantially assertive to do so, perhaps because of a lack of tenancy rights knowledge or because they assume there will be a lack of action if they attempt to do so.

Evictions

Evictions are discussed separately from the list above because they can result from a wide variety of situations, such as a noise complaint or the nonpayment of rent. In recent

²⁰ It is also the case that every few years, the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (LAHCID) tries to monitor landlords' maintenance of buildings subject to LARSO.

years, there has been growing research on U.S. evictions, with much of this work using data provided by Princeton University's Eviction Lab, which has published eviction data going back to 2000. These data can help explain other phenomena as well, such as how evictions contribute to homelessness (Crane & Warnes, 2000) and how they correlate with spatial dynamics (Kim et al., 2021; Nelson et al., 2021). Having such a dataset is crucial because it can help court administrations and other government agencies (e.g., legal services offices representing tenants in eviction proceedings, bureaus that assist the homeless, and public and federally subsidized housing programs) determine which housing policies increase housing insecurity or worsen homelessness (Hartman & Robinson, 2003).

As mentioned earlier, studies on U.S. evictions were quite limited until recently. Eviction research was initially focused narrowly on providing descriptions or looking only at evictions in a specific geographical area. For example, for some time between 2012 and 2016, Desmond and his colleagues focused only on evictions in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, via the Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS). (See Appendix A for the eviction studies listed in the MARS database). Eventually, as eviction records were collected in greater numbers by Princeton University's Eviction Lab, researchers began to focus on other urban areas, as well as on the U.S. as a whole.

In this study, tenants were queried if they had prior histories with eviction to determine if such an experience influenced their protective actions and explore how various experiences may have spurred tenants to mobilize collectively to address the eviction issue. The following section summarizes the studies on renters and evictions that have been conducted in the U.S. to date.

Literature on Renters Facing Evictions

The two main streams of research on renters and evictions involve 1) studies specifically on eviction and 2) studies on urban housing. The urban housing literature is the branch generally focused on low-income tenants, ranging from renters participating in community development work to those affected by regulations or serious landlord-tenant problems like eviction. Generally, the majority of rental housing studies have focused on those who receive housing assistance, for example, under Section 8.²¹ Research on low-income tenants who do not receive any type of housing assistance has been scarce. This is the specific population I investigate in the current work.

In Desmond's (2016) book, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, he shared that only one-quarter of low-income families in the United States receive housing assistance, leaving the remaining low-income families at a high risk of being evicted and becoming homeless. Families who are evicted are limited in their housing options. They often have difficulties in both finding housing they can afford and landlords who will accept them as tenants because they have an eviction on their records. Sadly, many end up in dilapidated rental units, which, although affordable, frequently come with hazardous indoor environments. This substandard housing can then affect residents' mental and physical health. While Desmond's research showcased these difficulties, studies on unassisted low-income renters remain few, likely because the data are limited or because the data are difficult to work with (Hartman & Robinson, 2003). Nevertheless, Desmond's

²¹ Section 8 is a demand-side subsidized housing program in the U.S. Specifically, it is a tenant-based program that financially assists low-income individuals and families so that they can afford to pay for housing in the private market.

(2016) work in Milwaukee and his efforts to spearhead Princeton's Eviction Lab opened the door for scholars to evaluate eviction data.

Earlier, because of the prior lack of good data eviction data, some scholars resorted to researching organizations that assist low-income tenants with their housing problems (e.g., Albiston & Nielsen, 2014; Dreier, 1997). There have also been researchers who have examined regulations or housing enforcement codes and their relationships to rent increases and evictions (e.g., Hartman et al., 1974; Hirsch et al., 1975; Hynes et al., 2000). Some of these investigators used an empirical approach and applied regression analysis to analyze correspondences between particular dependent and independent variables. For instance, Hirsch et al. (1975) performed an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to determine how rent is affected by habitability laws that guide rent adjustments after landlords confront habitability issues. Another group of investigators undertook a cross-sectional survey of tenants and asked them about their indoor environmental issues, applying the principles of community-based research to perform a correlational analysis of tenants' poor housing conditions, such as having mold or roach infestation (Hynes et al., 2000). Additionally, there have been empirical studies that have applied survey research and measured descriptive statistics, correlated from available data, and applied bivariate or multiple regression analysis (Bachelder et al., 2016; Montgomery et al., 2017).

As mentioned earlier, a series of examinations of evictions and their effects on low-income renters was undertaken by Desmond and his colleagues between 2012 and 2016 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Each of these studies with Desmond as the principal investigator applied different types of regression models to calculate the answers to specific research questions (Desmond et al., 2013; Desmond & Gershenson, 2016); just one study conducted

took a mixed-methods approach (Desmond, 2012). Most of this research appropriately used “renters” as the unit of analysis to understand how evictions affect the population. The two exceptions here used U.S. Census block groups—Desmond’s (2012) “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty,” and Desmond et al.’s (2013) “Evicting Children.” Given all of Desmond’s studies focused on renters facing eviction in Milwaukee, they shared the limitation of generalizability, since their findings might not apply to renters in other U.S. cities. (See Appendix A for a detailed review and more descriptive information about each of the studies discussed above, the methods and analyses used, and the researchers’ findings.)

With the rise of eviction data gathered from across the United States by Princeton’s Eviction Lab, more studies have followed, and the research continues to expand. However, the motivation to develop interventions to reduce evictions requires that we have accurate eviction data across local and state jurisdictions, and presently, no such comprehensive data across all states exist. However, court records have been used to produce such data, but with some limitations. For instance, court eviction records are commonly known to contain data-entry errors and inconsistencies regarding including adjudicated cases, both of which interfere with having accurate eviction data. These inaccuracies can have enormous implications for the studies’ statistical results, which could then misrepresent the actual impact evictions have on renters, landlords, and communities. They can also leave policymakers with unsound solutions to the eviction epidemic. For example, when researchers systematically assessed over 3.6 million administrative court records from 12 states, they concluded that the inconsistencies they found created significant, varying results in their analyses (Porton et al., 2020). The authors also found that there was

variation in terms of geography, as well. Moreover, they discovered that 22% of the records they examined contained ambiguous information, and once they adjusted for this ambiguity, the eviction rate was reduced significantly, to just 14%. Clearly, then, such data must be combed through, critically assessed, and account all types of omissions, errors, and biases.

Notwithstanding such eviction data inconsistencies, as mentioned earlier, studies on evictions continue to grow, most using data drawn from the Eviction Lab along with complementary data in order to understand how eviction rates correlate with specific factors. For instance, one study assessed how states with pro-renter policies have helped reduce eviction and filing rates overall, even while rates remained high in communities of color (Merritt & Farnworth, 2020). Another work found that an increase in eviction costs reduced eviction rates across states, but also that this cost increase resulted in raised rents and greater homelessness while simultaneously lowering the available housing supply (Coulson, et al., 2020). While evictions can result in homelessness, as well as a variety of health, social, and financial problems, van Holm and Monaghan (2020) discovered that increased eviction rates could also result in decreased community engagement, as measured by the number of 311 calls (i.e., a hotline that allows residents to ask questions about resources in their communities and report issues as well) in seven selected cities. Other researchers have looked at how disproportionate numbers of eviction have impacted people of color across states, finding that this has been particularly difficult for Black and Latinx female renters (Hepburn et al., 2020). Moreover, investigators have recently examined the concentration of high eviction rates across cities using a geographical and

built-environment lens by creating a diagnostic tool to capture the causes of these eviction concentrations (Rutan & Desmond, 2021).

Literature on Private Landlords

Research on eviction, especially in the private rental market, which has primarily been written from the tenants' perspective, tends to provide only half the story of landlord-tenant relationships. It is often the tenants who are seen as the party suffering the most in landlord-tenant conflicts, especially because a disproportionate number of tenants are minorities and have lower socioeconomic status than their landlords (Hartman & Robinson, 2003). However, landlords can also suffer significant consequences from conflicts with their tenants, especially in eviction cases. Still, research highlighting the perspectives of landlords, especially in the private rental sector, has been lacking. In the last two decades, several researchers have performed qualitative research on private landlords to understand their perspectives and approaches to managing their housing units. These studies have highlighted several aspects of landlord behavior influencing landlord-tenant relationships. For instance, Rosen and Garboden (2020) found that landlords sometimes use exclusionary and other tactics toward low-income tenants. In terms of exclusion, landlords have the power to choose who to rent their units to, and one of the resources they use during the tenant-screening process is a background check, which allows them to dismiss those who have had poor landlord-tenant histories (Hartman & Robinson, 2003; Purser, 2014). On the other hand, Rosen and Garboden (2020) also found that landlords sometimes work to hold onto their tenants by educating them about how to be more responsible and self-reliant, for example, teaching them how to make wise financial decisions and to pay their rent on time.

However, the research has shown that when a tenant does not pay their rent or if they break the rules of their lease agreement, the act of evicting them can be a stressful process for landlords (or property managers), where they could even face anger or threats from the tenant (Purser, 2016; Garboden & Rosen, 2019). In fact, landlords rarely want to go through the eviction process because it can be costly and because having a vacant unit can be more expensive than having a renter who pays the rent at least some of the time. For these reasons, landlords will sometimes use late fees or start eviction filings as a corrective mechanism aimed at having the delinquent tenant pay up while making some profit on the margins (Garboden & Rosen, 2019). Overall, researchers have found that stereotypical perceptions some landlords hold of their low-income renters persist, such as assessments like that tenants are from a lower or criminal class, which furthers the class divide between landlords and renters (Purser, 2016; Rosen & Garboden, 2020).

In the present study, I operationalize a landlord to be the owner and/or manager of at least one rent-controlled—or subject to LARSO—building. I include property managers or individuals who work for a property management company because they represent the landlords in the day-to-day maintenance of their building and in the interactions with their tenants.

Literature on Tenant Rights Movements

Generally, earlier academic work on tenant movements in the U.S. has been mostly historical and descriptive in nature (e.g., Baar, 1977; Indritz, 1971), while later studies have tended to be explanatory, applying particular methodologies and analyses to better understand tenant participation (e.g., Anderson et al., 2018; Heskin, 1981). Additionally, there have also been some case studies focused on understanding tenant movements

within a particular city or region, such as the tenant movement in New York from the early 20th century to the 2010s (Dreier, 1984; Heskin, 1981; Joselit, 1986; Spencer, 1986; Weaver, 2021), the tenant movement in New Jersey in the 1970s (Baar, 1977), and various tenant movements around the country in various eras (Dreier, 1984; Gilmore, 2020; Gottlieb et al., 2006; Heskin, 1983; Indritz, 1971; Joselit, 1986). This section summarizes the literature of tenant mobilization in Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles Metropolitan Area has had two key tenant mobilization efforts: the first was the tenant movement of Los Angeles and Santa Monica, which began about in the early 1980s (Heskin, 1983); and the second has been the Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee in the City of Los Angeles, which has been active since the late 1990s. The former was key in the success of local rent control policies that passed in cities neighboring Los Angeles city and the latter is particularly notable because some scholarly and organizational reports have highlighted the Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee's efforts as an innovative policymaking process. The Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee movement was a citywide effort that brought the attention of slum housing to the local government in 1997. This committee, comprising a group of Los Angeles attorneys, real estate developers, religious leaders, representatives of nonprofit organizations, and academics, presented two reports describing the poor management of slum-housing complaints by both the Department of Building and Safety and the Health Department, the two central city agencies tasked with responding to housing issues (Merrifield & Blasi, 1999; Pitkin, 2002; Tabor, 1997). These reports led to the creation of the Los Angeles Housing Department (LAHD)—since renamed the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (LAHCID)—and the creation of a program called the Systematic Code Enforcement Program (SCEP), managed

by the LAHCID.²² SCEP was charged with inspecting apartment buildings in the city every three years, supposedly to reduce slum housing. Yet, since SCEP's 1997 launch, there have been no publicly available reports produced evaluating the effectiveness of SCEP, nor have there been any studies on the collaboration of organizations and tenants mobilized to address this policy issue.

The efforts made by the Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee demonstrate one of the ways in which tenants and organizations have worked together to address the Los Angeles housing crisis, as well as broader social issues exacerbated by substandard housing. Since the discussions of the Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee's work, however, scholars have not investigated any other mobilization program focused on substandard housing.

One recent journal article described a tenant movement that is closest to the heart of the present study. It discussed how low-income tenants, lawyers, and community organizers worked together to build a tenants' rights movement in Southern California beginning around 2015 (Anderson et al., 2018). Focusing on two specific Los Angeles organizations, the researchers highlighted the challenges of movement lawyering activities have due to legal reasons between lawyers and tenants, especially when lawyers represent them as clients. For instance, the work of a lawyer advocating for a tenant's cause could be in conflict with their legal practice because of issues of confidentiality, the scope of representation, or a conflict of interest.²³

²² The LAHCID has two additional programs that mitigate other substandard conditions. These are the Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP) and the Lead Hazard Remediation Program (LHRP). REAP encourages landlords to make repairs by putting their buildings into the program after an initial inspection has determined their building is "substandard." LHRP is a program in which the city partners with local nonprofit organizations for in-home visits in order to educate tenants about household lead hazards.

²³ Here, one strategy that has made it possible for lawyers to represent and provide resources to mobilize tenants has been to have the parties sign a "conflicts waiver." This waiver also needs to specify how the lawyer and the client resolve any conflicts if they arise. Such attorney-client agreements can be used to

There is also research that has sought to extend theories on tenant mobilization. For example, to explain why tenants choose to mobilize, Heskin (1983) conducted a survey of tenants and activists in Los Angeles and Santa Monica to measure the theory of “tenants’ consciousness,” an idea he adapted from the theory of “class consciousness,” which comes from research on working-class movements (p. 66). According to Heskin’s study, “tenants’ consciousness” contains the four elements of shared identity, shared problems, “identification of the ‘systemic cause’ of these shared problems,” and a commitment to resolve shared problems (p. 66). To measure his theoretical model, Heskin developed levels of “tenant consciousness,” which he then compared using survey data from his Los Angeles and Santa Monica study sites to explore possible correlations between “tenant consciousness” and social movement participation. Yet, while conducting a review of the literature, I found no other researcher applying Heskin’s model. In part, this is likely because the idea of “working-class consciousness” was debated philosophically later by social movement scholars, who reached the consensus that “consciousness” is too ambiguous a concept and that not everyone who possesses such “consciousness” then applies it to conflict situations or social movements (Snow & Soule, 2010). Although Heskin (1983) is the only study in this branch of the literature that has attempted to analyze tenant movements at the individual level empirically—as opposed to historically—there has been work examining tenant movements primarily at the institutional level (i.e.,

“navigate difficult ethical issues in movement representation (Cumming & Eagly, 2001, as cited in Anderson et al., 2018).

Bradley, 2014; Lind & Stepan-Norris, 2011). For the present study, however, factors that lead tenants to protective collective actions at the individual level were investigated.²⁴

Social Movement Strategies and Resources

The following literature review section discusses two broad categories in the literature: social movement strategies and resources used by activist organizations. This part of the literature review was performed as background to inform my research design which looked at various organizations to understand the collective actions of tenants. The social movement strategies portion will focus on the types of organizations that mobilize and how they operate in order to advance their agendas. These groups include AOs and PILOs. The resources section of this literature review discusses how previous studies have observed the resources that are used by organizations to sustain their missions. After each review, concepts utilized in this study are highlighted in bold.

Advocacy Organizations

Over the last half a century, numerous studies have been conducted on a wide variety of organizations that have made social and policy changes. Many of these studies fall into particular categories: sociological studies on social movements, organizational studies on special interest groups, and discussions of public interest law organizations. Although aspects may have changed over the years, such as how these organizations

²⁴ Extensive consideration was given to other social movement research to explain why individuals choose to join collective actions or social movements (see Appendix D for a list of these studies). Special attention was paid to how these studies applied social-psychological theories or concepts, such as expectancy-value theory, motivation, and collective identity, to help guide the present research and answer the key research questions at the individual level. However, a decision was made not to limit this study only to tenants' social movements or collective actions but to understand the tenants who choose to act individually on their housing concerns. Risk perception theory, specifically PADM, allowed the study to consider individual and collective actions and understand the tenants' points of view.

structure themselves, what resources they use or attract, and how they approach their missions, all that is discussed herein have a central advocacy component. In looking at the various studies on advocacy organizations and recognizing the different operational methods used by the organizations, Andrews and Edwards (2004) chose to establish a synthetic definition for advocacy organizations. Specifically, they stated that an advocacy organization is an association that "make[s] public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies and groups" (p. 481). Utilizing this definition, the authors included three different organizations in their discussion: interest groups, social movement organizations, and nonprofit advocacy organizations. This study uses Andrews and Edwards' definition of AOs. In addition, PILOS are included under nonprofit advocacy organizations, as they also fall under the definition put forward by Andrews and Edwards. The latter is explained in greater detail below.

Interest Groups

The term "advocacy organization" has often also been used interchangeably with "public interest group," as both influence political behavior (Berry, 2015). However, according to Salisbury (1984), the word "interest" refers to values, attitudes, and preferences. Given Salisbury's definition, interest groups (IGs) advocate for policies that are in line with their interests. IGs can have either broadly defined or very specific interests and are usually established by large groups of people whose positions are similar to policymaking positions (Salisbury, 1984). In addition, IGs function through the provisions of their members, who monetarily invest in a group with their particular interests, and with materials unavailable outside the group. Andrews and Edwards (2004) define IGs as

"voluntary associations independent of the political system that attempts to influence the government" (p. 481). In other words, they are private groups with specific interests who politically influence the government.

This study adopts Andrews and Edwards' (2004) definition of IGs. Since the research is based in the City of Los Angeles, this qualitative investigation considered potential IGs that play a role in the collective action of tenants attempting to address housing concerns.

Social Movement Organizations

The literature on social movement organizations (SMOs) began with McCarthy and Zald's (1977) development of what they termed resource mobilization theory. Zald and McCarthy (1987) defined an SMO as "a complex, or formal organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals" (p. 20). SMOs differ from IGs in that they have different levels of institutionalization and relations with government bodies (Andrews & Edwards, 2004). Since the study examined the growing tenant rights movement in Los Angeles, Zald and McCarthy's (1987) definition of an SMO is adopted.

Nonprofit Advocacy Organizations

Nonprofit AOs are associations that are "legally defined as incorporated entities that qualify for exemption from the federal income tax" (Salamon & Anheier, 1992, p. 29).

Additionally, O'Neill (1989) defines these organizations as,

... primarily involved with lobbying or disseminating information directed toward broad societal objectives or collective goods rather than outcomes of benefit only to their own members. Even when advocacy organizations represent a particular group—such as women, members of minority' groups, physically handicapped people, victims of drunk driving, and potential victims of handgun attacks—there is

an implicit assumption that actions benefiting these people will benefit all of society. (p. 110)

Thus, as explained by O'Neill, AOs, like IGs and SMOs, work together toward the collective good, even if their respective definitions of what the "collective good" means might differ.

AOs, as nonprofit entities, allow people to join for various reasons. According to Prakash & Guherty's (2010) book *Advocacy Organizations and Collective Action*, people may join an AO because: 1) they are volunteers or skilled professionals and want to contribute to society through the organization in order to maximize the organization's impact on policy changes, 2) they believe in the organization's ability to make change through strategic work, or 3) the organization's values and interests match their own. The AOs considered in this study are nonprofit organizations that represent low-income residents in Los Angeles and that directly address housing issues of the private rental sector in the city.

Public Interest Law Organizations

There are a couple of good reasons for not combining AOs and PILOs into one category. First, PILOs have distinct approaches to policy changes compared to AOs. Second, the historical origins of PILOs are distinct from AOs. It is important to understand their distinctions, as well as how their unique traditions have evolved to this day.

PILOs began with a tradition of advocating for those who were least likely to be represented. According to Harrison and Jaffle (1972), "Public interest law is the representation of the underrepresented in American society" (p. 459). In the 1970s, the IRS recognized this type of organization as a "public interest law firm," meaning a law firm that is represented by a community board of directors, does not accept fees, and represents a broad public interest with no private gain (Harrison & Jaffle, 1972, p. 459). Because of the

nonprofit structure of these types of firms, their public interest legal work has traditionally been funded through local bar associations, law schools, or foundations, such as the Ford Foundation. There are also PILOs that are funded through the firms' commercial practice in order to make "ends meet" (Harrison & Jaffle, 1972, p. 459).

Since the 1970s, PILOs have changed somewhat pertaining to the cases they accept. Esquivel (1996), who writes on the identity crisis of public interest law practice, observes that PILOs have shifted from poverty and civil rights and civil liberties issues to having an association or a foundation like the Ford Foundation direct their public interest law activities. In the 1980s, they expanded their casework to

environmental protection, consumer protection, reform of government process (rule making), employment, responsiveness of mass media, health/mental health, women's rights, international issues, education, and electoral rights ... children's rights, juvenile rights, rights of gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons, indigent criminal defense, and civil and criminal government prosecution. (p. 340).

In other words, the practice of public interest law has grown to follow the idea of procedural justice to apply to improving a group's place in society. While public interest law has played a part in many large, well-established law firms, where lawyers take on pro bono cases, the current study will focus specifically on those organizations that provide legal representation to groups that may not be able to afford private law firm representation otherwise.

As defined by Albiston and Nielsen (2014), PILOs are "organization[s] in the voluntary sector whose activities (1) seek to produce significant benefits for those who are external to the organization's participants, and (2) involve at least one adjudicatory strategy" (p. 71). Thus, the distinction between nonprofit AOs and PILOs is that PILOs are organizations that uphold the law and advocate for laws that apply to all individuals, while

nonprofit AOs advocate for policy change. Simply put, PILOs generally defend the law for vulnerable persons who cannot advocate for themselves.

An important note to make from Albiston and Nielsen's (2014) definition of PILOs is that the work they do excludes "individual pro bono work in private firm settings, organizations such as trade organizations to pursue benefits for their members, private for-profit businesses, and government organizations" (p. 72). With this caveat, this study adopts Albiston and Nielsen's (2014) definition of PILOs, as stated in the previous paragraph.

Thus far, the purpose for providing the definitions of AOs and PILOs is that the descriptions served as a guide to organizations encountered in this qualitative study. Some of the tenants interviewed acted on their housing issues through AOs or PILOs, individually or collectively. The following section presents what the literature says about particular strategies used by AOs and PILOs, which will be used as a guide to understand AOs and PILOs working to assist tenants in a collective manner to address their landlord-tenant issues.

Strategies of Advocacy Organizations

In this section of the literature review, I review contributions on organizational strategies, focusing on guided or tested by theories, including political opportunity theory and others.

According to Meyer (2004), POT arose as "a corrective, explicitly concerned with predicting variance in the periodicity, content, and outcomes of activist efforts over time across different institutional contexts [with] [t]he approach emphasiz[ing] the interaction of activist efforts and more mainstream institutional politics" (p. 127). In other words,

those utilizing POT looked at various social, economic, and political structures to understand how political opportunities are perceived by activists or AOs and to investigate the activities of political actors to realize their policy-change goals. Meyer (2004) observed that few studies had tested POT against alternative theories, such as political process theory, which had been used widely by political scientists, especially in case studies conducted in European countries. He also noted how rarely the theory was tested in the social movement literature. Two of the main reasons for the lack of studies here are scholars are challenged to make generalizations about the theory from each individual social movement and many scholars use the theory as a guide, rather than as a method to test the variables they find pertinent for their particular case studies (Meyer, 2004).

Nonetheless, various studies have applied POT for studying cases concerning political processes, which is one way of determining how AOs have influenced policy changes. Andrews and Edwards (2004) looked at how studies on AOs have generated discussions around the political context; they have conceptualized five major categories regarding how organizations have been involved in the policy process: "agenda setting, access to decision-making arenas, achieving favorable policies, monitoring and shaping implementation, and shifting the long-term priorities and resources of political institutions" (p. 492). AOs involvement in the general policy process has allowed studies to examine how they may influence agenda-setting through protests or media communications, network with other organizations to exchange information in order to shape decision-making and to lobby for their interests in Washington, D.C.

Studies that have looked closely at how AOs have been involved in the political process have recognized that organizations have different types of connections with

political institutions. For instance, Walker (1991) identified two categories of AO groups based on what he termed "insider strategies"—such as lobbying—and "outsider strategies"—such as influence public opinion (p. 110). Others have delineated this differently. For example, instead of dividing AOs into two groups, Betzold (2013) looked at the varieties of insider and outsider strategies employed by a number of organizations. Table 2.2 below illustrates the insider and outsider strategies that were used as a guide in this qualitative study to see if there are connections in how these strategies might explain why and how tenants choose to address their housing concerns individually or collectively.

Table 2.2

Inside and Outside Advocacy Strategies

Inside Strategies	Outside Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct contacts • Information to negotiators • Member of a government delegation • Intervene in the debate • Submissions to city hall • Draft legal text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side event/exhibit • Information to the public • Parallel event • Media interviews • Press release • Demonstrations • Press Conference

Note. From Betzold (2013)

Resource Mobilization Theory

For AOs to employ either the insider and outsider tactics, resources are needed. RMT has been applied in the past by scholars to explain how organizations are funded, and how that funding might influence the organizations as they work toward a particular issue or set of issues. Sometimes individuals or organizations are influenced by the resources that are available to them in order to be effective in their missions. Some studies have

looked at specific types of organizations, for instance, those that are tax exempt, and how the resources and connections they have with their communities have affected the breadth of their roles as influential parties of policy change (de Graauw, 2015). Other research has investigated the different types of funding, and how funding types can impact an organization's advocacy efforts or the services they provide (Neumayr et al., 2013; Thomson, 2011).

Here, some investigators have used RMT, which, for the past four decades, has helped scholars to understand certain social movement outcomes. In very simple terms, RMT explains that movements are driven by increases in resources (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). RMT was first introduced by McCarthy and Zald (1977) and several others in the 1970s. Previously, few scholars recognized that strategies and tactics could be considered a resource in the political structure, such as, for instance, protest activities seen as a political resource (Lipsky, 1968). McCarthy and Zald's (1977) approach to the theory was to establish a basic structure of how social movements grow, decline, and change by using political, sociological, and economic theories, while also moving away from the social-psychological view of collective behavior (p. 1212). In other words, instead of focusing on the social-psychological explanations (e.g., attitudes, values, and grievances) of why individuals approach issues collectively, RMT approaches how social movements develop by looking at the resources used by an organization. For McCarthy and Zald (1977), RMT

emphasizes both the societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena. It examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements. (p. 1213)

RMT looks at the structure of resources that make social movements possible. McCarthy and Zald (1977) saw social movements as the delivery of collective goods, where resources become the source of competition. Consequently, their definition of a social movement considered "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" through the use of resources (p. 1217-18). McCarthy and Zald (1977) constructed different levels of resources to explain the various types of resources utilized by social movements, such as the development of SMOs, as explained in the previous section, and skilled social movement professionals, who operate the movements. Therefore, through RMT, social movements are linked to collective interests and the pooling of resources (Jenkins, 1983).

Interestingly, the application of RMT since the 1970s has rarely been tested, but it has often been used as a guide for investigators' empirical research, linking resources with the processes of movements or clarifying how resources were obtained (Cress & Snow, 1996; Edwards & Kane, 2014). There have also been critiques of RMT, where some scholars stated that they could not see how RMT could be applied to explain collective actions, such as group protests (Piven & Cloward, 2012). While resources have often been seen as tangible objects or skills, some academics have argued that culture should also be considered as a resource for social movements (Williams, 1995).

It was not until Cress and Snow's (1996) analysis of 15 homeless SMOs that RMT was empirically tested and a typology of resources was created. In doing so, they conceptualized resources beyond the categories of money, legitimacy, people, and expertise, and determined how SMOs used these resources, highlighting how important each of these was to the viability of the SMOs they examined. In addition, they also looked

at how these resources were internal or external, and how this difference might have consequences to the course and character of the SMOs. For instance, if an SMO is dependent on external resources, the SMO might be less autonomous because the resources it receives might come with constraints. Following this typology, other scholars were able to conceptualize the resources used by social movements and to look closely at how social movements attracted different kinds of resources to become viable (Rao et al., 2000). Here, Edwards and Kane (2014) performed an extensive literature review on the resources identified by scholars studying social movements. Table 2.3 on the next page presents the list put together by these scholars on resource types and access. The types of resources shown in Table 2.3 on the next page will be used to inform and analyze the qualitative data to identify any overlaps as to how resources are used by AOs, PILOs, and tenants to address their housing concerns.

Table 2.3

Resource Types and Means of Access

Resource Types	Means of Access			
	Self-production	Aggregation	Cooptation/ Appropriation	Patronage
Material	Fund-raising events	Individual donations from non-members Crowd-sourcing, raising money through social media sites	Use of office space Gaining use of equipment (computers, buses, etc.) WiFi or internet access	Start-up grants Large donations Foundation grants Government grants Service contracts Corporate sponsorship
Human	Mentoring and training leaders Movement mentors Teaching tenants about their rights	Recruiting constituents Mobilizing a large number of participants Recruiting activists with particular skills	Networked recruitment Acquiring a mailing list Having organizational members Drawing on the members of coalition partners	Providing staff or volunteers Providing technical assistance
Social-organizational	Founding AOs Starting a task force Launching a website Maintaining social media pages	Building networks Forming Coalitions	Recruiting local affiliates from existing organizations Gaining access to congregations or civic groups for recruitment Mesomobilization	Being loaned the mailing lists and telephone lists of sympathetic individuals
Cultural	Social construction of collective identities Collective action frames Producing innovative tactics and repertoires Producing and preserving movement history, oral history	Movement-initiated summits or workshops where groups come together to share advice, information, strategy Working groups	Providing links on a website to materials produced by someone else Links to someone else' webpage	Excellence awards aimed at recognizing competence and effectiveness Accreditation of fiscal procedures to enhance the confidence of supporters and donors Certification, such as "cruelty-free" or "gay-affirming"
Moral	Creation of new moral classifications such as "rent control for all renters"	Compiling a list of endorsers Listing advisory committee members on letterhead Soliciting statements of support for specific projects	Allying yourself with a well-respected group Hiring grassroots supporters to lobby office-holders Tenant unions Links to well-respected groups on your webpage without permission	A widely respected person or organization recognizing a group or activist in order to call positive attention to their work Human rights awards An audience with the city mayor

Note. From Edwards and Kane, 2014.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study sought to understand tenants' perceptions of their housing issues and to explain the actions tenants take to address these issues. The three main areas of housing issues the study considers are the tenants' apartment's indoor physical conditions, health related conditions, such as vermin infestation, and housing instability threats (i.e., evictions). Conceptually, the design of this study began by considering the application of the PADM, a theoretical model developed by psychologists studying environmental hazards. I chose to adapt the PADM framework in order to address the central research question concerning why tenants take action to address their housing threats, which is a threat to the tenants' living environment (i.e., a type of an environmental threat).

Generally speaking, PADM is used to analyze people's perceptions of a threat (such as a tornado) and then their responses to that perceived threat. Utilizing PADM, I adapted the model to examine the perceived threats of housing problems and to explain tenants' responses to their problems. Based on early, preliminary research, it was clear the broader context in which tenants make their decisions is important to consider in terms of the tenants' responses. For this reason, I developed the research questions to focus on contextual considerations, including the people (landlords) and the organizations (public and nonprofit), which potentially influence tenants' decision-making.

This chapter discusses the design of the study, including the appropriateness and benefits of using the chosen model design. In addition, this chapter presents the research questions, a discussion of the adapted PADM, and the study's methods, including the sampling method and the study protocols, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and the validity and reliability of the main instrument used to collect the data.

Study Design and Justification for the Approach

The study used a qualitative research design. The primary data were semi-structured personal interviews with tenants, landlords, and staff of nonprofit service organizations—specifically AOs and PILOs—via electronic, remote means.²⁵ In addition, secondary data were collected, including observation notes of events (both in-person and virtual), as well as pertinent websites, newspaper articles, reports, peer-reviewed articles, and archival material found via web searches. The data were first organized into background and analytical files, and then evaluated during the early analysis stage of the investigation, in which particular themes emerged. Some of the background data informed the context of the tenants' situations, the PADM model, and therefore these background were considered analytical.

A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because the point of the research was to investigate the lived experiences of low-income tenants who had a wide range of housing problems. Quantitative research would have been inappropriate for this study because PADM has never been applied to landlord-tenant issues. In fact, I assessed that the PADM framework, which is a quantitative approach applied in natural hazards research, could perhaps only partially fit the subject under review. Indeed, preliminary research for this study suggested that certain relationships not captured by PADM could influence tenants' decision-making. Nevertheless, a deeper understanding of these relationships, as well as other conditions of the tenants' lives, was necessary to make assertions about the tenants' decisions. In this sense, while this study sought to explain

²⁵ The study was originally designed for in-person interviews, but the COVID-19 pandemic made it infeasible to conduct interviews in this manner.

tenants' actions and to describe the conditions and contexts of their decision-making, there was also an exploratory element to this research. In choosing a qualitative approach, I recognized that it was unwise to quantify factors that were only superficially understood. Moreover, some relationships, processes, and social phenomena might not adequately be captured using quantitative measures, even if there is sufficient knowledge of a phenomenon to understand its composition in general.

Qualitative approaches are methodical and flexible, and they support explanations, descriptions, and deep exploration. Qualitative research uses an *iterative* and *emergent* process; it relies on multiple comparisons within the data and back-and-forth analysis to produce a greater depth of understanding of a phenomenon than quantitative research (Chandra & Shang, 2019). While pursuing qualitative analyses, concepts, themes, relationships, and patterns frequently emerge to provide an understanding of the study subject and the world in which these aspects operate (I discuss this study's data analysis below). Qualitative research also has a breadth of tools to explore ideas and to theorize concepts by posing open-ended questions to study participants.

There are various qualitative approaches that can be used. Chandra and Shang (2019) have summarized different approaches to qualitative research as having three major epistemologies: interpretivism-constructivism, empiricism/falsificationism-positivism, and critical realism. The last epistemology, critical realism, which is sometimes termed pluralistic realism, is when a researcher has combined both interpretivist and positivist approaches—or other schools of thought—in their study. Chandra and Shang asserted that qualitative approaches often change and evolve, and that researchers should

use prior studies as guidance, rather than putting limits or constraints on their qualitative studies.

The epistemological position of this research asserted that interpretivism and positivism are complementary, since “social reality is partly real, partly co-constructed and interpreted and hence structured at various levels; thus both camps can be combined to better study the social reality” (Chandra & Shang, 2019, p. 11). The key difference between the two epistemologies is that positivist work “seeks to identify those details with propositions that then can be tested or identified in other cases, while interpretive work seeks to combine those details into systems of belief whose manifestations are specific to a case” (Lin, 1998, p. 163). Positivist approaches seek the generalizability of phenomena, while interpretivist work shows how the approaches (the process) take place. Another way to describe the differences is that positivist work infers causal relationships between variables in the data, but it does not show the mechanism of that causal relationship, whereas interpretivist work can reveal the mechanism (Lin, 1998; Roth & Mehta, 2002). In addition, positivist work has a general deductive approach, while interpretivist work has an inductive approach. In these ways, the two epistemological types are complementary, and together, they offer a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach, which gave rise to the critical realism school of thinking, was the epistemological position taken in this study.

With this epistemological position, the design of the qualitative study combined guidance from previous studies that applied the same school of thought and general case study design, also known as case research. Case research is a tactic that allows for the investigation of a subject using multiple sources of data and an iterative research process

to develop a holistic description of the study (Easton, 2010), allowing one to study individuals and organizations embedded in a single case. There are numerous rationales for undertaking a single case study, including the possibility that the case might be critical, unusual, common, revelatory, or longitudinal in nature (Yin, 2014). Drawing on Yin (2014), I characterized the case in this study as unusual because an existing theoretical model was adapted and applied for the first time to examine low-income tenants' decision-making processes concerning their housing problems (or housing threats). My role as a researcher in this study was to collect information and perform in-depth analysis to understand the perceptions and perspectives of low-income tenants' experiences with housing issues from each individual's point of view.

Research Questions

As discussed, this qualitative research was designed to understand the perceptions of low-income renters and to assess the application of an existing theory from another research domain. To accomplish these objectives, I developed a set of research questions to capture key concepts, such as perceived threats found in the original theory (or model), while casting the net wider to understand particular contexts, such as the relationships and information processes experienced by tenants and proximate stakeholders (landlords and organizations) in the housing sphere.

The research questions appropriately begin with "how" and "what." While hypotheses were not specifically tested in this qualitative research, they were suggested by the quantitative PADM framework. In other words, there might have been some expectations about relationships among the variables in the model. That said, this research eschewed formal hypotheses, and instead, I formulated hypotheses based on the study's

discoveries (Stake, 1995). Thus, this qualitative study design allowed for new hypotheses and revised theories, providing the potential for an adapted model, which could be tested in other studies.

There were four major research questions designed to achieve clarification and detail for enhanced understanding, and within these four, there were additional embedded questions. While tenants (the unit of analysis) were the focus of the adapted PADM, landlords and staff from nonprofit organizations were also interviewed to learn more about the relationships and information processes at work. Together, the full context influenced the tenants' decision-making processes. The four main research questions, as well as their embedded sub-questions, are presented below. While RQ1 and RQ2 were asked of AOs/PILOs and landlords, respectively, RQ3 and RQ4 were posed only to the tenants.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the organizational strategies and structure employed by public and nonprofit organizations—specifically AOs and PILOs—to assist tenants with their actions?

RQ1A. What are the resources AOs and PILOs use to address tenants' agendas?

RQ1B. How do AOs and PILOs influence tenants to act on their landlord-tenant issues?

RQ1C. What is the social movement structure for tenant rights in California?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): How do landlords and property management companies approach landlord-tenant issues?

RQ2A. What are landlords and property management companies' approaches to landlord-tenant issues?

RQ2B. What resources do landlords and property management companies use to help them navigate their concerns?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): How do low-income tenants in Los Angeles perceive threats, whether explicit or implicit, in landlord-tenant relations?

RQ3A. What are the tenants' approaches to perceived threats?

RQ3B. What resources do the tenants use to help them navigate their housing concerns?

Research Question 4 (RQ4): From the analysis of the data, what explains how tenants respond to landlord-tenant issues?

RQ4A. What explains how landlords and property management companies influence how tenants act on their housing concerns?

RQ4B. When tenants do act, how do they use the resources and strategies from AOs to address their housing concerns?

RQ4C. What explains why some low-income tenants act individually versus collectively on landlord-tenant issues in the City of Los Angeles?

These research questions directly and indirectly informed the adapted model used in this research, which I discuss below.

Adapted PADM Model

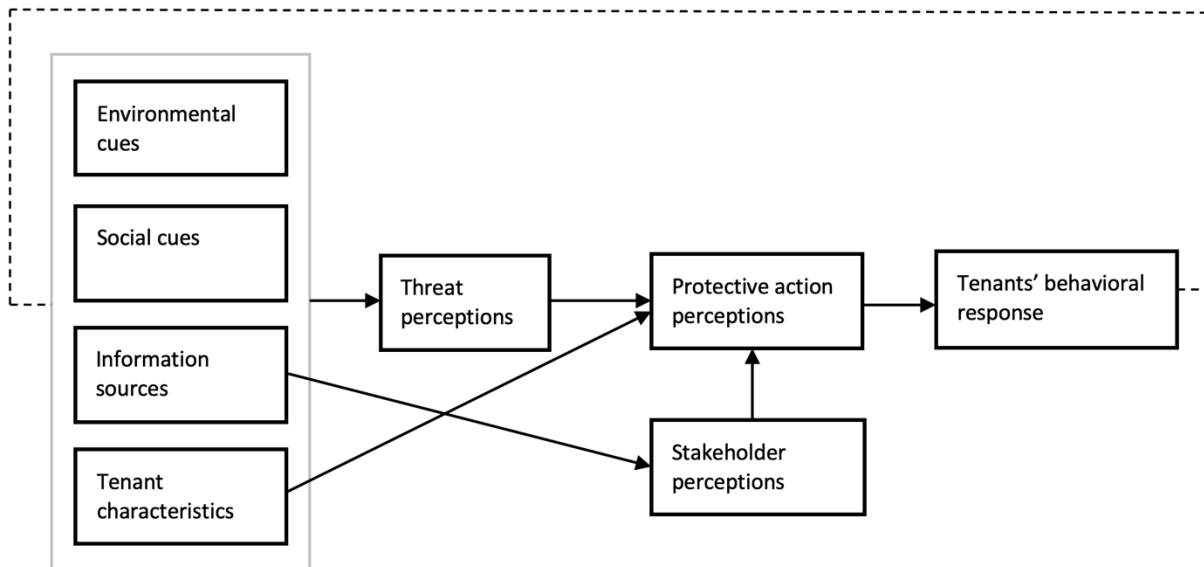
The adapted model employed the basic logic of PADM by identifying a range of factors that directly or indirectly contribute to explaining tenants' responses to their housing concerns. In so doing, the adapted PADM model was intended to identify the set of

factors (e.g., tenant characteristics, among others) that influence the perception of a housing threat. Threats in this study means the tenants' perception of structural conditions of their units (i.e., electrical problems), health related conditions (i.e., mold or vermin infestations), and housing instability, such as evictions.

Under the adapted model, threat perceptions, as well as other factors like stakeholder judgment and tenant characteristics, influence perceptions about protective actions. Protective action perceptions were thought to directly influence tenants' actual responses to their housing problems (see Figure 3.1 below). Although a tenant's response could be the terminal response (i.e., the threat gets resolved or exhausted), in some cases, the response might not be sufficient, thus sometimes leading the tenant to start the decision-making process all over again, depending on the effectiveness of the response that the tenant originally took (see the dotted line below).

Figure 3.1

Adapted PADM



The adapted model implied hypotheses because it used the logic of PADM as its starting point. Applying PADM to this study, the preliminary research provided an overarching framework—the adapted model found in Figure 3.1 in the previous page—for the study’s implementation. However, the study was *not* designed to be completely exploratory and unstructured. Rather, it started with some basic structure to allow for the identification of key informants (tenants and related stakeholders) and the formulation of the research questions. These aspects then fed into the interview protocol (see the following section) to produce the data to answer the above research questions. The adapted model could thus be considered a guide in this investigation, with the logic of the model supported, partially supported, or not supported by the data. Therefore, the data analysis could result in the adapted model being considered appropriate for studies on this subject; alternatively, the adapted model could need revision for future studies on tenant housing problems and the actions tenants take to resolve their issues.

Sampling Method and Interview Protocol

I used particular criteria and purposeful sampling methods to select the study participants. The sampling technique allowed me to apply my subjective judgment to select the participants who met the study’s established criteria. In addition, snowball/referral sampling allowed me to interview people who identified other individuals as having the necessary characteristics to participate as well (Palinkas et al., 2015). Overall, three distinct groups were interviewed for this research: low-income tenants, AO and PILO staff, and landlords.

For tenants to participate, they had to: 1) be at least 18 years of age; 2) have their name in a written or oral rental contract with their landlord²⁶; 3) have resided in their current unit for at least 12 months; 4) have their rental unit priced below the low-income level, as determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for Los Angeles County for 2018²⁷; 5) be living in a unit located in the City of Los Angeles; and 6) be living in a unit subject to the LARSO.²⁸ The fifth criterion was adopted to ensure consistency in the city's regulatory environment across the units. It should also be noted that units LARSO could have unique dynamics between tenants and landlords, different from units operating solely under market forces. Moreover, tenants living in LARSO units live in units built before 1978. They are likely to experience problems with (indoor) housing conditions compared to recently built apartments (after 1978).

I used a particular verification process to ensure each participant fit the criteria. For criteria 1 through 3, the individual had to self-report as a potential participant. For criteria 4 through 6, I verified that the unit in which the individual lived was in a LARSO building by using the zone information map access system (ZIMAS) website provided by the City of Los Angeles.

The snowball sampling technique was also used for the tenants, AOs, PILOs, and landlords. Specifically, I focused on interviewing professionals representing AOs or PILOs, as defined in the literature review (see pages 52 to 54), who worked for organizations that provide services to low-income tenants living in the City of Los Angeles and that focus their

²⁶ In cases where tenants had oral rental agreements, I asked whether the tenant participant was the responsible party for paying the rent, otherwise known as the head-of-household.

²⁷ See HUD's income limits: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/datasets/il.html#2018>

²⁸ Units subject to LARSO are multifamily units in the City of Los Angeles built before October 1, 1978.

efforts on addressing housing issues, whether directly or indirectly. For the landlords' perspectives, I interviewed property owners and those who worked for property management companies who manage rent-control (or subject to LARSO) buildings in the City of Los Angeles.

Primary Data Collection: Interviews

The study's tenant participants were initially solicited when they visited two of the PILOs with whom I had a professional connection. The recruitment of the study participants began in November 2019. For the PILOs that I visited, my intention was to wait in a waiting room until people had gathered, at which point I would introduce myself, explain my study, and ask if they might be interested in participating. However, I quickly found that this recruitment method was not workable, as most of these potential participants were in an anxious state because they were having landlord-tenant problems that they wanted to address as soon as possible; thus, they were at the PILO meetings to seek help, and they were generally disinterested in participating in this study.

My next plan was to contact qualified tenants with whom I was still in contact from previous professional work. This outreach effort was slightly more successful: five tenants agreed to participate in the study. However, my attempt to use these interviewees as part of a snowball sampling approach was unsuccessful. After interviewing one individual at another PILO in February 2020, they suggested I attend one of their legal clinics in late February, and this person gave me permission to present my study and to invite tenants to participate during that clinic. I did as the person suggested, which allowed me to get four more tenant participants. Unfortunately, while attempting to recruit more participants in

early March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit Los Angeles fully, and the clinic closed as a result.

Interview Protocol

The interviews of the first nine tenants I interviewed before the pandemic became my sample data, which I used to validate the interview questions after the answers had been transcribed. I followed the four phases of the interview protocol refinement (IPR) method to increase the reliability of the interview protocol: Phase 1) ensure that the interview questions align with research questions; Phase 2) construct an interview protocol that balances inquiry with conversation; Phase 3) obtain feedback on the interview protocol; and Phase 4) pilot the interview protocol with a small sample (Castillo-Montoya, 2016) (see Appendices E, F, and G for the interview protocol, along with the questions I posed to the tenants, AO and PILO representatives, and landlords). After reviewing and analyzing the interview data of the small sample and after consulting with fellow academics, I refined my questions to best address the four main research questions, as well as the sub-questions.²⁹

Once necessary modifications were made to the interview questions, I adjusted the recruitment strategy, chose to conduct the interviews by phone or via the web-based Zoom app to maintain social distance, and created flyers in English and Spanish (see Appendix H). These modifications were submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. I also applied for funding to compensate the study participants. I felt that compensation

²⁹ Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, this research was transformed from a mixed-methods design to a qualitative design for the sake of expediency.

would be especially practical since many low-income residents in Los Angeles were losing their jobs due to the pandemic.³⁰

After receiving a second IRB approval regarding the modifications to the study late that summer, I contacted various AOs, PILOs, and landlords and invited them to participate in interviews for this research. Following several of these interviews, I asked some of the participants if they would be willing to forward the flyer to tenants who might also be interested in participating in the study. Two PILO staff did so willingly. Simultaneously, I asked other professional contacts in Los Angeles who work with low-income communities in the city to help spread the word, which they readily did. Thus, with the assistance of the two PILOs and several professional contacts, I began receiving calls and texts from many tenants who were interested in being interviewed for the study.

Initially, I was able to keep track of how individuals had heard about the research project (e.g., from a tenant who knew one of the PILO staff or from one of my professional contacts), but over time, I was unable to track how each person had come to hear about it. There were various reasons I lost track of the web of contacts; for instance, some of the tenants shared names of people who had told them about the study who I did not know, some said they had seen my flyer on Facebook or WhatsApp, and some discussed how they had been emailed my flyer by an acquaintance. Each person was duly screened to ensure they met the criteria of the study.

Once I verified that an individual met the participation criteria and they agreed to be interviewed, I arranged a day and time for the interview that would be convenient for

³⁰ Each tenant was compensated for their time with a grocery gift card worth US\$40.00.

them. Each person was told the purpose of the study and what their participation would entail, and all were given opportunities to ask questions. Each individual was provided with the following three consent options: 1) participate and agree to audiotaping; 2) participate and not agree to audiotaping, but allow me to take detailed notes during the interview; or 3) decline participation. Those who agreed to participate were offered a copy of the study information sheet for their records.

On the day before the scheduled interview, I texted or emailed each interviewee a reminder. Most of the tenant interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Again, because of the pandemic, these interviews were conducted either over the phone or via Zoom. For the phone interviews, after asking them permission to record the call, I used the app Rev, a call-recording application. By the beginning of November 2020, I had conducted a total of 54 tenant interviews, including with tenants who were members of LATU. The interviews with the AO and PILO staff and the landlords lasted about 1 hour. I interviewed a total of 12 AO and PILO representatives and eight landlords. All of the interviews were semi-structured in nature, and the questions were open-ended. When needed, additional probing questions were asked to clarify aspects of what they had said and to gain a deeper understanding of the participant's initial responses.

During each interview, I had the interview protocol in hand to make sure I asked each question in the order in which it appeared on the protocol, and I also had a notepad in front of me where I jotted down notes, observations, names, and events that I thought were important or interesting. I saved these observational notes as interview memos, along with the memos from the various meetings and events I participated in throughout the data-collection period.

Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was collected for both background information and triangulation with the primary data. As discussed earlier, the secondary data came from several sources, including city agency websites, AO and PILO websites, newspaper articles, reports, peer-reviewed articles, and notes from 15 in-person and virtual events and meetings I observed.

Regarding the websites of the city agencies, AOs, and PILOs, web pages that included their missions, the services they provide, and the resources available for tenants (e.g., housing materials that sometimes included flyers, pamphlets, and booklets), as well as announcements for workshops and legal clinics. All such material was printed as PDF documents and transferred to ATLAS.ti, which is a document review software tool often used in qualitative research. I performed analysis to identify all the various types of resources provided by the organizations and to document the collaborative work undertaken by the city agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Newspaper articles that mentioned the “Los Angeles Tenants Union” were collected for content analysis. The dataset of newspaper articles was obtained through keyword searches in three databases: Newsbank, ProQuest, and NexisUni. To search for relevant articles, I set the timeframe to “all” and used the keywords “Los Angeles Tenants Union,” “LA Tenants Union,” and “LATU.”³¹ I read the articles and tabulated them on an Excel spreadsheet to record each article’s title and date, a summary of the article, the actors involved, and their claims. This document was transferred to ATLAS.ti for further analysis with the data from the websites, interviews, observational notes, and reports.

³¹ The earliest article that mentions the union was written in 2015.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality

The study's protocol, including the research objectives, interview protocol, flyers, informed consent form, and process for storing the data, was approved by the IRB at the University of California, Irvine (UCI IRB HS# 2019-5183).

Verbal informed consent was given by all study participants. A study information sheet (SIS) was written for all three groups of participants (low-income renters, representatives of AOs and PILOs, and landlords). The participants had an opportunity to read and ask any questions before agreeing to participate. The SIS contained the details of the study, its objectives, the collection method, how long the interview would likely take, the compensation, and their option to withdraw.

The participants were told that all the information they shared would be kept anonymous, accomplished by removing all identifiable information, such as names and addresses; confidential, by never connecting a response with a person's name; and that their names would not be shared without their consent. In the data analysis phase, pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents.

All interview data reports were stored in a Google Drive folder provided by the university, accessible only by the principal researcher using a security code. All paper data from the interviews, including handwritten notes, were shredded after copies were saved in the Google Drive folder. All data from this study in the Google Drive folder will be destroyed five years hence, as per university policy.

Reliability and Validity of Data Collection

To establish reliability, I took precautionary steps before, during, and after data collection. The data collection was assessed for consistency throughout the entire study

period. For instance, I made sure to document the time I made contact to schedule an interview with a participant to the moment I thanked the interviewee for their participation. The detailed documentation of the interview procedure enhanced the study's reliability and validity.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) listed eight strategies that researchers can use to increase the validity of qualitative data. Of these, I applied several, including: 1) triangulating my qualitative findings by using different sources of data, 2) clarifying bias by making sure that I would not let any information I had researched prior become a factor that would bias the interviews,³² 3) spending prolonged time in the field through engagement and persistent observation, and 4) providing rich, thick descriptions for readers. I also cross-checked the codes I developed during the data-collection phase with the codes of other researchers, allowing me to focus on the emerging themes drawn from the data of this study, and not resulting from predetermined themes of other investigations.

Data Analysis

All 83 interview recordings were transcribed verbatim.³³ The interviews conducted in Spanish were translated into English. My data analysis of the transcripts used a multiple-cycle coding method, whereby the first cycle was intended to collect all the different codes, and subsequent cycles were to provide a mechanism to categorize and organize the various codes thematically.

³² The interview questions were reviewed by my advisor and department faculty to ensure that the questions did not inadvertently invite bias.

³³ This number includes 54 tenants, 12 individuals who work for AOs or PILOs, and 8 landlords, as well as the initial 9 tenants who provided the sample data.

Shortly after transcription, I listened to each interview an additional two times: the first time to note my first impressions regarding the themes I had picked up on, and the second time to fill out the Excel spreadsheet with the answers to each question posed. Following this step, I began coding for relationships among the questions, creating a new column on the spreadsheet for each code. Once this process was complete, I had several themes and sub-themes that had emerged from the coding. Additionally, I transferred the interview transcripts to ATLAS.ti for document management and to perform further coding. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, I transferred all other documents pertaining to this study into ATLAS.ti. Altogether, I transferred 201 documents.

ATLAS.ti is an application tool used for encrypted data analysis. Using this application, I applied the first-cycle elemental codes to each interview transcript, website document, newspaper articles, etc. I then used descriptive and in vivo coding as the two first-cycle coding methods. As Saldaña (2013) has discussed, descriptive coding provides topical designations to particular segments of data and is commonly used as a first step in data analysis. The in vivo coding allowed me to pay particular attention to each participant's choice of language, perspective, and worldview (Saldaña, 2013). Using in vivo coding was especially important to apply to the data of this study because not all the participants were tenants; some respondents—lawyers, for example—expressed distinct views about landlord-tenant situations. In vivo coding allowed me to differentiate the phrasing expressed by the low-income tenants from the professionals. When necessary, I applied other coding methods and consulted with experts knowledgeable in qualitative data analysis for guidance.

I also applied process coding for the second coding cycle to help refine the first cycle of coding. Process coding was appropriate for this study because the method searched for “ongoing action/interaction/emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with the purpose of reaching a goal or handling a problem” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, as cited in Saldaña, 2013, p. 96). Here, similar to the first coding cycle, I used other coding methods and consulted with experts with qualitative research experience when necessary.

After all coding was complete, I had a total of 703 codes assigned to the data, which were then categorized into 34 sub-categories and then into 6 major themes that had emerged. The multiple coding cycles helped establish a coherent set of codes, revealed themes pertinent to the research questions posed, and eliminated any duplication. I also relied on the literature to guide the coding process to evaluate the concepts and patterns captured by the data, and most especially, by the interview data. Throughout the entire process, I wrote memos to capture my observations, thoughts, ideas, and relationships between different data (e.g., similar codes captured in both interview data of tenant participants and landlords), as well as the observed themes and patterns.

In the next chapter, I present the results of the analysis of the data collected for this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The central purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how low-income tenants who live in the private rental sector **and in units under the LARSO** in the City of Los Angeles navigate their housing concerns. Specifically, the study aimed to understand how tenants address housing issues when they arise; to learn their perspectives about housing problems; and to explain why they might act on their housing issues, whether alone or collectively. As discussed in earlier chapters, I used an adapted PADM as the theoretical framework to answer the research questions about identifying both the external factors—outside tenants’ homes—and internal factors—interior housing conditions and the tenants’ perspectives—to explain behavioral responses to tenants’ housing concerns.

The findings in this chapter are presented under each research question I posed at the outset. Following a discussion of the central renter population in Los Angeles and the composition of this study’s subjects, the chapter presents the results of the analysis in three main sections. These sections are: a) the organizational infrastructure that exists in Los Angeles, including the resources identified and the strategies employed by both AOs and PILOs, which allowed me to answer Research Question 1 (RQ1); b) the landlord-tenant relationships and the policies regulating them, as well as the relationship challenges between landlords and tenants, which permitted me to answer Research Question 2 (RQ2); and, c) a description of tenants’ perceptions regarding housing threats and a discussion of the connections among the discovered themes regarding the actions they take, which allowed me to answer both Research Question 3 (RQ3) and Research Question 4 (RQ4).

Los Angeles City Renter Demographics and Housing Characteristics

The population this study focused on was low-income renters in the City of Los Angeles. According to the U.S. Census, approximately 63.2 percent of all occupied housing units are renter-occupied housing units in the City of Los Angeles (2019). Large proportions of these renters are Hispanic/Latinx (40.9%), immigrants (47.7%), and cost-burdened (56.6%). In addition, 71.9% of these units, or 629,329 units, are older (built before 1979). This number is close to the estimate reported by LAHCID, which states that there are approximately 624,000 units on about 118,000 properties that fall under the LARSO jurisdiction (Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department, 2021). Table 4.1 below provides additional selected demographic and housing characteristics:

Table 4.1

Selected Demographic and Housing Characteristics for Renter-Occupied Housing Units, Los Angeles City, 2019

Characteristic	Housing Units	Percent
Renter-Occupied Housing Units	874,365	100
Race/ethnicity		
Whites	443,827	50.8
Blacks	108,955	12.5
Asians	107,704	12.3
Hispanics ¹	357,390	40.9
Immigrants ²	417,088	47.7
Educational Attainment		
Less than HS	193,395	22.1
HS degree or equivalent	152,737	17.5
Some college or associate's	225,312	25.8
Bachelor's degree or higher	302,921	34.6
Cost-burdened households ³	494,749	56.6
Overcrowded units ⁴	153,420	17.3
Built before 1979	629,329	71.9
Median household income	\$46,250	

Notes. ¹Hispanics of any race; ²foreign born as a proxy for immigrants; ³households paying more than 30% of their income; ⁴overcrowded units defined as units with more than 1 person per room. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

Study Participant Characteristics

The majority of this study's tenant participants were women (50 of 54) and persons of color (46). Most were Latinx, with cultural roots in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Peru (43). Thirty-eight of the 54 participants, or 70%, had received a high school education or less. Thirty-seven of these participants chose to do the interviews in Spanish, as it was their preferred language. Among this group, 28 told me that they understand English "very little" while the rest shared they can speak basic conversational English. Only one participant out of the total 54 participants spoke in both English and Spanish during the interview. The remaining 16 interviewees chose to have the interviews in English; all of these tenants had obtained a high school degree or more.

The participants were employed in various occupations. The most frequent jobs were homemaker,³⁴ housecleaner, and waitress. Many of those in the last two jobs had recently lost their jobs because of the pandemic. In addition, the majority of tenant interviewees were single mothers (20), and 42 out of the total 54 participants lived in their apartments with children. Thirty-five out of the 54 participants received some sort of government assistance, such as food stamps. Several of these interviewees volunteered that they were undocumented immigrants. Table 4.2 on the next page summarizes the demographic characteristics of the tenant participants.

Additionally, a total of eight landlords were interviewed for this study. Two were White men in their 40s or 50s who owned a property management company, while the rest

³⁴ As discussed, the majority of the participants were women, and some of these women described their work as homemakers as jobs focused on the care of their families and their homes. Additionally, some of these women also babysat for other local families' children, for which they were sometimes paid and sometimes not, depending on the exact arrangement.

were “mom-and-pop” landlords: 3 White women, 1 African American woman, and 2 White men. Their work experience as landlords or managers ranged from 5 to 30 years, and the number of rental units each managed ranged from two to 2,000 units.

Table 4.2

Tenant Participants’ Characteristics

Characteristic	Total Participants
<i>Gender</i>	
Male	4
Female	50
<i>Educational Attainment</i>	
Less than elementary school	5
Elementary school	10
Middle school	8
High school	14
Some college or associate’s	10
Bachelor’s degree	6
<i>Marital Status</i>	
Single	30
Married	15
Domestic partnership	7
Divorced	2
<i>Children Living at Home</i>	
Children	42
3+ children at home	25
No children	12
<i>Government Assistance</i>	
Receiving	35
Not receiving	19
Los Angeles Tenants Union member	12
Other Characteristics	
Household Monthly Salary	<i>Average: \$2,270 Min: \$1,100, Max: \$5,000, Median: \$2,000</i>
Age	<i>Average: 42.5 years Min: 21 years, Max: 71 years, Median: 42 years</i>

In addition to the above groups, I also interviewed 12 people who worked for nonprofit organizations. Three of them were lawyers who specialized in landlord-tenant law; these attorneys worked at three different PILOs in the City of Los Angeles. Their years of professional experience at the PILOs ranged from 5 to 30 years. Additionally, I interviewed three individuals who worked as outreach coordinators for either a PILO or an AO, providing resources to the tenants in the communities they served. The remaining six participants worked as AO or PILO staff, giving administrative or legal support to keep their organizations running, as well as being the first-person contact for tenants at their organizations.

Furthermore, via analysis of both interview data and secondary data collection, this study found that there are a total 16 organizations,³⁵ three local government agencies, and one tenant association (LATU), and various other institutions that provide direct services to renters who are facing landlord-tenant challenges within the City of Los Angeles.³⁶ Figure 4.1 on the next page is a map that shows the locations of the tenant participants and institutions covered in this dissertation. Together, these institutions, along with the participants described earlier, revealed an organizational “service provider” infrastructure existing for low-income tenants in the City of Los Angeles that offers specialized landlord-tenant services to residents.

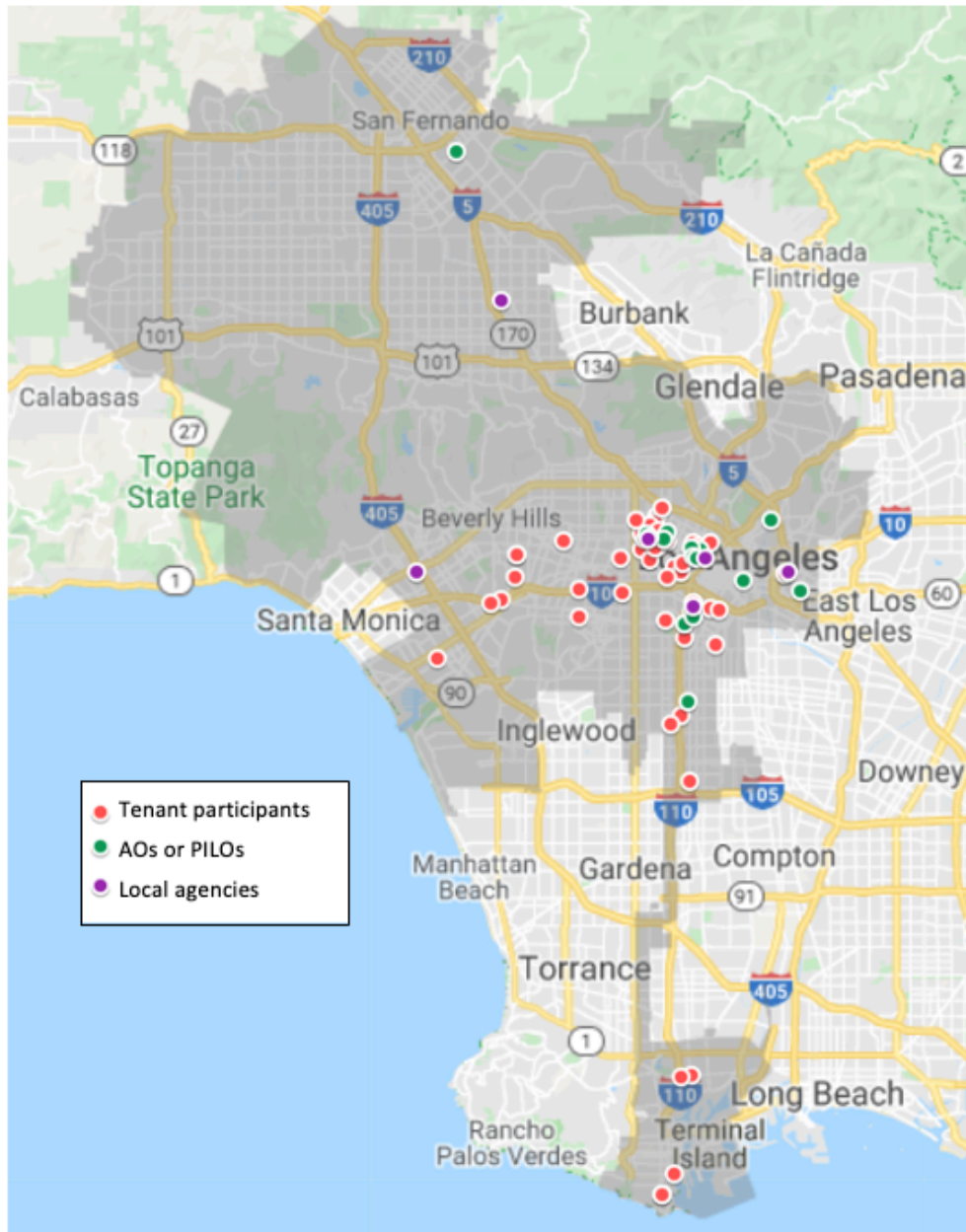
³⁵ The 16 organizations mentioned in this study is not inclusive of all the organizations in Los Angeles City. They are inclusive of the organizations that were observed from secondary data or discussed among interviewees.

³⁶ This study does not cover all primary and secondary organizations, coalitions, and campaigns that advocate for tenants’ rights as some are located outside the study area (Los Angeles City under LARSO). For instance, there are organizations in neighboring cities but within the County of Los Angeles that offer specialized direct services to tenants living in units that are outside of LARSO (e.g., Community Legal Aid SoCal), but I did not investigate such organizations for this research.

To protect confidential information, the names and all identifying information of the participants in this study have been excluded in this dissertation.

Figure 4.1

Map of Tenant Participants, AOs, PILOs and Local Agencies



Organizational Infrastructure for Renters

There are numerous organizations and agencies situated in different neighborhoods that provide a diverse number of services directly to renters. However, each entity offers specific types of services, and not all of them provide exactly the same services.

Additionally, some of these organizations are situated in areas within the borders of the City of Los Angeles but provide services to renters in the County of Los Angeles, except the tenants living within the city border, thus limiting the resources available for low-income renters.

Organizational Infrastructure

I borrow the concept of “organizational infrastructure” from the social movement literature. This concept is appropriate to apply in this study because data from this research revealed the various AOs and PILOs that provide direct services to low-income tenants are formally and informally linked through campaign and policy advocacy networks developed over the course of many years. According to Nicholls (2003), organizational infrastructure links people and institutions together through coordinating mechanisms that mobilize collective resources for specific goals. This section describes these organizations in some detail regarding the types of organizations they are, the services they provide, and the resources used or offered. While the 16 organizations included in this research vary in terms of size and the types of services they provide, I focus particular attention on the resources they offer directly to low-income tenants who live within the city borders of Los Angeles.

Advocacy Organizations (AOs) and Public Interest Law Organizations (PILOs)

AOs and PILOs are organizations that advocate for policy change. The organizations listed in Table 4.3 below fall into this general category. However, four of the 16 organizations listed differ from the rest in that they do not offer legal counsel or legal or trial representation; these four organizations are denoted by asterisks. Apart from these four, the rest are classified as PILOs because they are essentially law firms that provide legal services, including to low-income residents. Overall, from the interviews and a close examination of their websites, I found notable differences in the way each organization provided its services, depending on its specific mission, programs, and funding sources, as well as the location in which they offer assistance and possible legal expertise. Nevertheless, when assessed as a group, they form a connected organizational infrastructure, linked together by various mechanisms of collaboration, as I discuss in the following section.

Generally speaking, education, legal counsel and representation, and advocacy are the main services offered by the AOs and PILOs I discuss here. With the exception of some PILOs that charge a small fee for legal or trial representation, all of these organizations offer their services free of charge to low-income Los Angeles tenants.

Table 4.3

AOs and PILOs that Provide Services to Low-Income Tenants in the City of Los Angeles

Organization	Services Provided
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment	Education, policy change, tenant organizing, advocacy, and legal counsel
Asian Americans Advancing Justice	Multilingual intake, [†] legal counseling, and legal representation
BASTA, Inc.	Education, advocacy, legal counsel, and legal and trial representation

Bet Tzedek Legal Services	Free legal services to low-income residents in Los Angeles County
Coalition for Economic Survival	Tenant organizing, education, and advocacy
Esperanza Community Housing Corporation*	Train <i>promotores de salud</i> (community health promoters) who provide resources, education, primary prevention, and advocacy to families and children in Los Angeles
Eviction Defense Network	Free legal counsel and legal and trial representation on a sliding fee scale
Fair Housing Foundation	Fair housing complaint intake, investigation and resolution, education, legal counseling, mediation, and referrals
Inquilinos Unidos*	Provides counseling, advice, and education, and trains community leaders
Korean American Coalition Los Angeles	Free legal counsel
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles	Free legal services to low-income residents in Los Angeles County
Los Angeles Community Action Network*	Tenant organizing, education, and advocacy
Los Angeles for Community Law and Action	Tenant organizing, education, advocacy, legal counsel, and representation
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County	Free legal services to low-income residents in Los Angeles County
Public Counsel	Free legal services to low-income residents in Los Angeles County
Strategic Action for Economic Justice*	Education, policy change, tenant organizing, advocacy, and legal counsel

Note. *Denotes advocacy organizations (AOs); † Asian Americans Advancing Justice “has the capacity to offer services in numerous Asian languages, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Khmer, Indonesian, Thai, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, Urdu, along with English and Spanish” (Guidestar.org, 2021; see <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/95-3854152>, para. 7).

Specialized Legal Services

AOs and PILOs do not provide the same legal counsel expertise or services. For instance, as mentioned above, there are four AOs that do not offer legal representation or trial representation. However, in some instances, through invitations and collaboration with lawyers at other PILOs or through lawyers providing pro bono work, AOs will occasionally provide legal counseling through legal clinics, whether in person or virtually. Legal counseling differs from both legal representation and trial representation because it

involves a lawyer educating tenants on their rights and how a landlord-tenant law or policy applies to a particular tenant's situation.³⁷

On the other hand, PILOs do provide a wide range of legal services, from legal counseling to litigating tenants' cases. Thus, they often represent tenants in unlawful detainer (UD) cases (or in eviction cases going through court proceedings). Most PILOs offer free legal representation to qualified low-income tenants in the city, but there are some that do not offer such representation freely due to the source of their funding. For instance, BASTA, Inc. charges a flat fee to low-income tenants—often a month's rent—while the Eviction Defense Network (EDN) charges a fee on a sliding scale. The financial support model these organizations use is a “self-sustaining” model, meaning that they do not depend on federal or local government grants that may cause them to turn away particular clients, such as undocumented immigrants. Thus, these PILOs exist to represent not only low-income Los Angeles renters but also middle-income clients who are struggling. One lawyer, Tammy (not her real name), at one of these PILOs witnessed challenges their organization faced with its “self-sustaining” fee-scale model over the past two decades, especially regarding equipping staff attorneys. The lawyer described the situation in the following way:

The spring of 2003, 99% of our caseload settled [...]. The people who came through the office had some temporary downturn in income, an emergency, got laid off, got into some sort of hassle paying their rent, or ended up in eviction proceedings. Landlords were relatively willing to let people stay if they had the rent or tenants were relatively willing to move someplace else if they could save a little money and get a little time, so 99% of our caseload settled. Then, in May of 2016, this started to change as rent started going up. That's the start of this most recent housing crisis [...]; 87% of our caseload was being prepared for trial because, as rents went up,

³⁷ Only a licensed attorney can give legal advice. A non-lawyer, such as legal assistants, paralegals, community and tenant organizers, however, can recite legal information.

tenants were more willing to fight or forced to fight for their housing, and landlords were more invested in kicking them out. As a result, we had 87% of the caseload going to trial. It's like almost a complete flip. Our staffing isn't set up to take 87% of the cases to trial. You can set up an economies-of-scale project, whereby, using very routinized forms and front-loading the work with paralegals supervised by an attorney, [... a lawyer can] prepare the case well enough to achieve your clients' goals for an average of \$700 per case. What you cannot do for that is take the case to trial. Because once we know a case has to go to trial, all of those routine papers have to be changed to [be] more specific—specially designed for the case—and that takes a lot of time. And while one lawyer can go to court with seven to 10 cases and settle them in the course of a day, once a case has a trial assignment, it's one lawyer tied up for three to five days. That is cost-prohibitive. (Personal interview, Tammy, February 24, 2020)

This quote shows the human resources and financial impacts that these organizations must deal with, especially when facing limitations from having to handle larger caseloads going to trial.

While some organizations must deal with the significant challenges of handling large caseloads, others face having limited specialized legal expertise. This is the case, for instance, for the Housing Rights Center, which focuses only on housing discrimination complaints, such as those regarding race, religion, national origin, or familial status. For housing situations that fall outside the scope of the services they offer, such organizations will refer tenants to other organizations or agencies. So, for example, since many do not concentrate on disability law, an organization might refer a disabled tenant to the Disability Rights Center.

Some of the organizations I interviewed for this study specialize in mass, class action, or personal injury litigation against landlords. For instance, the Inner City Law Center (ICLC) has tenant organizers who have developed relationships in the local community and who educate tenants on their rights. Over time, they will sometimes see a pattern of neglect or health issue complaints from tenants against particular landlords.

Under the law, these types of complaints are considered physical or emotional injuries, which fall under the purview of ICLC lawyers. One ICLC legal staff, Sarah (not her real name), member explained:

Once the organizers feel that, you know, a couple months have gone by, a year has gone by, and these requests are just falling into a deaf ear, then our organizers come to the litigation team and say, “Hey, you know, we think this is a great case for you guys to file [a] habitability case. Because the managers aren’t doing anything. There’s no response from the landlord, from the manager, or anyone. Conditions are getting worse. So, there’s a lot of issues with not having screens, as well—you know, bugs come in and mosquitoes come in at night. These units are really hot. So that’s one way the organizers bring in the clients, but this is after months and months of them educating our clients, even after trying to work with the landlord. (Personal interview, Sarah, July 29, 2020)

These types of litigation cases against landlords are one type of collective action that tenants sometimes take. It is a strategy where tenants in a single building sue their landlord for damages.

Other Services

PILOs often provide legal representation for emergency cases, such as evictions. They also commonly litigate against landlords for habitability or personal injury damages and provide legal, one-on-one counseling. Additionally, there are some that provide legal education on tenants’ rights to groups through their legal clinics and workshops, with or without an attorney present. Beyond these types of legal services, some PILOs also provide nonlegal help to tenants, such as reaching out to educate, inform, or guide them regarding their rights as tenants. These organizations offer these services via community outreach by holding events, performing phone-bank call-ins, speaking at schools and churches, and providing virtual clinics that they can access through their website. Another type of nonemergency help PILOs provide is to counsel tenants about how to file complaints

through government agencies, such as the city’s Public Health Department, regarding substandard housing conditions caused by their landlords. Additionally, for long-term tenants who, through no fault of their own, have been asked by their landlords to vacate and who live in units that fall under LARSO, such organizations can often assist the tenants in making sure landlords give them the appropriate relocation compensation as required by law.³⁸

Collaboration Among AOs and PILOs

In this study, I found several ways that collaboration occurs between Los Angeles’s AOs and PILOs. The concept of “collaboration” is used here, which also serves as another type of service provided directly to tenants while they are attempting to navigate through their housing concerns; however, not all types of collaboration involve services provided to tenants directly. Overall, I encountered three main ways organizations collaborate with one another to benefit tenants: through referrals, client legal co-representation, and the Shriver Project.

Referrals

AO staff who were interviewed for this study mentioned that when tenants had an emergency legal case, they would refer the tenants to PILOs for them to get the legal assistance they need. While reviewing the websites of these organizations, I noted that some would provide links to other organizations. For example, one of the organizations, EDN, tried to be comprehensive with their referral process by creating a flyer titled

³⁸ Even though LARSO provides few permissible reasons for landlords to evict tenants, there are several allowable “not-at-fault” reasons that landlords can use for evictions, such as the Ellis Act, major renovations, and if units are being converted to condominiums for sale. If a tenant is eligible and qualified, the landlord is required to give the tenants relocation assistance. For more information, see: <https://LAHCID1a2.lacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Relocation-Assistance-English.pdf>

#OnEveryFridge. On one side, the flyer described the “do’s and don’ts” for tenants to follow, and on the other side, it listed all the available legal resources for tenants, including legal clinics held each day in the County of Los Angeles; various organizations’ phone numbers; and the city and county agencies, courts, and private attorneys specializing in this area of the law (see Appendix I to view this #OnEveryFridge flyer, which is also available in Spanish). EDN’s goal with this project was to get the flyer posted on every single refrigerator throughout Los Angeles. Such referrals can help tenants significantly, especially when the organization that is assisting them has limited resources or services. This referral process demonstrates that these organizations do not have territorial struggles or adversarial relationships with one another when it comes to supporting tenants.

Co-representation

Another way tenants are assisted by AOs and PILOs is when organizations collaborate with one another to give tenants more comprehensive support, accomplished by co-representing tenants or clients. This co-representation is done through both informal or formal means. For instance, PILOs like the Housing Rights Center and EDN sometimes work together on a single case by sharing their expertise with one another. One of the housing counselors, Shane , from the Housing Rights Center discussed this situation as follows:

I want to say the most collaboration we’ll do is with an organization like the Eviction Defense Network. For example, we don’t provide eviction defense. If a tenant has been served an eviction or a summons from court, at that point, we will immediately refer them to the Eviction Defense Network. Prior to doing that, if they come to us first, we get their story. If we do feel that there is a discrimination involved, we will open a case, we’ll refer them to the Eviction Defense Network, and we’ll conduct an investigation. Hopefully, if successful, we find something; then, we’ll provide

findings or even a letter we write to the management indicating that this tenant was discriminated based on a protected class. Then we would use that information to help with the eviction defense if it were to go to court. (Personal interview, Shane, July 17, 2020)

Thus, although the Housing Rights Center does not have attorneys on staff to help a tenant with their eviction case, they will build a discrimination case when they suspect one and then provide that information to EDN so that the tenant's eviction case has a strong defense.

There are also organizations that use a multipronged approach to help tenants deal with their housing issues. For example, when tenants are dealing with substandard housing in South Central Los Angeles, there are organizations that work together to combat the poor housing conditions. They do so by referring the tenants to other organizations with whom they officially collaborate. For instance, in a medical facility, a doctor will treat a tenant's health issue caused by their bad housing conditions, and then they will refer that person to an AO, whose staff will assess the indoor environmental conditions in which the tenant lives. After that, they are helped by tenant organizers in another AO, who teach them their rights and how to communicate with their landlords about tenants' healthy habitability rights (Bell & Rubin, 2007; Huarita & Basolo, 2019).

The Shriver Project

The Shriver Project is a program that was approved by the Judicial Council to increase legal representation for the poor in the County of Los Angeles. It is thus government-funded. It is also currently the largest legal service provider existing in Los Angeles (Blasi, 2020). This project provides eviction defense attorneys to qualified low-income tenants when the cases are filed in Los Angeles's Stanley Mosk Courthouse. At the courthouse, the Eviction Assistance Center screens tenants in terms of their eligibility and

then helps them with their paperwork, such as assisting the tenants to fill out their fee-waiver applications. The Eviction Assistance Center then refers them to partner PILOs, where they meet with attorneys who will represent them in their eviction cases. The four PILOs who partner with the Eviction Assistance Center are Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, the ICLC, the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles, and Public Counsel (Blasi, 2020). For those tenants who do not qualify for the Shriver Project to receive free legal representation for their eviction cases, they are referred to different PILOs that can provide them with the necessary legal counsel and legal representation.

Government Agencies for Housing Law Enforcement

There are also government agencies that help tenants address a wide variety of issues, including substandard housing issues. Traditionally, LAHCID, formerly known as the Los Angeles Housing Department, has been the primary agency that tenants are referred to, especially for tenants who live in LARSO units. This agency works to address LARSO violations, which can include physical conditions needing repairs or illegal rent increases. When a housing repair is neglected by a landlord, a tenant can file a complaint with LAHCID against the landlord. LAHCID will send an inspector to visit the tenant's home and then give a "notice to comply" letter to the landlord, allowing them 30 days to repair it.³⁹

LAHCID has several programs to enforce housing codes, and some AOs and PILOs partner with LAHCID to make their programs a success. One program mentioned several times during the interviews is the Rent Escrow Account Program (REAP). LAHCID places a building in REAP after they have assessed multiple building or housing code violations and

³⁹ In instances when there is an emergency repair, such as no hot water, the landlord must legally comply within either a three- or a seven-day period, depending on the exact issue.

after two notices to comply have been sent to the landlord without success (Huarita & Basolo, 2019). Once in REAP, a reduced amount of rent is collected by LAHCID, which goes into an escrow account that is managed by LAHCID. These funds then can only be used by the landlords toward repairs. The AOs who partner with LAHCID via a program like REAP work to educate tenants on REAP, guide them regarding where to pay their rent (instead of to the landlord), and ensure cooperation between the landlords and tenants, especially when workers need to get into the tenants' homes to make the necessary repairs.

Table 4.4

Code Enforcement Agencies

Government Level	Agency	Substandard Conditions the Agency Addresses
State	Department of Food and Agriculture	Addresses unsafe pesticide or fumigation use
County	County of Los Angeles, Department of Public Health	Inspects food facilities, housing, and swimming pools after complaints are made
City	Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department	Investigate code violations in multifamily units after complaints are made by tenants
	Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety*	Investigates code violations for existing single-family residential houses and commercial, industrial, and vacant buildings

Note. Adapted from Huarita and Basolo (2019). * Certain single-family homes like those used as boarding houses are considered units under LARSO; in these cases, complaints might need to be addressed by this agency.

LAHCID is not the only enforcement agency in Los Angeles. The Department of Public Health (DPH) also receives complaints from tenants for health-related problems, such as mold, bed bugs, or roach infestation. These are health code violations that are not enforced by LAHCID. Additionally, Table 4.4 in the previous page shows other code enforcement agencies and the general problems each one addresses. Since the present

study focused on tenants living in LARSO units, the two agencies that most tenants will likely go to for support are DPH and LAHCID.⁴⁰

Courthouses

Depending on the exact zip code where a tenant's apartment is located, if the landlord files an UD to evict the tenant, the case will be filed in one of eight courthouses.⁴¹ The majority of UDs are filed in the largest courthouse in Los Angeles, the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, which is located downtown. As mentioned earlier, the Stanley Mosk Courthouse has a dedicated Eviction Assistance Center to help tenants with their eviction issues.

Unfortunately, some tenants who have been served with an eviction notice and who need legal representation can fall prey to fraudulent service providers, sometimes referred to as *notarios*. The phenomenon is not unique, although it is understudied. One law review article written by Careen Shannon (2009) noted that such providers were unregulated in New York and discussed how immigrants navigating the labyrinthine immigration system were falling prey to these scam providers. Shannon suggested several solutions to address the unauthorized practices of *notarios*, which included reforming existing laws on nonattorneys representing immigrants, educating immigrants to secure legitimate legal counsel, encouraging lawyers to report this type of fraud, and increasing the protection of

⁴⁰ This study focused on low-income tenants living in the private rental sector, which is why I do not discuss situations regarding tenants living in public housing or receiving subsidized vouchers. It is for this reason that I do not mention the Housing Authority here.

⁴¹ On the County of Los Angeles, Superior Court of California website, there is a filing court locator for unlawful detainers. These depend on the zip code assigned to a court district, as per the local court rules, found in Chapter 2, "Distribution of Court Business and General Provisions." For zip codes in the City of Los Angeles, unlawful detainers are assigned to one of eight courthouses, as follows: Compton Courthouse, Stanley Most Courthouse, Santa Monica Courthouse, Inglewood Courthouse, Van Nuys Courthouse East, Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse – Long Beach, Pasadena Courthouse, or Chatsworth Courthouse.

immigrants so that they are not preyed upon in this manner. When I asked Tammy about the sorts of challenges tenants face when attempting to access legitimate resources but then preyed upon by *notarios*, she responded,

Man, I don't know how the *notarios* do it. Our people tend to find help in *El Clasificado* and other throwaway papers, and the *notarios* advertise heavily in those newspapers and rip people off. Our people tend to fall prey to *Centro de Ayuda Legal*. It sounds like a community-based nonprofit when it's a rip-off service. They are like roaches. You stomp one out and three more pop up [...]. Every time I walked by [the Stanley Mosk Courthouse], I was spending time arguing [...]. You'd have to have someone there all the time to discourage people. We actually did use to have an outreach worker out there all the time, [...] if you're going to be effective, you have to warn people about the rip-off services [...]. (Personal interview, Tammy, February 24, 2020)

Further, this attorney later explained how much more prevalent these *notarios* were back in the 1980s. However, she told me that the state legislature had twice passed laws to seal the records of unlawful detainer cases for 60 days before they were made public in order to ward off these scammers. Nevertheless, one still finds *notarios* walking down the hallways of the Stanley Mosk Courthouse because it is a public space. The overall prevalence of these fraudulent "legal" services is unknown. Although this subject falls outside the scope of the present research, it would be a good area for future study.

Law Enforcement: Police and Sheriff

During the interviews, some tenant participants mentioned instances when the police might also get involved, including disputes with neighbors in a building or when a landlord is harassing a tenant. In the former case, landlords will often stay out of disputes between tenants in a building unless a tenant has violated their lease. In the latter case, the most common way that organizations have seen landlords harass tenants is by illegally locking them out of their homes. Here, a staff member, Michelle , working at the Strategic

Action for Economic Development (SAJE) voiced the reasons why the local police are often not particularly helpful in such situations:

So we've seen a lot of folks assist with illegal lockouts, because that's another form of harassment and it's completely illegal for landlords to illegally lock out their tenants at the moment. There's a process that needs to be followed for tenants. Like, if they got illegally locked out, they have to call the sheriff to confirm that they got illegally locked out, and the sheriff will come and, obviously, be like, "You can't illegally lock out your tenant," because landlords are taking matters into their own hands now. We're trying to avoid having police involved because, to be honest, the police is useless when it comes down to housing. They're not really aware of tenant rights. I think it's this perception of folks, thinking the police is going to save them or do something and it's not ... cops don't really know—they don't really have a lot of knowledge on housing. I think at this point, it's more having people from the community, supporting folks that are going through illegal lockouts, and also knowing what their rights are during an illegal lockout. (Personal interview, Michelle, July 17, 2020)

Although nothing more was discussed about training the police on tenants' rights, this person did note one important aspect about how the police get involved when there is landlord harassment. In a law review article, Brennan (2020) clarified the definitions of different types of evictions: formal, informal, and illegal. A formal eviction results after a court eviction hearing has taken place and the judge has decided the case in the landlord's favor, meaning that the eviction is legal. The court's order is then sent to the sheriff's office, and those officers will post a "Notice of Writ" on the tenant's door to notify them of the day they are required to move out. An informal eviction occurs when a landlord and a tenant negotiate the tenant's move-out date, whether by request, negotiation, or coercion. Lastly, an illegal eviction is a civil or criminal violation of federal, state, or local laws. Illegal evictions mainly take place in one of two ways: when a landlord illegally locks their tenant out, which is "also known as a 'self-help' eviction," and when a "constructive" eviction takes place, "in which the owner makes a property deliberately uninhabitable, such as by

shutting off the heat in winter” (Brennan, 2020, p. 40). Both self-help and constructive evictions occur among low-income tenants in Los Angeles.

Los Angeles Tenants Union

This last section discussing organizational infrastructure focuses on the tenants’ association known as the Los Angeles Tenants Union, or LATU.⁴² This tenants’ association was formed following the merging of several groups that shared similar grievances and agendas.⁴³ Initially driven partly by the gentrification occurring in Los Angeles’s Westlake neighborhood, as well as in certain other parts of East Los Angeles, LATU and certain community leaders came together to address not only eviction issues but also the effects evictions have on largely low-income resident communities. LATU officially began in East Los Angeles in fall 2015, but it has grown substantially and now has 13 other union chapters representing different parts of the city.⁴⁴ LATU is strictly member-based, and every tenant who joins has the opportunity to play the role of a leader within the organization.

The union provides numerous resources to Los Angeles renters. Two of the main resources LATU offers directly to tenants are community support and greater empowerment, especially in terms of how tenants relate to one another. As one LATU member Kelly stated,

⁴² LATU is a union funded by its own members. It is an autonomous “member-funded union which fights for the human right to housing” (Los Angeles Tenants Union, 2021, para. 2)

⁴³ One of the interviewees who had been a part of the process when the union was formed noted that there were several groups that had been involved in political organizing and mobilizing that then merged together to form LATU, namely, the Union de Vecinos (based in Boyle Heights), Ultrared, and School of Echoes.

⁴⁴ These union chapters include Baldwin-Leimert-Crenshaw, Canoga Park, East Hollywood, Eastside, Hollywood, Mid-City, North Hollywood, Northeast L.A., South Central, Vermont and Beverly, Westside, Westwood, and Wilmington/South Bay (Los Angeles Tenants Union, 2020).

It's interesting because the tenants' union is nonhierarchical. People take different roles and step into positions of leadership, but they are not the leaders; the union itself, and the community is a leader. We're really careful not to privilege, say, how are you representing the tenants' union? Are you speaking for the tenants' union? We're not that kind of an organization, and that's really difficult for nonprofits and news media and other organizations to understand. Everybody is individual. (Personal interview, Kelly, September 25, 2020)

Besides community support and empowerment, LATU also offers training, education, access to attorneys, case management, and funding to provide economic support to renters who are in dire situations in order to prevent homelessness. The same member later told me, "Most tenants don't know their rights, and they're too scared to defend them. That's part of the reason why the community support is crucial; because this is more like social work than it is political organizing" (Personal interview, Kelly, September 25, 2020). My observations of several LATU meetings, both in person and virtually during the pandemic, demonstrated that sense of community when tenants had the opportunity to update the union regarding where they stood in terms of their current landlord-tenant issue, as well as when they expressed their frustration or confusion or when they asked questions about what might be done to improve their particular landlord situation.

The discussion, thus far, responds to part of my first research question, RQ1A which asked what resources AOs and PILOs use to address tenants' agendas. As described in the prior section, the organizations offering services to renters consist of AOs, PILOs, government agencies like LAHCID and the DPH, and the tenants' association LATU. In the course of this research, I found that there are numerous resources available to renters facing difficulties with their housing, and there are existing programs in some of these organizations that were created to alleviate or combat housing issues, as well as to provide free legal representation to all low-income tenants who qualify. For tenants who have

access to these resources, they are able to learn about their rights, and by doing so, many are then empowered to address their housing issues.

Housing Resources and Strategies

According to the literature on political opportunity theory (POT), advocacy organizations and activists use strategic approaches to make community-wide impacts and to push for policy changes. These strategies are driven by agendas and goals to advocate for the disenfranchised. In the case of Los Angeles, amidst housing and health crises, AOs, PILOs, and tenants have mobilized together to act at different levels, from small community efforts to large regional scales. In addition, the literature on resource mobilization theory (RMT) shows how the resources that individuals and organizations access and use influence the actions they then take. The following section provides a description of various outreach efforts, education, coalitions, and campaigns that are frequently mentioned in terms of resources and strategies used by AOs and tenants to address housing concerns in the City of Los Angeles.

Outreach Efforts

Outreach is a significant task performed in various ways by advocacy and community-based organizations in order to refer people to available services (Buck, 2009). These outreach efforts vary greatly, but they can be classified by each one's delivery model. The four general delivery models include *satellite*, *peripatetic*, *detached*, and *domiciliary* (Dewson et al., 2006). The *satellite* outreach model involves delivering services at a specific site, such as at churches or libraries. BASTA, Inc., for instance, frequently performs outreach at resource fairs, schools, and libraries. Secondly, an organization using *peripatetic* outreach will use another organization's location to provide services. For

example, PILOs often use the offices of AOs or churches to provide their legal services to clients. Thirdly, the *detached* outreach model involves staff from AOs or PILOs going out into the community and engaging with residents one-on-one or in groups. Both BASTA, Inc. and Inquilinos Unidos sometimes use this outreach model. While some organizations have their own staff perform canvassing and tenant organizing in local communities, there are PILOs like ICLC that use professional community organizers whose role is to engage with the community and to educate them about tenants' rights. Lastly, the *domiciliary* model involves the staff of an organization visiting tenants' homes. For instance, Esperanza Community Housing Corporation uses trained health promoters to visit the homes of low-income families, while other organizations choose to have tenant organizers visit renters in their homes to help them build strong legal cases.

Two delivery models not mentioned by Dewson et al. (2006) are *social media* and *telephone* delivery models. The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed many AOs and PILOs to come up with creative ways to do outreach. Thus, since spring 2020, almost all the organizations working in this area have amplified their social media outreach efforts through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. They use these platforms to post flyers, to provide links to information about tenants' rights and resources available to them, and to offer information about virtual workshops on tenants' rights. Regarding *social media* outreach efforts, I identified two main goals: to offer the names of organizations that can address tenant issues, and to provide these organizations' contact information. However, I found that this type of outreach effort has proven challenging. As Shane from the Housing Rights Center stated,

We do have a certain significant—I should say, percentage—of clients that don't necessarily ... that aren't, I guess, maybe tech-savvy or phone savvy. I don't know. They just prefer to come in. There's people that just prefer to talk with somebody face-to-face. I think it's just more the older population. That's definitely one challenge we face, where they just want everything—physical paperwork and just talking to somebody face-to-face because we are open, we never closed. But just everything is done through phone, email, and the outreach has integrated “virtual walk-ins,” where by appointment, somebody can Zoom with us and can talk to us about their situation. That is definitely a challenge for some that, like I said, aren't tech-savvy and just prefer to come in person. There's individuals with certain disabilities that, again, might be helpful for them to talk to someone in person versus over the phone. Maybe it's comprehension [or] maybe it's the social interaction that helps them understand that better versus over the phone. (Personal interview, Shane, July 17, 2020)

In an effort to address the above-described matter, the Housing Rights Center has opted to allow their offices to be open for people to come in and fill out a form so that staff can schedule a day and time to speak with them. Additionally, as mentioned, information is provided to tenants so that they can call the proper organization.

In general, AO and PILO outreach efforts have three overlapping components: 1) they make their presence, services, and resources known to the communities, 2) they educate the communities on tenants' rights and protections, and 3) they target groups that can benefit from the services and resources they provide. Regarding this last component, as discussed above, AOs and PILOs have been particularly active at targeting communities through social media during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, there has been little control over how people access the information they need, as well as the materials they retrieve via social media. For example, some PILOs noticed that they were interacting with a wider audience than usual, including individuals outside of the geographical areas they usually target. Michelle from SAJE observed,

We primarily focus in the City of L.A. and South Central, but now we've been getting folks from—we've gotten folks from—the Inland Empire, Riverside, all over the

county. I mean, we still help out the folks where they're calling from, even though we don't have a lot of knowledge on what their tenant protections are because of the city. We do know, like, if you live in a city, we don't really know what your tenant protections are, but this is what the county protections are, because we know what the county and state rights protections are. (Personal interview, Michelle, July 17, 2020)

In this statement, the challenge for organizations conducting social media outreach efforts is made clear: they are reaching people outside of their normal jurisdictions who they are not trained to help. This can be problematic, as assisting tenants outside of the City of Los Angeles requires having knowledge of different legal protections.

While outreach efforts have proven quite challenging for all AOs and PILOs since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the organizations have been able to have some outreach success via the virtual options discussed above. Additionally, some have continued to do community outreach by dropping flyers and information at tenants' home doors and by using mobile phones to contact tenants by phone or by text to provide information about upcoming virtual workshops or clinics. Moreover, the majority of the organizations' websites have information and links to virtual workshops available to tenants to learn about their rights and protections during the pandemic, as well as to offer them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

Empowering Tenants

The outreach efforts mentioned above have also led to greater education about existing tenants' rights and protections for renters. AOs and PILOs educate tenants of their rights wherever they meet them. For instance, paralegals managing an eviction case will explain to a client what protections and defenses they have to fight against their landlord through the legal system. Another example is when a *promotora* (health promoter) visits a tenant's home, performs an inspection, and teaches the tenant about harmful chemicals

contained in cleaning supplies, such as those found in Fabuloso or Cloro,⁴⁵ after which they might suggest the tenant use less dangerous cleaning products. For AOs and PILOs, there is always an opportunity to educate tenants in any situation to promote healthier homes, to reduce poverty and homelessness, and to prevent any kind of abuse from landlords.

There is overlap between AO and PILO outreach, education, and empowerment. Educating tenants on their rights leads tenants to feel more empowered and confident regarding making a decision or taking the next step when dealing with landlord-tenant issues. One Public Counsel lawyer, Jennifer , described what it means to educate a tenant when they get a 60-day notice to move out, but they do not know where to go:

Well, sometimes it's just about informing people about their legal rights so that they are empowered to know what decisions to make [...]. It's that kind of thing about basically empowering people by explaining the situation to them in a way that is particular to them, because it's very hard to sift through all this information if you're doing research online [...]. I'm a lawyer; I practice in this area; I'm looking at this notice and I'm saying it's not legal under this new law so you don't have to worry, basically. That's, I think, a big part of what the pre-litigation services are: [it] is really providing competent legal advice that tenants can rely on in order to make decisions about what to do. (Personal interview, Jennifer, February 27, 2020)

Offering such legal advice before a tenant's situation becomes a legal case (i.e., an eviction case or an UD) that would need to be handled before a judge allows the tenant to know what they can do at that juncture. For instance, a lawyer might inform their client what a notice to vacate means, which might give the tenant some assurance that they do not need to move out immediately without a justified legal reason. This type of "pre-litigation" information on tenants' rights is often done through the legal clinics offered by the PILOs.

⁴⁵ In my interview with a health promoter at the Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, it was noted how it is an aspect of Latinx culture to clean homes with products with strong odors because going into someone's house smelling these products gives people the feeling that the house is "clean." The Esperanza Community Housing Corporation teaches people about the possible harmful effects of using such cleaning products in their homes, including asthma and skin allergies.

Additionally, some AOs that do not have lawyers on staff sometimes provide workshops with more of a self-help approach. Michelle from SAJE clarified,

We're not a service provider. This workshop is more so self-help. We provide the information, the guidance, but the purpose of it is to not only help the community but also guide them and empower them to take the proper steps that are needed in order to resolve their issue. (Personal interview, Michelle, July 17, 2020)

Organizations that perform community outreach and that organize tenants see the real value of educating renters of their rights. Here, Julio), a tenant organizer from ICLC observed,

We empower people, and they, in turn, go out and help their friends and their neighbors by providing that same information. You give them that confidence, like, "Look, I did, and I stood up for my rights. Look, this is what the outcome is. You should do the same." So ... so that's one of the most important things we do is actually empowering the tenants out there, because we can only do so much. We have tenants out there, empowering each other—that ... that, you know, goes a long way. (Personal Interview, Julio, July 15, 2020)

From this statement, we understand that the tenant organizer sees the impact of guiding and informing tenants of their rights, but then also having them share that knowledge with those around them.

There are different elements to the empowerment resulting from organizations educating renters. According to Rogers et al. (1997), there is a three-pronged framework for understanding empowerment in general. The authors state that the three dimensions involve "self-esteem—self-efficacy, where an individual has the optimism and control over the future," (p. 1045) the second is the feeling of power or feeling less powerless, and the last is harnessing the anger into action that is observed in community activism (p. 1045). Although the present study did not measure the concept of empowerment, through the interviews I conducted, staff from several organizations observed seeing the act of

“empowerment” take place among tenants through education, which then stirs them into action.⁴⁶ The organizations’ outreach efforts and the education tenants receive from them indicate inside strategies within communities to achieve small victories in each struggling tenant’s life.

Advocacy Coalitions

AOs, PILOs, and LATU have come together to form coalitions to make large-scale impacts and policy changes within Los Angeles. There were individuals whom I interviewed that discussed how some tenants choose to participate in the efforts promoted by these organizations. In general, advocacy coalitions are a “mechanism for groups of individual policy participants to aggregate their resources and expertise to increase their influence in mapping their preferences into public policies” (Weible, et al., 2020, p. 1055). Building such coalitions is a common mechanism to mobilize individuals at multiple levels and to coordinate among different actors and organizations toward a specific goal (Nicholls, 2003).

Although this study did not seek to identify advocacy coalitions, discussions about these types of coalitions did occasionally come up during the interviews, as well as during the content analysis of the newspaper articles and websites, which highlighted several campaign efforts. For instance, Proposition 10 became a major grassroots effort in 2018, mobilizing thousands of volunteers to expand rent control across all of California, but it was decisively rejected by the voters in the fall of that year. Although the coalition was

⁴⁶ Later in the chapter, I discuss how these concepts fit into the PADM.

ultimately not victorious, one LATU member, Walt Senterfitt, expressed it as a positive win for those who were involved in the mobilization effort:

Through this campaign, support for rent control has expanded far beyond tenant activists, to include the Democratic Party, the California Federation of Labor, and hundreds of other civic organizations. We go into 2019 with a much broader coalition and tens of thousands of fired-up tenants who want some relief. (Senterfitt, as quoted in the Los Angeles Times, November 7, 2018)

Another tenant rights' campaign, the Right to Counsel campaign, started that same year. It emerged as a result of the rising eviction cases that courts hear every year. The goal was for the County of Los Angeles to provide more opportunities for tenants to receive free legal counseling by providing them more financial support within the court system. With the pandemic increasing the city's housing crisis, Los Angeles adopted a plan on August 26, 2020, to ask LAHCID to create a COVID-19 Emergency Eviction Defense Program and to allocate \$10 million to it (Reyes, 2020).

An additional effort that has occurred during the pandemic has been the Cancel Rent & Mortgages campaign that the coalition has been trying to get approved at both the city and state levels. As part of this effort, members of LATU and other supporters mobilized a socially distant protest in front of the Los Angeles mayor's residence, driving and honking their cars in support of the measure. Additionally, the most successful social campaign effort during the pandemic has been the StayHousedLA.org initiative. This is a website that connects tenants with useful information about their rights, legal assistance, and virtual workshops and legal clinics. This particular type of collaborative effort is unique in that it has brought Los Angeles County government officials, legal service providers, and tenant organizers together to help tenants remain in their homes and reduce homelessness.

So, what are the organizational strategies employed to assist tenants with their actions (RQ1B), and what is the social movement structure for tenant's rights (RQ1C)? This study identified four strategies that organizations employ to assist tenants when they act on their landlord-tenant issues: outreach efforts, education, coalitions, and campaigns. Taken together, these strategies reveal a social movement structure of interconnection and coordination among the AOs, PILOs, and LATU, especially in terms of coalitions and campaigns. This movement is not just city-based but regional, since these organizations have mobilized not only for the tenants within the City of Los Angeles but also for those in the county and throughout California. This is a growing movement, but its full breadth, because it stretches beyond the borders of the City of Los Angeles, is outside of the scope of the present study.

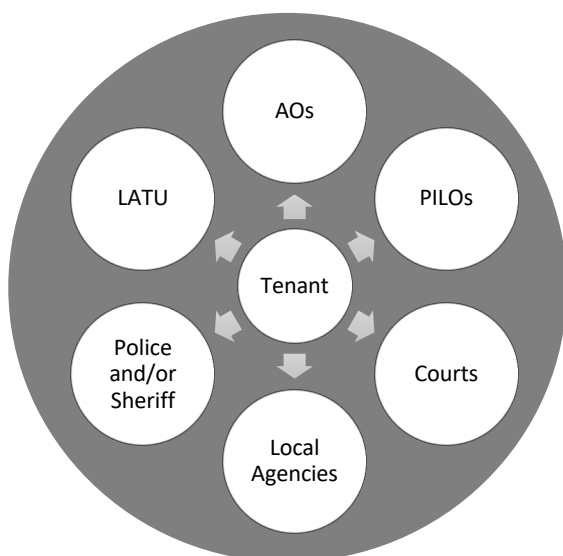
Organizations Influence on Tenants' Actions

Research question 1 (RQ1) asked how organizations influence tenants to act on their landlord-tenant issues. From my interviews with organizations, I learned that some tenants are involved in efforts like calling members of the L.A. City Council, writing letters to the city, attending protests, and holding press conferences. When considered from the tenants' point of view, there are two general ways that tenants could be influenced by the organizational infrastructure and the regional tenants' movement—directly and indirectly. Directly, in that each of the entities provides information and resources that require tenants to have contact, whether in person; via phone, email, or text; or virtually. This form of interaction could also be considered a kind of social interaction: the people that tenants might interact with—lawyers, court clerks, or professional community organizers—might be from institutions or entities that have the resources the tenants seek. Secondly, tenants

are also connected with the organizational infrastructure indirectly, since these entities, especially AOs, PILOs, and LATU, mobilize for stronger renters’ rights and protections through advocacy, even though the tenants might or might not ultimately benefit from these mobilizing efforts. Figure 4.2 below shows the number of entities with whom tenants in the City of Los Angeles could interact if landlord-tenant issues arise. In addition, it also shows how a social movement structure advocating for tenants through the advocacy coalitions surrounds the tenant and the entities affected. This is an indirect relationship because some tenants may not participate actively or may not be personally involved in the movement. As seen in Figure 4.2, clearly, tenants have many entities with whom they may interact directly (i.e., in-person, over the phone, or virtually) when seeking help for their housing issues. At the same time, while some tenants will be aware of these activities, they will also be interacting indirectly with the broader housing movement through the advocacy coalitions and campaigns and through the strategies used by the organizations to advocate for greater tenant protections (see the shaded area below).

Figure 4.2

Tenants’ Interactions with the Organizational and Social Movement Infrastructure



Landlord-Tenant Relationships

This section describes the general context of landlord-tenant relationships. Specifically, here, I discuss four aspects of such relationships: how rental units are managed, the major conflicts that can arise between landlords and tenants, the resources landlords use to help them with the problems they face with tenants, and the key regulations that make landlord-tenant relationships challenging. This section is based on secondary data collected, such as websites, pamphlets, and handbooks, that included information on landlord-tenant regulations and interviews with landlords, organizations, and tenants.

Who Manages Rental Units and What is Managed?

Since this study focused on individual tenants, it is important to characterize who the tenants typically interact with when a problem arises in an apartment they rent. Sometimes a tenant might not know their landlord personally; instead, their contact person might be a manager who lives in the building or property management company (PMC) staff. Additionally, sometimes the name of the person or company that a tenant pays their rent to might not be their landlord, but instead, a PMC that the landlord has hired to take care of the rent and the maintenance of the apartments. Nevertheless, the interactions and the relationships a tenant has with the agent who represents their landlord play a crucial role in helping us better understand how tenants act on their housing concerns.⁴⁷

All landlords have legal responsibilities under landlord-tenant law. There are several major responsibilities that each landlord has, but how these responsibilities are

⁴⁷ From this point forward, I occasionally use the word “landlord” as a generic term for landlord, PMC, property manager, or property agent, unless specifically noted.

carried out vary from one residential building to another. Almost without exception, landlords implicitly or explicitly understand that they are business owners, their tenants are their clients, and their rental units are their assets. Thus, the landlord is responsible for taking care of and protecting their asset. Doing so requires that landlords keep up with the maintenance and the necessary repairs, as well as with the payments and accounting. Table 4.5 below summarizes the major responsibilities a landlord has.

Table 4.5

Landlord's Responsibilities

Responsibility	Description of Task
Prepare legal rental agreement	Contractual agreement that outlines landlords' and tenants' responsibilities
Disclose what is legally required	Can include mold threat, lead-based paint disclosure, and what utility or utilities the tenant must pay
Provide a habitable unit for the duration of tenancy (implied warranty of habitability)	Keep up with building, housing, and health and safety codes and make any necessary repairs
Respect tenant's privacy	Twenty-four-hour notice required whenever landlord or landlord's agent needs to enter for repairs (also known as the right of entry)
Pay mortgage	Make monthly payments as per the legal agreement between the property owner and their bank
Maintain insurance	Usually required by lenders before providing the owner with a loan
Pay utilities	Pay the utilities as agreed to in the landlord-tenant lease
Comply with antidiscrimination laws	Adhere to regulations such as the Fair Housing Act (FHA), the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), and the landlord's right to enter
Follow state and local rent regulations	Can include late fees or termination of lease for the nonpayment of rent by the tenant or the disregard of rent-control rules by the owner
Follow security deposit rules	E.g., California landlords can charge up to two months' rent as a security deposit if the apartment is unfurnished or three months' rent if the apartment is furnished
Cannot retaliate against the tenant	California law does not allow landlords to raise the rent illegally or to evict tenants without just cause

Follow legal procedures for tenancy termination or eviction	California state and local laws are very specific regarding how a landlord is allowed to proceed with a termination or an eviction, such as providing a notice to rent or quit
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Note. Adapted from Nolo (2013) and State of California Department of Consumer Affairs (2010).

The above table informs us that the business of owning and maintaining a residential property includes various responsibilities. Depending on how much time a landlord has to manage the apartments they rent, as well as the location of the apartments relative to where they live, a landlord may choose to manage their rental property themselves, have a management team that includes managers and contractual maintenance repair workers, or hire a fee manager—PMCs.⁴⁸

From my interviews with landlords and PMCs, I found there are several reasons why a landlord might hire a fee manager. Some landlords hire a PMC because they do not want to manage the day-to-day operations and maintenance of the property themselves, because they may live far away from their rental apartment building, or because they might be unable to manage the building for a variety of other reasons, such as health reasons. Whatever the reason or reasons, a landlord will hire a PMC, which then takes over many of the landlord’s responsibilities, such as taking requests for repairs and receiving monthly rent payments. Sometimes a PMC will also handle the tough conversations with tenants that the landlord does not want to have and will help to maintain a peaceful relationship between the landlord and her or his tenants. Thus, PMCs can play different roles in the landlord-tenant relationship, with some acting as mediators, facilitators, and communicators between landlords and tenants. Whatever their exact role, PMCs are generally hired to handle the landlords’ grunt work, and because of this, a PMC has a

⁴⁸ Landlords pay a fee to PMCs to manage their properties.

fiduciary responsibility to their client, the landlord. Richard, a White man in his 60s, whose PMC manages several multifamily apartments under LARSO, stated, “it’s the highest duty of law. It’s like a doctor-patient, psychiatrist-patient, dentist-patient, lawyer-client. It’s a pretty strict duty. So, under that duty, we are to maximize the owner’s revenues as one factor” (Personal interview, Richard, July 7, 2020).

Since owning and managing property assets are a landlord’s responsibility, it is a type of work that cannot be taken lightly, since there are many laws and regulations in place that dictate how landlords are to maintain their properties. Paul, a White man in his early 40s, whose PMC manages the units of about 100 owners—most of them mom-and-pop landlords—explained the situation this way:

Part of being a property manager is being able to stop on a dime and say, I am making it personal and I need to take a step back. What’s fair? What’s honest? What’s the right thing? But for a mom-and-pop owner, the reason why they hire a PMC is a one-tenant-problem perceived. The owner doesn’t know the laws, the tenant is being threatening, and they need an unbiased third party now. Yes, I’m a property manager: the landlord hires me, and I do it, but as a property manager. I know tenants have rights and I know landlords have rights and they know what those rights are. I also know what’s fair. I know what is right and what is reasonable and I know what should the landlord exercise—his right—and that the tenant exercise their right. It can lead to a very stressful situation for both. So my job is to set expectations for the landlord when they take it personal [...]. What I do tell owners is you can’t treat property management as a hobby. It’s really a franchise. (Personal interview, Paul, July 10, 2020)

PMCs, depending on the quality of service they provide the landlords, can help diffuse a lot of the problems with tenants to reduce or avoid many headaches. Richard, a PMC agent who manages thousands of units for a dozen landlords, explained that the law states “you can’t be an absentee landlord and ignore everything and you don’t know what’s going on in the unit” (Personal interview, Richard, July 7, 2020). Clearly, it is important that landlords ensure their assets are receiving the constant care they require.

In addition, many landlords take personal pride in their buildings. Whatever their reasons for owning a rental property in the first place—perhaps for retirement income or for increased cash flow or for some other purpose—landlords can occasionally become too emotionally involved when problems arise with tenants. It is for this reason that a PMC is especially helpful to have because a PMC will not take problems with tenants personally since the building is not their own. However, because PMCs act as a sort of “middle ground” between a landlord and their tenants, landlords sometimes perceive the PMCs’ role as siding with the tenants rather than with them, which is one reason why landlords might prefer to manage their buildings on their own. In addition, hiring a PMC to manage a property might not be financially feasible, especially for mom-and-pop landlords, who may only have a few units—or even just a single unit—to manage, and thus, they opt to manage the unit or units themselves.

Resources Los Angeles Landlords Use

Given the immense list of business and legal responsibilities landlords have, there are various resources that landlords use to keep up with the ever-changing landlord-tenant laws. The need for these resources has been especially important during the pandemic, when a number of new regulations were put in place. Thus, besides available self-help and do-it-yourself books, landlords can learn about their legal responsibilities from websites produced by city, state, and federal agencies, such as those put out by the Housing and Urban Development, California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, and LAHCID for the City of Los Angeles. In addition, the Housing Rights Center, which is a PILO, provides workshops and certifications for landlords to learn about discrimination and accommodations for disabled people. Additionally, being a member of a landlord

association, such as the Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles (AGGLA) or the California Apartment Association (CAA), allows landlords to have immediate access to a wide variety of resources. Some landlords and property managers interviewed for this study shared that the benefits of being a member of AGGLA have been to receive weekly updates about changes to regulations, to attend seminars to educate themselves on housing regulations, to learn about proper repairs, to understand the lawful way to provide notices to tenants, to learn how to use AGGLA's screening system; and to have access to legal counsel for difficult problems with tenants. AGGLA and similar associations are not only intended to benefit individual landlords but also PMCs, as well.

Landlord-Tenant Relationship Conflicts

Understanding that landlords have many responsibilities to meet, it is likewise important to point out that tenants have responsibilities of their own in this relationship. The four major responsibilities for tenants, which are often addressed in lease agreements, are as follows: 1) paying the monthly rent; 2) taking reasonable care of their unit and common areas, such as hallways; 3) notifying the landlord when issues about the property arise or when they are not able to pay the rent on time; and 4) paying for any repairs for damages done to the property by the tenant, the tenant's family or guests, or their pets (Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010). When these tenant responsibilities are not met, conflicts can arise.

When considering the responsibilities of both landlords and tenants, it is evident that good communication and good problem-solving skills are crucial when conflicts of any kind arise between the two parties. Since landlords and tenants hold contractual agreements, the contract can be broken if either side breaks the terms of the lease. Even

then, when the agreement is broken, how the situation proceeds from there depends on a lot of factors, such as the kind of relationship the landlord and tenant has (e.g., whether it a trusting relationship), how each side's goals and desires are communicated (e.g., whether the tenant wants to continue to live in the unit and pay the rent), and how their legal rights are exercised (e.g., whether the tenant or landlord needs to seek legal counsel). For landlords and PMCs who have managed multiple properties over many years, they have learned that their approaches to maintaining good relationships with their tenants matter. To reduce potential conflicts with tenants, some Landlords use strategies, such as running background checks or interview prospective tenants, to build a good rapport with their tenants.

Some of the landlords interviewed for this study expressed several strategies they use to attract good, responsible tenants. Lisa, an immigrant from Eastern Europe who manages a duplex, stated, "you attract what you show," noting that when you present an apartment, and you see a tenant fall "in love" with the place, they are likely to care for the property as if it were their own and are unlikely to cause major damage (Personal interview, Lisa, August 8, 2020). Another landlord, who feared having tenants who would not pay their rent in a timely manner, conducted extensive background checks and interviews with possible tenants to ensure that they would be able to pay their rent on time and not to cause problems (Personal interview, David, August 12, 2020). Overall, my interviews with the landlords and PMCs showed that all have the goal of having the right kind of landlord-tenant relationship that brings the least amount of conflict with tenants. As Paul put it, "the tenant's right is to have a good-faith conversation with the landlord" (Personal interview, Paul, July 10, 2020). For his part, Richard, one of the landlords quoted

above, stated that he wishes to see all his tenants “pay rent [...], don't bother [other] tenants, [...] and don't abuse the property” (Personal interview, Richard, July 7, 2020). The landlords, of course, are motivated to maintain their assets and to make some profit from their businesses, so most have the goal of having good relationships with their tenants, leading to beneficial outcomes for all.

Unfortunately, the findings that repeatedly emerged from the data indicated that some landlords feel they have “bad renters” and some tenants feel they have “bad landlords.”⁴⁹ Either party can decide not to approach their problems pragmatically or may choose to exercise their rights in a malicious or aggressive manner. How often these types of approaches occur is impossible to calculate; however, there are two main bodies of regulations this study revealed that can provide insights into why landlords and tenants might be at odds with one another. These regulations are discussed in the following section.

Regulations Addressing Landlord-Tenant Relationship Conflicts

As noted in the literature review chapter, California has been categorized as a state with numerous pro-renter regulations and several organizations and landlords interviewed for this study agreed with this assessment. Moreover, as was mentioned repeatedly by both AOs and landlords, there are three overarching bodies of regulations that currently regulate the majority of landlord-tenant relationships and where most conflicts arise. The first two regulations discussed below have been around longer than the other two, meaning before the pandemic began, while the last two regulations were put in

⁴⁹ The idea that out of all landlords, approximately 5% are bad was repeatedly expressed during the interviews with the organizations, landlords, and tenants. This same 5% figure was used for bad tenants, as well.

place during the pandemic. The regulations the AOs and landlords discussed are the “implied warranty of habitability,” LARSO, and the two temporary eviction moratoriums.

Implied Warranty of Habitability

Every landlord in California who leases an apartment to a tenant has an “implied warranty of habitability” clause.⁵⁰ The decision from a California Supreme Court case, *Green v. Superior Court* (1974), stated that under the “implied warranty of habitability,” all landlords are responsible for repairing any conditions that seriously affect a rental unit’s habitability unless the condition needing repair was caused by the tenant or the tenant’s family, guests, or pets (Department of Consumer Affairs, 2010). For the landlord, this also means that they must comply with California’s building and housing code standards. For some of them, maintaining a unit in a “livable” condition is challenging when they observe that their tenants are not cooperating with them to fix the problems in the units, such as not notifying the landlords of necessary repairs or not allowing them inside the unit to make repairs. David , a Jewish man in his 50s who has a management team for several of his buildings, each with about 30 units, located near downtown Los Angeles, stated:

So the warranty of habitability says that landlords are responsible for everything and you’re guilty until proven innocent. So if a tenant has bugs and rodents in their unit, you can’t prove it that they brought it because the bed bugs don’t have a little sign on their back saying the tenant brought me here. So you would never be able to win in court. (Personal interview, David, August 12, 2020)

David also shared with me that rodents are the most difficult pest to control, especially when tenants do not assist in the coordination of having pest control workers enter their apartments for fumigation.

⁵⁰ This applies to both written and oral agreements.

Since it is illegal for landlords to retaliate against tenants, landlords are motivated to establish a good paper trail to document how their responsibilities have been carried out. Still, there are some landlords who do not perform adequate or proper repairs, and therefore, problems in their housing units might continue. The landlord Richard shared some of his observations not only as a property manager but also as a real estate speaker for AGGLA workshops:

The landlords also fail to comply. So the mom-and-pops, they'll bring in their cousin Billy to do the repairs on the weekend. He's unlicensed. Uninsured. Doesn't know what he's doing, and they make repairs, [...] but it wasn't done properly. So the landlord gets pissed off and complains, "Yeah, I did everything." But it wasn't done well, and that goes to their lack of sophistication about how to manage and maintain their property. (Personal interview, Richard, July 7, 2020)

The "lack of sophistication" aspect that Richard mentioned could imply various things about how landlords approach the business of renting units, as well as the motivations of some landlords to choose to have their units repaired cheaply, such as trying to make the most profit as possible.

Rent Stabilization Ordinance

As mentioned earlier, landlords who rent a unit to a tenant under LARSO cannot evict the tenant for almost any reason unless the tenant has not been paying their rent. Most landlords interviewed for this study told me that they suspect that landlords rarely want to evict a tenant; rather, they simply want their tenants to pay their rent. However, even when a landlord files a UD in court for the nonpayment of rent, some landlords without legal representation could still lose their cases for not following California's procedures, even if they seem trivial. Florence, an African American, mom-and-pop

landlord who manages a couple of units by herself, explains her experience with evicting a tenant who did not pay their rent:

[...] those little things, like, how you serve a three-day notice to pay rent or quit, [or] what the amount is that you have to put on there, and if you put the wrong amount, you can actually lose the case. Different notices. Like, for example, you know, I lost the case because I didn't know that I had to serve them a copy of my permit that I have to renew every single year. You have to serve your tenants a copy of that. And I didn't know that. And I lost the case because I was honest and said, "No, I didn't serve my tenants." (Personal interview, Florence, August 12, 2020)

Thus, one small mishap could erode a landlord's attempt to evict a tenant. In such a case, the landlord and tenant would then have to continue on with their adversarial relationship with one another.

Besides making it difficult for landlords to evict tenants, another aspect of LARSO that adds to the pressure and can increase conflicts between landlords and tenants is the limited amount of rent that landlords are allowed to increase each year, which has been an average of 3% annually for the last 10 years.⁵¹ For many mom-and-pop landlords, this small annual increase might not be enough. For instance, if the rent for four units is \$1,000 each, then with an average 3% increase each year, that would be an additional \$1,440 in rent per year.⁵² However, when a large repair is needed, it could easily cost a couple of thousand dollars, which would then eat up any rent increase and put financial pressure on the landlord. One can see that this circumstance would be quite different for landlords who own a lot of units and who have funds earmarked for serious repairs. For mom-and-pop landlords, such small annual rent increases could prove quite challenging. Ultimately, this

⁵¹ See allowable rent increases from LARSO: https://LAHCID1a2.lacity.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/allowable_rent_increases_english.pdf?download=1

⁵² Richard advised that landlords not miss any of the annual rent increases because "you cannot retroactively go back and do it next year. So you have forever lost the ability to get that 3% increase" (Personal interview, Richard, July 7, 2020).

situation might affect not only them but also their tenants, since a landlord might prefer not to make adequate repairs or to choose cheaper options to save money, or, alternatively, to raise rents more than is legally allowed because their tenants might not know what is permissible under the law.

AB 3088, SB 91, and the Local Temporary Eviction Moratorium

The regulations AB 3088, SB 91, and the Local Temporary Eviction Moratorium are new policies that were put in place while I was conducting this study. The intent of these policies was to protect tenants from being evicted for not being able to pay their rent as a result of the pandemic. AB 3088 is a California state law that declares that landlords cannot evict tenants for not paying their rent during the period March 2020 through August 2020. For tenants to be protected by AB 3088, they must provide a declaration to their landlords notifying them of their inability to pay rent due to the pandemic. However, even though tenants cannot legally be evicted for nonpayment for this reason, they are still responsible for any unpaid amounts during the official repayment period, which is until August 31, 2021.

Another new law is SB 91. It protects tenants who were unable to pay their rent from September 2020 through June 2021. However, for tenants to avoid eviction under this new law, they not only must provide a declaration to their landlords but also pay at least 25% of their monthly rent during this period. The allotted repayment period for SB 91 ends August 31, 2021. Any unpaid rent can be converted to consumer debt and collected through small claims court.

Locally, the Los Angeles County Eviction Moratorium essentially extended the protection of AB 3088 through February 28, 2021. It was passed before AB 91 became law

in order to protect Los Angeles renters. Additionally, within the City of Los Angeles, Ordinance No. 186585 and Ordinance No. 186606 were passed to extend stronger protections; these ordinances do not allow landlords to evict tenants for allowable no-fault reasons, such as Ellis Act evictions for renovations and condominium conversions.

These multilayered regulations have made it harder for mom-and-pop landlords to manage their businesses, especially since many are dealing with tenants who are unable to pay their rent while the landlords must still pay building expenses like property maintenance, taxes, and insurance. Additionally, landlords are still expected to perform their professional landlord responsibilities, such as making building repairs when needed. For AO and PILO staff, the complex web of regulations has made it difficult for them to explain and counsel tenants, thus further increasing the chances of complicating the relationships between landlords and tenants.

Returning to the research questions addressed in this study, RQ2 asked how landlords and PMCs approach landlord-tenant issues. Given landlords' many business and legal responsibilities, their approaches vary greatly and can depend on a lot of different factors. As discussed above, within the City of Los Angeles, there are many regulations in place that protect a tenant from being evicted. These same legal protections make it challenging for landlords if issues arise with their tenants, especially when the tenants stop paying their rent.

I also asked what approaches landlords and PMCs take to address their issues (RQ2A). From my investigation, I learned that, for the most part, landlords want to have peaceful working relationships with their tenants with as few problems as possible. This is logical, as there are not many businesspeople who would want to have difficulties with

their clients. How the landlords achieve good relationships with their tenants varies by the landlord, from hiring a fee manager to managing the rental units with the assistance of a management team. Additionally, as discussed, there are also plenty of mom-and-pop landlords who manage their assets by themselves.

In RQ2B, I asked what resources landlords and PMCs use to help them navigate their concerns? The results of my investigation indicate that they use various resources, including information provided by state, county, and local agencies on policies that regulate landlord-tenant agreements, landlord responsibilities, and how to maintain their properties in line with housing and health codes. Additionally, some landlords also choose to join a landlord association, which can provide them with numerous resources, including workshops, tenant screening methods, advocacy, and legal counsel, all of which are aimed at improving their businesses and making it easier to maintain their legal responsibilities.

Tenants' Perceptions and Responses

This section of the chapter discusses the study's findings regarding how low-income tenants perceive their housing concerns, as well as what explains how tenants respond to those concerns. Based on the adapted PADM of this dissertation (see Figure 3.1 on page 67), this section covers the organizational strategies and resources available to tenants in the City of Los Angeles. These strategies and resources provide the context to help explain how the concepts "social cues" and "information sources" elucidate the ways in which tenants perceive their problems, as well as how a tenant's perception relates to the action she or he takes. In the following subsection, I provide a discussion of the tenant characteristics, the housing characteristics—environmental cues in PADM—and the three

concepts found in the PADM process, namely, threat perceptions, protective action perceptions, and stakeholder perceptions.

Environmental Cues: Substandard Housing Conditions

Geographically, the study's tenant participants lived in apartments scattered around the South Central Los Angeles, Mid-City, West L.A., and San Pedro areas of the City of Los Angeles (see page 87 for a map of the approximate locations where the tenant participants lived). The tenants' buildings were built between 1901 and 1967. Likely due to the small sample of buildings I found no discernable patterns between the age of a tenant's buildings and the quality of the housing conditions. For example, there were some tenants living in older buildings who did not have apartments in substandard condition. Thirty-seven out of the 54 tenants I interviewed lived in one-bedroom apartments, studio apartments, or rooms within large houses⁵³ (see Table 4.6 on the next page for these tenants by size of units). Twenty-nine of these 37 tenants lived with children, with an average of 3.4 people per rental unit; since most of the units are small, this means that the homes are generally overcrowded (defined as units with more than 1 person per room). Moreover, because these units are under LARSO, the tenants have had the benefit of controlled rent increases (less than 5% each year). Controlled rents most likely contributed to the relatively long tenancy of the tenants; approximately 43% of them had been living in the same home for more than 10 years. Additionally, because of the limited annual rent increases, the longer

⁵³ According to an attorney from one of the PILOs I interviewed, under LARSO, the units where tenants rent one or more rooms in a house (e.g., in a boarding house), even when the tenants share the kitchen and bathroom, qualify as a LARSO unit.

the tenancy, the less the rent would be compared to average market rates (see Table 4.7 below for the average rents for different tenant time frames).

Table 4.6

Number of Participants Living in Each Unit Size

Number of Participants	Unit Size
25	1 bed, 1 bath
11	2 bed, 1 bath
6	3+ bed, 1+ bath
4	Room
8	Studio

Table 4.7

Number of Tenants Living in Apartments and Average Rent

Number of Participants	Time in Apartment (years)	Average Rent
12	1 to 5	\$1,225
19	6 to 10	\$1,193
10	11 to 15	\$1,010
6	16 to 20	\$1,060
7	21 to 25+	\$1,085

Housing Conditions and Landlord-Neglect Threats

Some tenants interviewed for this study perceived their housing conditions as a threat that needed action to remedy. RQ3 posed the question, “How do low-income tenants in Los Angeles perceive threats, whether explicit or implicit, in landlord-tenant relations?” To address this question, I queried tenants about their approaches to housing threats (RQ3A) and asked about the resources they used to help them navigate their housing issues (RQ3B). The six overarching tenant interview questions aimed at answering these

questions concerned their description of: 1) the physical conditions inside their apartments and in the common areas during the duration of their tenancies; 2) how they had found out about the problems in their dwelling; 3) who their landlords were; 4) any problems with their landlords; (5) what their experiences were after notifying their landlords about problems; and 6) whether they had sought help or received information from a lawyer, organization, city agency, or tenant union, and if so, what those experiences were like⁵⁴ (see Appendix E for the “Interview Protocol for Low-Income Tenants” for the specific questions I posed to the renters, in both English and Spanish).

The data and analysis showed that the tenants usually recognized a problem in their homes through observation or through a human sense other than sight. For instance, the tenant participants would often say something like, “I was cleaning the bathroom” or “I was cleaning the kitchen” and then noticed that water was leaking underneath a sink. Or, while showering, some saw mold growing on the walls, or they could smell shower mildew. For those tenants who dealt with pests in the past, some mentioned that the sight of roaches frightened them, or that they had to keep all of their food in the refrigerator so that the pests could not get access to it. Pertaining to common areas, some tenants noted that they smelled something bad, such as the smell of trash in a parking area that came in through an apartment window, or that the floor squeaked when they walked into or out of their buildings. There were also some tenant participants who discussed problems they had with their neighbors before providing detailed stories about their housing conditions.⁵⁵ When I

⁵⁴ These questions also supported research questions RQ4, RQ4A, RQ4B, and RQ4C.

⁵⁵ There was insufficient data to see how often this occurred or how landlords were involved. Moreover, landlords are not responsible for responding to problems between tenants, even though they sometimes choose to get involved.

asked each tenant who had had a problem what they had done about any of their housing and neighbor problems, most told me that they had notified or complained to the building manager, the agent representing the landlord, or the landlord her- or himself. Tenants notified their landlords in several ways, orally in person or over the phone or in writing via text, email, or letter. Others described building protocols to notify their landlords or building managers such as filling out a form in an office building or through an online form and submitting it.

I tabulated and coded (several cycles) the data to develop a list of the housing conditions identified by tenants and the responses of their landlords to these issues. The housing problems were sorted into four categories: normal wear and tear, some neglect, substandard, and very substandard (see Table 4.8 on the next page).⁵⁶ This table indicates the worse the housing conditions—from normal wear and tear to very substandard—the less responsive the landlord was to the tenant’s housing problems—from responsive and timely repairs to total neglect. These observations could be explained by various factors, including the level of communication between tenants and landlords or agents of the landlords.

Overall, the tenants’ experiences were diverse, with some tenants having had to deal with extreme situations. Generally, tenants who had “normal wear and tear” conditions at home reported that their landlords, for the most part, responded in a timely manner. These

⁵⁶ Note that tenants were asked to describe about the problems they had while living in their current unit. How landlords responded to problems sometimes differed over time because of a change of landlord or manager. Among the 54 tenant participants, 21 stated that they had had two or three different landlords during their tenancy.

tenant participants rarely complained about how long it took for their landlords to address an issue, or that the approach the landlord took was inadequate.

Table 4.8

Housing Conditions and Landlord Actions

Number of Tenants	Category	Housing Condition as per Tenants	Tenant's Report of Landlord's Action Regarding Repairs Needed
16	Normal wear and tear	Electric or plumbing problems (e.g., clogged kitchen sink).	Responded in a timely manner, and repairs were done adequately.
8	Some neglect	Plumbing or electric problems; aging/wearing of furnishings, walls, or doors (e.g., clogged bathtub or kitchen sink, paint peeling from the walls).	Responded in a timely manner, but repairs were done slowly or were delayed.
14	Substandard	Rodent infestation or mold problems; plumbing or electric problems; aging/wearing of furnishings, walls, or doors.	Timely or untimely responses and/or requests were ignored. Landlord neglects to repair and/or makes inadequate repairs.
16	Very substandard	Mental or physical health issues from indoor environmental conditions (e.g., serious rodent infestation; critical mold problems; severe plumbing or electric problems; very bad aging/wearing of furnishings, walls, or doors).	No response and/or persistent neglect regarding needed repairs from landlord. Sometimes nothing is done unless the landlord is notified by a local agency to comply with repairs.

The data showed a general pattern of tenant behaviors when tenants discussed a communication problem with their landlord and their responses. Specifically, those tenants who lived in the category of “substandard” and “very substandard” had to deal with landlords who neglected problems the tenants raised multiple times and were unsuccessful at getting the problems resolved. Eventually, some of those tenants took steps of reporting

the issue to a city agency or seeking help outside of their own circle of contacts (i.e., family and friends). As one example, Maria, is a single mother with two small children who lived in a one-bedroom apartment; she is a Mexican immigrant who speaks some English. Maria struggled to get the landlord to replace the carpeting in her apartment despite her concern that it was causing asthma symptoms for one of her children. She also battled to get the attention of the property manager to fix a bathroom issue. She told me her story in the following way:

What happened is that I tell him [the agent of the landlord] the problem so that the problem does not get bigger. So I tried to get him to come. I think what happened once the roof fell off—from the bathroom, from where we bathed[...]—I told him, and they delayed to come. The neighbors above could see through the hole, so we couldn't bathe. So some acquaintances put a plastic on it so that they would not look down [...]. And then water leaked through the bathroom walls, and it was pure hot water. I told him that the apartment was very small and that the heat was locked in, that it was already an emergency, and the person whom he sent scolded me and told me why I had not reported it since the beginning. I told them that I did report it, but they ignored me. (Personal interview, Maria, July 10, 2020)

Maria also reported that she had been attempting to contact the building manager but that he did not respond until “the roof of the bathroom had fallen.” Eventually, when she learned of her child’s asthma during a doctor’s visit, the doctor suggested she have the landlord get rid of the carpeting in her apartment, which was the same carpet she had had for the 20 years she had lived there. Since the indoor environment was no longer healthy for her child, she sought outside help. Eventually, she learned about Inquilinos Unidos, an AO, which then directed her to seek help from BASTA, Inc., a PILO, which helped her file a complaint with LAHCID and the City’s Health Department. However, at the time of our

interview, the landlord had yet to change the carpet, and because of the pandemic, she did not believe that anyone was going to come to her apartment to fix her issues.⁵⁷

I also interviewed tenants who had landlords who had responded to requests for repairs needing immediate attention but who ignored requests that did not require such pressing attention. For instance, Carla, an immigrant from a Central American country who lived in a one-bedroom apartment in an impoverished neighborhood with three small children, discussed how some plumbing problems she had had were resolved but that the manager was still ignoring other problems in her apartment, such as peeling paint and problematic kitchen cabinets that, in Carla's opinion, needed replacing. Additionally, in the common areas of her building, Carla said the stairs were also in need of repair. Part of our conversation unfolded as follows:

Carla: Well, I have told the manager, but she does nothing. Well, for example, I see that the steps are so cracked, right? And they thunder very badly when you are walking, when you are going down or up. So I told her that I was scared, and she didn't say anything to me. She told me that, "Well, I can hardly do anything; the owners nowadays do not fix the apartments, and it is rare when they fix something."

Interviewer: Okay, so you say that she does nothing. When she doesn't do anything, what do you do next?

Carla: Well, nothing. What am I going to do? I guess, just leave it like that. (Personal interview, Carla, July 15, 2020)

As Carla discussed, she received the information that the landlords were unlikely to fix any problems, and thus, she decided not to take any further action. However, many other tenants who had unresponsive landlords chose to fix the problems themselves. As Michelle from SAJE observed,

⁵⁷ One AO staff member noted that carpeting is one of the most frequent repair requests that go unfulfilled. Landlords are not legally required to change carpets because they are considered cosmetic.

The pattern that I've experienced, and that I've seen with the cases that I've taken on mostly have to do ... I feel like it's more cultural, like I mentioned, like, the humility. They don't want to cause trouble. They just don't want to stir the pot. With the mom-and-pop landlords, that's a tricky one, because the tenants are aware that they're mom-and-pop or they may not have the funding to do repairs. That's why they're also like, "I know that they can't do it, so I take matters on my own. I make the repairs myself." (Personal interview, Michelle, July 17, 2020)

Among the tenant participants who took matters into their own hands and made the repairs themselves, a few of them have been reimbursed by their landlords. However, I learned that reimbursement is more the exception than the rule: most tenants have not been reimbursed for repairs they made that were the landlord's responsibility. Based on his experiences and observations of landlord neglect, Julio, the tenant organizer stated,

It's definitely a profit motive. A lot of landlords know that you need to keep the building up to code, which requires maintenance, and maintenance costs money. Because all these tenants tend to be long-term tenants, [...] as soon as the long-term tenant moves out, the owner will come renovate the unit, make it look really nice, and bring in someone that's going to be paying rent at market rate. So, they really just look at how much is the tenant paying rent and how much am I going to make. And if I don't make those repairs, how much money I'll save. But to me, I think the majority of the landlords don't want to make the repairs. It's all profit motive. There are some landlords who just don't care, or maybe like old people really just kind of have neglected the property. (Personal interview, Julio, July 15, 2020)

According to my research, the tenant organizer's opinion above is in line with what PMCs have seen among some landlords—that since tenants are long-term and paying less rent, the landlords are less motivated to make tenant-requested repairs and frequently neglect the maintenance and upkeep of the apartments until the tenant moves out.

Social Cues: Family and Neighbors

In considering the tenants' approaches to these threats (RQ3A), my data reveal that when tenants have had problems with their apartments or their landlords, the first people they have contacted have been their family members or neighbors. Typically, after

discussing the problem with friends or family, they would receive advice on how to act on their issue, which sometimes included being referred to a resource that might be able to help, such as a local community organization. In addition, given that the majority of the tenant participants had lost their jobs during the pandemic, many had turned to family or friends for financial help, as well, so that they could keep paying their rent.⁵⁸ Beyond family and friends, for those tenants who have not been able to pay their rent, they sought help elsewhere, such as from community organizations or food banks.

Information Sources: Schools, Social Media, and TV

In answering research question 3B, information sources are understood as resources that inform tenants of housing threats, as well as the possible protective actions they might take by utilizing various sources. It should be noted here that the manner in which the tenant participants heard about the present study counts as an information source, as well. Such referrals came via AOs, neighbors, friends, and social media.

Regarding when the tenants learned they had a housing problem and the resources they used, the data showed two consistent observations among the majority of participants. The first observation was the number of tenants who heard about the eviction moratorium and the rent subsidy program offered by LAHCID. Since the interviews for this study were conducted in the late summer and in the fall of 2020, and many of the participants had been staying at home without any work, many were worried about their inability to pay their rent. In all, 52 of the 54 tenant participants had heard about the temporary eviction moratorium and the rent subsidy offered by LAHCID. When I asked

⁵⁸ The majority of the Spanish-speaking tenant participants told me they had continued to pay their rent using their savings or by taking out personal loans from family or friends.

how they had heard about them, 13 said from a family member or coworker, 12 from LATU, 11 from TV, eight from social media—primarily Facebook—and eight from an AO in their community. Considering that a large proportion of the tenant participants had not previously heard about their housing rights, organizations that could help them, or resources that were available to them, the fact they received information about the eviction moratorium and the LAHCID rent subsidy demonstrates that Los Angeles County succeeded in spreading the word to protect renters from getting evicted as a result of the pandemic.

The second observation was that many mothers with young children in elementary school (12) had heard about some of the AOs and PILOs through their schools, either via flyers that were placed in the backpacks of their children or from teachers inviting them to attend workshops about their housing rights at school. Although these mothers were not sure if these workshops were organized by the organizations themselves, they did remember attending the workshops and learning about the various organizations they eventually sought help from.

Fear of Losing Their Homes

Following the adapted PADM framework, I asked what explains how tenants respond to their landlord-tenant issues (RQ4). The interviews clearly demonstrated that the fear of losing one's home was the largest and most frequently perceived threat expressed by all the tenants. This perception primarily came from two different problems the tenants faced: an inability to pay their rent and frequent landlord neglect and harassment.

Threat Perception: Inability to Pay Rent

At the time I was interviewing the tenant participants, the majority (43) had been unable to pay their rent for at least one month due to the loss of a job or income because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of those tenants who were unable to pay their rent, four were being harassed by their landlords for not paying their rent through pressure techniques or by threatening them with eviction. For many of the tenants, reaching out to me was the first time they had contacted someone for help outside of inner circle, such as family and friends. During the interviews, some tenants expressed how they had recently learned about community organizations and food banks for the very first time during the pandemic. While speaking with them, it was clear that the fear of losing their homes was certainly causing a lot of anxiety and depression, especially for those with children. Thus, this fear, driven by the lack of financial resources, prompted many tenants to act and to reach out for help anywhere they could get it.⁵⁹

Threat Perception: Landlord Neglect and Harassment

Some of the tenants I interviewed had experienced harassment from their landlords with varying degrees of intensity. Some expressed the fear of losing their homes because the landlords had been demanding the rent or because the landlords were “abusive” in their communications. In fact, a number of the immigrant tenants I spoke with would use the word “abusive” often when discussing communications with their landlords or property managers. For some, these adversarial relationships prompted them to ask for outside help. Although none of the tenants I interviewed expressed that their landlords had

⁵⁹ Some tenants told me they were grateful to be given a \$40.00 grocery gift card because they were running out of funds to pay for necessities, including food.

threatened to call Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Michelle told me that they had heard this kind of complaint quite often:

Harassment is a huge one, especially with the undocumented community. It's illegal for landlords to use your status as a way to harass them or to evict them, as well as using [phrases] like, "I'm going to call Child Services," and stuff like that. That's also illegal as a threat. (Personal interview, Michelle, July 17, 2020)

Even though it is illegal for a landlord to retaliate against a tenant, many of the tenants I interviewed were unaware that this behavior is not allowed. However, for the tenants who were being harassed by their landlords to the point where they were being forced out of their apartments, many had sought help from government agencies or PILOs. One tenant, Estela, who is undocumented, shared her own experiences with me. Estela has one child, and had been renting a room in a large house. Estela is fluent in English and Spanish, and she found help through LAHCID to exercise her rights as a tenant under LARSO:

We called and filed the complaint [with LAHCID] because the owner did come and, well, not just the one time—he's come multiple times, demanding all of the money that's owed to him, apparently, to this day. So we did have to open up a, you know, we had to file a complaint with them so that they can help us because since the first month [of not paying rent], you know, he was kind of harassing us—the owner for his money, you know. And then it's like, we told him, I said, "You know what this situation that we're in and it's unfortunate," I said. It is tough, but it's not like we haven't paid you the rent before this. And you know there's nothing we can do about it, you know. Like, we have to stay home; it's not like we don't want to go to work. It's, you know, it's the law. Everybody has to stay home right now. It's for our own health. (Personal interview, Estela, July 14, 2020)

Estela, who had been unable to pay her rent for a few months, called the Los Angeles County helpline, 211, which is how she learned about LAHCID. After contacting LAHCID, they informed her about PILOs available to help her with her situation. She was then able to speak to a lawyer and get free legal advice, as well as to learn more about her housing rights.

Some tenants I interviewed perceived that their landlords were plotting to evict them. Mario, for example, is a young member of LATU and lives in an apartment with two other roommates; he explained how he had been on a “rent strike” because of his inability to pay his rent, although he was not sure that his rent strike was working:

They [the landlords] are just trying to basically sell the [apartment building] to a developer who’s going to, you know, demolish it and make some, like, luxury condos. And so they can’t, you know. Like they’ve tried to just basically lie to us so many different ways and tell us that we know because we’re on month-to-month that we have to leave and that they’re being generous by, you know, offering us, like, one- or two-months’ rent for free towards the end of our lease, which I thought was true. I was like, well, I guess that ... that is them just being nice. And that, you know, it turns out they’re just ... they’re trying to get us out because they know they have not very much leverage when I actually know what I am entitled to. (Personal interview, Mario, September 28, 2020)

What Mario meant by “entitled to” was the amount of relocation assistance he and his roommates could receive because the landlord was trying to remove them out from the house for nonpayment of rent. Mario knowing his rights and having access to legal counsel through LATU had helped him navigate his conversations with the landlord’s lawyer.

Protective Action Perception

Overall, those tenants facing harassment who claimed to know their rights and the resources that are available to them said they have more support to face their fear of eviction head-on. However, I also interviewed some tenants who were afraid to seek help or who feared that the problem would become worse between them and the landlord if they reached out to others for assistance. These tenants perceived that the protective action of seeking outside help would not work in their situations. Sometimes they expressed that they wanted to avoid having the relationship with their landlord become worse than it already was, especially when the landlords had ignored their requests for

repairs. For example, Patricia, who was renting one unit in a duplex building, and whose daughter had encouraged her to participate and become a member of LATU, explained,

They [the Los Angeles Tenants Union] told me to complain to the city, but I tell them, "If I complain to the city about the landlord, we are all going to be worse off." And I say, "I'm going to be homeless. I'd rather stay that way, without saying anything to them." Better yet, I can manage with some fixes and cleaning. Yes, the house is fine. Right now, there is still humidity, because of the leaks. (Personal interview, Patricia, October 5, 2020)

Even when Patricia was made aware of what other tenants were doing regarding problems similar to hers, especially via LATU, her fear of losing her home stopped her from seeking help. At the time of our interview, Patricia had just joined LATU because her daughter had found out about it through Facebook, although she had not been attending the meetings regularly and was relying on her daughter for help with translation and information.

Stakeholder Perception

Since all the tenants interviewed for this study lived in rent-controlled units, nearly all of them had the experience of an LAHCID inspector come into their homes to inspect them at least once.⁶⁰ However, the tenants' perceptions of LAHCID varied; some had good experiences with the department while others did not. There were some tenants who did not perceive LAHCID as an agency they could trust to help them with their problems. For example, Luisa had lived in her apartment for about 2 years. Luisa was 25 years old and a single mother with three small children. She had been working as a housekeeper for a family in Malibu but had lost her job due to COVID. At the time of our interview, she was living with her three children in a one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment. One week after

⁶⁰ LAHCID inspects rent-controlled buildings every 3 or 4 years as part of their mission to reduce substandard housing in the city.

our interview, I learned that she had vacated her apartment to live with her sister. During our interview, I asked her questions about the conditions of her apartment, which led to the following conversation:

Interviewer: Do you know that there is a Housing Department?

Luisa: Yes, but the problem is that I'm scared of doing something like that [i.e., complaining to the agency about landlord neglect].

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Why are you scared?

Luisa: One, because I think that maybe I will lose my apartment because they will blame me for something I've done. That's why. Because here in my apartment, there are too many cockroaches. But it's not just my apartment; everyone else has them. (Personal interview, Luisa, August 3, 2020)

Thus, from her words, we hear that Luisa perceived that LAHCID would be unable to help with her problems because she—rather than the landlord—would be found at fault. This perception led her not to trust LAHCID, and hence, not to act on getting outside help.

Some tenants perceived that their landlord had a something against them. Gloriana is a tenant who has lived in her one-bedroom apartment for approximately 25 years and has a teenage daughter. Unfortunately, her housing is in very substandard condition, and her landlord has been neglecting many repairs during her tenancy. She lives in a building near Downtown Los Angeles, a mixed commercial and residential building of 13 units, and her landlord is Korean American. During our interview, she explained why she believes her landlord might be discriminating against her and another Latinx tenant in the building, also a long-term tenant in the building:

I think the problem here is, I am not sure of this, but I think it's like—how do I tell you? It's like discrimination, because at the beginning when I arrived [25 years ago], we were mostly Latinos that lived here, practically all of us are immigrants. So she [the landlord] little by little was kicking those people out of the building and was

remodeling the apartments, upgrading them if you will, like changing carpet to wood flooring, changing the windows. All very beautiful, according to her.

She has been renting these [remodeled] apartments to students from UCLA, who are Asians [...] She says that they do not give her problems, that we Latinos give her many problems, and I say, "But what problems? If when I arrived in this apartment there was nothing remodeled, everything was used, everything was old" [...]

I always told her, "Please fix this," but she says, "In a bit" or "afterwards," but until now, she has not done anything. [...] The truth is, she will not listen to any of our problems we have in our apartments because she responds with, "The students do not have a problem. They do not complain about anything." Why wouldn't they? When they practically grab their remodeled apartment, live one year, two years and then leave. We have been here many years and they will not remodel anything. (Personal interview, Gloriana, July 23, 2020)

Gloriana later explained that LAHCID has done very minimal to help with the necessary repairs being neglected by the landlord because the landlord has "always" been there when the inspectors have come to inspect her apartment and believes that they work together. In addition, she believes the landlord is waiting for her to move out so that her apartment would be remodeled and then rented to more students. She expressed how unfair it was that the students pay \$100 or more than she pays (her rent is \$690) because she is one of the long-time tenants in the building, and she thinks that the landlord should remodel her apartment. She also complained that the building managers do not even bother to help her and her other long-term neighbor because they told her that helping them with getting their apartment remodeled is outside of their job responsibilities. Gloriana, thus, perceives that both the landlord and LAHCID will be unable to solve her the problems with her apartment, which remains in substandard condition.

Some tenants learned that there are agencies to help with their housing issues. However, when they attempted to utilize these resources, they learned that they are

ineffective. For instance, Aurora is a member of LATU and experienced a bedbug issue in her apartment. She expressed her experience and frustration with DPH:

I don't really understand what's the purpose of the Department of Health, what's their purpose or what do they do because even when you contact them and notify them, they have to come out and verify it. And even if they verify it and they notify the owner, like, hey, you have a problem, you have to fix it. But they can't force the hand of the owner to do the right thing. So, then, to me, it's like, what's the point of them? If you come in and you see I have bed bugs, right, and then they say, "well, they haven't done nothing so we have to come back out and check." [...] So that was kind of going in circles, like a dog chasing its tail. And I'm like, can't you send [the landlord] notices? Can't you put a lien on them like when they go to pay their property taxes, like, hey, you know, there's gotta be some like consequences, right? [...] If the Health Department comes in and you've already verify [the bedbugs], like how can you just say, oh, well, we have to come back and reinspect and there's nothing, then there's no problem, so we have to close the case. I just didn't understand, it was the most unhelpful agency. (Personal interview, Aurora, September 30, 2020)

Aurora expresses her dissatisfaction with DPH's approach to law enforcement because the inspections were only notifying the landlord of the problem to fix and not giving the landlord a consequence if they did not address it appropriately. Her bedbug issue continued for months even after her landlord treated her apartment with pesticides; this was unsuccessful in getting rid of the pest until the landlord applied a heat treatment (the appropriate treatment for bedbugs).

The last three examples reveal different stakeholder perceptions expressed by the tenants. Their experiences with the agencies or their landlords or their perception of an agency working with the landlord had them question if the appropriate action (i.e., complaining to the agency) would solve their problem.

Tenants' Actions

What explains how landlords and PMCs influence how tenants act on their housing concerns (RQ4A)? Considering how tenants perceive threats in their homes, the various

responses of landlords to requests for maintenance influence how tenants then act. I found that having landlords who neglected or ignored requests when tenants' problems needed immediate repair or when tenants were living in situations where their health was threatened would often lead these tenants to take matters into their own hands, either by fixing the problem themselves or by seeking help from family, friends, or organizations.

A secondary question to research question 2 (RQ4B) asked how tenants who choose to act use the resources and strategies from AOs to address their housing concerns. The data indicated disparities among tenant participants and the level of accessing resources and strategies from AOs. I found that tenants who were LATU members had more opportunities to utilize available resources because being a member had made them aware of the legal resources the city has to offer, as well as the specific resources LATU provides. However, a large percentage of the tenant participants who spoke only Spanish were unaware of the resources available to them. For many in this group, they only learned about tenants' associations in the course of our interview. This result can be attributed to a language barrier because tenants who spoke little or no English, but *were* aware of the AOs and PILOs, knew about them only because they had stumbled across this information during workshops offered in Spanish, from family or friends who had told them, or from having spoken with a Spanish-speaking staff member of one of the organizations during an outreach effort.

Tenants Acting Collectively

My final research question (RQ4C) asks what explains why some low-income tenants act individually, versus collectively, on their landlord-tenant issues. The analysis of the data demonstrated certain patterns about the tenants who acted alone on their housing

issues and those who acted collectively. The three major themes that arose from the data to explain what distinguished tenants who acted alone versus those who acted collectively were education, self-efficacy, and community. Although some tenants who acted alone were able to fix their issues by themselves, learning about available resources gave them options regarding how to proceed with their housing issue beyond trying to fix the problems themselves.

In terms of learning about tenant rights, the education came in different forms. Some tenant participants learned about their rights through their neighbors while others learned about them by attending workshops—either online or, before the pandemic, in person—or from organizations that reached out to them. However, the occurrences of organizations reaching out to them seemed quite rare among the tenant participants, especially for those who spoke Spanish. There were also some tenants who had learned about their rights after having gone through a prior bad landlord situation. For example, Yolanda, who had the experience of her landlord attempting to evict her on several occasions through the court, sought legal representation through one of the PILOs. With the PILO's assistance, she had won each of her cases. Even though her relationship with her landlord continued to be adversarial, she told me she was less anxious about her living situation than when she was facing eviction. She discussed her situation as follows:

After the eviction cases, I learned my rights. But now I know more about my rights. It is frustrating, but at the same time, it doesn't seem so much to me anymore—I don't get so frustrated anymore—because I already know my rights. I no longer have to get a lawyer. With this, the basics that I know and what—well, I think I know more than the basics—so with everything that I already know, and with my experience and learning—because I have learned, I have started to read and everything, so everything is easier for me. And now I am giving workshops in my community to share with others about their rights. (Personal interview, Yolanda, August 3, 2020)

Clearly, Yolanda had previously gone through a very stressful situation that she was able to overcome, and from that experience, she resolved to educate others of their rights as tenants. Initially, she held her tenants' rights workshops free of charge. A few months later, however, I learned that she had been hired by a PILO and had become a paid tenant organizer helping the organization with its outreach efforts.

Learning more about the rights of renters, especially through a tenants' association or a health promoter, has also empowered some tenants to act, whether alone or collectively. This has especially been the case when tenants have learned about what landlords could and could not do under the law, as well as after becoming aware of the resources available to them. In addition, hearing how other tenants had fought their own situations with their landlords motivated and encouraged some to act on their own issues.

Among all tenant participants in this study, there were 12 who were members of LATU. I found that this group was the most informed about tenants' rights, and they were acting collectively on tenant issues with their fellow LATU members. Some of them mentioned how LATU's sense of community and their own belonging to this group of tenants fighting for their rights led them to participate actively in various activities, such as protests and rent strikes. One LATU member, Caroline, explained how it had been for her since joining LATU, which she had done at the beginning of the pandemic:

Being in LATU, it's like I'm protected. We're protected. We formed a group, and we're able to help each other, for example, with the evictions or going out and fighting or even just forming a blockade to try to help our neighbors. Even if they're our neighbors that live 10 miles away, they're still our neighbors, right? (Personal interview, Caroline, October 6, 2020)

Caroline described how she felt she was part of a group that she knows will be there for her. As a prominent example, she also told me that when she had maxed out her credit cards, she asked LATU for financial help, which they were able to provide. She believed that LATU is a community that provides critical resources and guidance on landlord problems, as well as offers opportunities to help fellow tenants with whom they are in solidarity.

Another LATU member, Brittany , described how she had been helped by being a member of the organization when she and her partner were unable to pay their rent on a two-bedroom apartment they had in West Los Angeles. Because of the vital help that LATU had provided her, she told me that she was actively working to spread the word about the association, as well as about tenants' rights, in general:

They [LATU] are wonderful people, fantastic. I started, like, distributing flyers in my neighborhood to spread the word because people don't know what's out there. It's, it's such a ... the internet is such a novel idea still that most people—especially if they're in their 40s or 50s—don't know that this kind of thing exists. And unless you've got friends on Facebook that know about it and are promoting it [...]. So I've been trying to, like, tell people as much as I can because, how many people are in this situation right now? It's got to be thousands of people in the city that are in the same ... in the same places we are, like everybody. (Personal interview, Brittany, September 27, 2020)

This statement shows how being educated about her rights and protections as a renter empowered her to act and join with other LATU members to spread the word about the association and the resources available. In other words, the acquisition of greater knowledge about tenants' rights can lead tenants to be empowered and to have greater self-efficacy to act on their housing problems.

However, this type of self-efficacy appeared to be weaker among the tenants who spoke little or no English. Analyzing the data revealed that those who had a higher level of education (i.e., a high school degree or more) and who spoke and read English had more

sophisticated approaches to their landlord-tenant issues than the tenant participants who spoke very little English and who had attained, at most, an elementary-school level education.⁶¹ For instance, tenants having higher education levels would write letters to their landlords notifying them of repairs that needed to be done. Some also documented their problems, such as by taking photos or videos. On the other hand, those with little education typically notified their landlords by phone or in person about the problems in their units. Additionally, three of the immigrants who spoke very little English revealed that they did not know how to write. Some of these participants had children who helped them communicate during interaction with me. Furthermore, since the majority of study participants had heard about the one-time rent subsidy that LAHCID had offered in September 2020, I learned that some of them were trying to get help to apply for this financial help; some were being helped by community organizations to fill out the paperwork while others applied in any other way they could. There were also five tenants who decided not to apply because the process seemed too daunting. Caroline, one of the English-speaking interviewees discussed earlier, explained the general complexity of the application and what was required to complete it. When I asked her what the application was like, especially for Spanish-speaking immigrants, she reported,

I would say that it would not be easy [to apply]. One, because you need a computer to fill it out. They do give the option of calling and making an appointment at one of the resource centers. I didn't even try to go that route. I know there's not many resource centers around, so I would say that's one of the stumbling blocks. Number two, you have to know ... a lot of people don't even know who their landlord is. They don't have addresses, they don't have email addresses, they don't have phone numbers, so it asked for all of this information of your landlord. The documents that you have to provide ... I say this because I lived in neighborhoods where this

⁶¹ I found that most of the interviews I conducted with this latter group were immigrants from El Salvador or Guatemala.

happens a lot, where there are no leases, so you can't necessarily prove that you live there. They do give you other options, like, "Send us a utility bill," or things like that. For example, if my immigrant parents were to be filling this out, they would need my help, and they only speak Spanish. (Personal interview, Caroline, October 6, 2020)

Caroline told me that she had applied for the rent subsidy, and because it was a raffle, she had been very fortunate to have received it. However, her landlord would not accept the subsidy from LAHCID because accepting it meant that her landlord could not attempt to evict her and because the landlord did not agree with the terms to not evict her for nonpayment of rent.

A very interesting observation that was validated multiple times was how there had been more Spanish-speaking LATU members attending the monthly meetings before the pandemic hit Los Angeles, but fewer who were participating during the pandemic. When the LATU meetings moved from in-person to online Zoom meetings, I found hardly any Spanish-speaking members attending via Zoom. Pertaining to this study, this made it difficult to recruit more people who spoke little or no English to participate. One long-time LATU member and organizer explained how they always made sure LATU had translations of documents for their Spanish-speaking tenants:

One of the things that's happened ... since the beginning of the tenants' union, we've been bilingual. All of our materials are in Spanish and English. We have simultaneous translation at all of our meetings. This has been a huge push—a huge, huge ... it's just [of] huge importance in the local chapters as they formed because we realized that we really have to address the language barrier that most tenants face. Many of the tenants, sometimes their first language isn't even Spanish, sometimes they're speaking indigenous dialects. We see this a lot when we work with day laborers. We had a really strong Spanish-language membership until COVID. When our meetings went onto Zoom, it was like a wall came down because the issue with technology and the issue with the cumbersome quality of Zoom and how difficult it is to have a bilingual conversation on an online platform, how slow [the] meetings go, how difficult it is to facilitate, and Spanish members do not feel comfortable in those meetings. We've lost a huge amount of our Spanish-language membership. (Personal interview, Kelly, September 25, 2020)

The fact that technology is such a barrier for many Spanish-speaking members is quite unfortunate, especially when people in this population are some of the most vulnerable and should be kept abreast of tenant protections, especially during the current pandemic. On the other hand, LATU did gain more young members during the pandemic, even if it has brought other concerns. As Kelly explained,

It [the pandemic] also brought in a huge influx of new members who are very well-meaning young organizers but don't have any training and don't have a community relationship because they came in through an online platform. That has not been good. It has been really difficult because they don't know how to do the community organizing face-to-face, on the ground. The only interaction they're having with people is on online, which is not a way to build relationships, and it doesn't build trust either. You can't confirm people's identity and get to know them through a video chat. There's been a lot of stuff going on in the union since Zoom happened; it's not been good for us. Other people might tell you, a younger member might tell you, "Oh, yes, it's great." I'm on a meeting every week, but I've been around since day one, and the majority of my time in the union has been in-person with people organizing in communities and houses and centers in their neighborhoods. It's not the same. (Personal interview, Kelly, September 25, 2020)

In this research, I also found that technology was a barrier not just for LATU members but for AO and PILO staff. For instance, technology has limited AOs and PILOs' ability to effectively help tenants with their problems, especially when their problems involve the need for the AOs or PILOs to review the documents tenants received from their landlord. Some tenants are not tech-savvy or do not have a scanner to forward a copy of their documents. That said, this barrier has shifted for some. Some of the organizations' outreach efforts have reached broader audiences who have access to the internet and are connected via social media.

In the next section, I discuss significant findings from this study and their importance for scholarship and policy. I also suggest future directions for research on

housing problems for lower-income households and tenants' actions to address their housing problems.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to understand how low-income tenants approach their housing issues by examining their threat perceptions and the actions they take. Additionally, this research aimed to assess the applicability of the adapted PADM to low-income tenants' housing problems. In doing so, the study sought to gain a greater understanding of the factors and variables that help explain how tenants perceive their housing issues, as well as what information and resources they use to resolve those issues. This chapter includes a summary and discussion of the study's major findings, a theoretical and methodological discussion of the research approach, the significance of the results regarding landlord-tenant policies and practices, the study's limitations, and suggestions for future research.

Summary and Discussion of Major Findings

Guided by the research questions posed at the outset, this study identified six major themes that emerged from the data: 1) the organizational infrastructure and resources available to low-income renters; 2) the strategies advocacy organizations (AOs) and public interest law organizations (PILOs) use to deliver information and resources to tenants; 3) the ways in which landlords manage their rental units, along with the types of business and legal responsibilities that landlords have, all of which contribute to landlord-tenant relationships; 4) the poor housing conditions in which some tenants live, the neglect of some landlords, and the perception of the housing threat of losing one's home; 5) the sources of information and experiences tenants have that explain their stakeholder perceptions; and, lastly, 6) the level of education and degree of language access as key

tenant characteristics that help explain tenants' behavioral responses to their housing problems.

The adapted PADM used in this research seeks to identify the factors influencing tenants to take action to address their housing problems. The analysis of the data showed three main factors that help explain tenant actions when responding to housing issues, whether they do so individually or collectively. First, the analysis revealed that participants with children who attended elementary schools in the City of Los Angeles tended to be more aware of the resources available to address housing issues compared to participants without children. The parent participants, and especially the single mothers, repeatedly noted that they had heard about their tenants' rights and about community housing organizations by attending meetings or workshops organized by their children's schools or by reading flyers that had been placed in their children's backpacks. When these tenants ran into problems, the AOs or PILOs they had heard about from the school meetings and workshops helped them with their issues, ultimately leading many to get their problems resolved. This finding aligns with sociologist Mario Luis Small's (2006, 2009) assessment that elementary schools are "resource brokers"; the mothers interviewed for this study achieved social capital through a resource-rich organization—the schools—that had ties to nonprofit organizations and government agencies that could help with housing issues. For example, one mother interviewed for this study shared that one of her children's teachers provided her with information about applying for the rent assistance program through LAHCID and a name of an organization that can assist her with the application. The schools provide resources related to housing issues and other issues as well, such as fire hazards. Another mother in this study shared that she had attended a workshop about fire safety

offered by the Los Angeles Fire Department at her child's school.⁶² The interviews yielded many other similar examples. Thus, mothers acquiring a valuable resource—practical information—from their children's resource-rich elementary schools had more knowledge about where to seek help when housing issues arose.

The second major finding of this study was that the tenant participants who were aware of their rights as renters were more empowered and had more confidence to act on housing issues. This finding was supported by AO and PILO staff, who have years of experience observing the correlation between tenants who know their rights and the ability of individuals to confront their landlords at either a micro level (one-on-one) or a macro level (collective action taken with other tenants). The tenant participants expressed how learning about their rights and what landlords could and could not do under the law made them feel more confident to exercise their tenants' rights. This finding supports research on empowerment theory, which states that individuals go through a process of increasing their personal power and developing a critical consciousness that, together, contribute to social change (Gutierrez, 1995). For some of the tenants who were LATU members, hearing stories of others who had dealt with similar troubles as their own gave them the confidence—or decreased their sense of powerlessness—to act on their own problems. This feeling of empowerment also contributed to the self-efficacy of the tenants—the personal belief that they could succeed by taking action. This idea is consistent with the protective action perception of the adapted PADM, which measures the potential efficacy of an action an individual might take (Lindell & Perry, 2012). The findings

⁶² At the workshop, she described how she had learned that the best place to store valuable items like cash or important documents was in the freezer because freezers do not burn to ashes if there is a fire.

of this work also encapsulated another aspect of empowerment not captured by the adapted PADM, namely, righteous anger and community activism (Rogers et al., 1997). Specifically, during the interviews, some tenants expressed strong, negative feelings about their landlords, and during the LATU meetings, I observed community activism strategies being developed, such as rent strikes and protests.

The last consequential finding of this study was the identification of two specific tenant characteristics that help explain the actions of tenants: one's level of education, and one's English skills. After categorizing the types of problems that the 54 tenant participants had, and after reviewing general patterns among each group of tenants under each problem category, I observed that most tenants who spoke very little English chose to notify their landlords of housing issues orally, whether in person or over the phone. In addition, the majority of the Spanish-speaking participants were immigrants, mostly from countries like Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, and the majority of this group reported that, at most, they had attained only an elementary school level of education. On the other hand, the participants who spoke English well—a group where most had at least a high school diploma—were able to perform more complex actions when notifying their landlords of problems, usually by sending notifications in writing (e.g., via email), and also sometimes by documenting their interactions with their landlords (e.g., taking photos or videos or making formal complaints to an appropriate city agency). I found that when tenants maintained a good paper trail between them and their landlords, their landlords seemed more responsive than in those cases when no such paper trail existed. From this result, an obvious but important, question emerges: Are the landlords' responses to written requests by tenants the result of landlords attempting to protect themselves in case the

situation escalated to a legal case? This clearly is a pertinent question, but my data could not definitively answer it. This question should be more fully examined in future studies of landlord-tenant interactions. That being said, the two characteristics of education level and English fluency certainly appeared to be significant in terms of the actions that particular tenants took. Indeed, a tenant's inability to speak or write in English appears to be a significant barrier to access information, and English fluency should be considered alongside a person's cognitive skills, as both seem necessary to resolve complex landlord-tenant issues.

In the literature, people's cognitive skills vis-à-vis their housing situations have been documented in housing research. For instance, Schachner and Sampson (2020) measured parental cognitive skill levels to predict residential mobility in Los Angeles. According to the authors, a person's cognitive skills are linked to "income levels, education, occupational attainment, and criminal behavior, independent of race and class" (p. 676). Their study found that besides race and class, cognitive skill level is another factor that explains neighborhood sorting, as such skills are a mechanism by which individuals can access complex information and gain greater access to high-status neighborhoods and schools. Although cognitive skill level was not a variable measured or tested in the present study, it seems quite plausible that the level of one's education and one's ability to understand complex landlord-tenant regulations would factor into how they act on their housing problem. Additionally, in a study focused on how Los Angeles tenants' navigate their eviction cases, sociologist Kyle Nelson (2021) used the concept of *interpretive disjuncture* to explain the "disconnect between the way laypeople and experts interpret and treat everyday troubles as legal problems" (p. 153). Nelson found that tenants disagree or

become perplexed with the legal system when they troubleshoot their housing issues, believing that their landlord is in the “wrong.” For instance, when tenants deal with an eviction case, they feel that landlords should be the “defendants” for the “wrong” they did even when the tenants are the actual defendants in the courtroom. While Nelson’s paper provided strong evidence that tenants should seek and retain legal counsel for their legal problems with their landlords,⁶³ his study, as well as that of Schachner and Sampson’s (2020), revealed that landlord-tenant relationships are much more complex for some tenants than is the case for others. Thus, the most vulnerable tenants—here, meaning those who speak only Spanish and who have lower cognitive skills—would seem to be far more susceptible to serious housing problems, such as eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

Theoretical and Methodological Discussion of the Adapted PADM

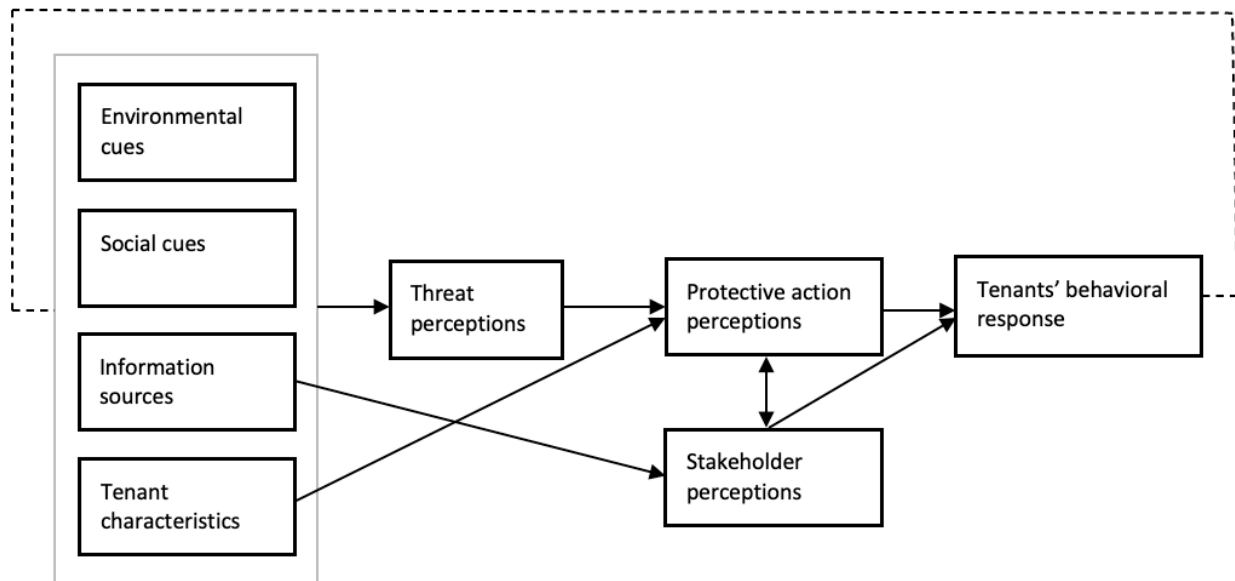
This study adapted and applied PADM theory to guide this research. The PADM identifies major concepts related to taking protective action and hypothesizes the direction and interrelationships of factors explaining taking action to address a threat or problem. In this research, the adapted PADM examined a set of factors in a context where it has never before been applied. I found that the applicability of PADM in the housing field had both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the adapted PADM include guidance to unpack concepts to identify potentially influential factors and to examine these factors within a system of relationships suggested by the PADM theory. The clarity of the model, its concepts and structure, helped explain how tenants processed their housing concerns. However, in this study, some factors were not always distinct leading to some uncertainty

⁶³ This aspect is why particular AOs and PILOs mobilized the “Right to Counsel” campaign in Los Angeles.

about the degree a particular factor was having the effect. In other words, while the adapted PADM allowed for identifying factors of tenants that informed their perception of a housing threat, the challenge was when a factor could be both a protective action perception and a stakeholder perception. For example, a tenant's perception of filing a complaint case at LAHCID for landlord neglect (protective action perception) and the fear that doing so might result in LAHCID triggering the landlord to evict them (perception of the stakeholder) are two PADM perception concepts that overlap in influencing a potential action. This result prompted me to revise the adapted PADM as shown in the figure below

Figure 5.1

Modification of the Adapted PADM



From the modified version above, a tenant's perception of the stakeholder (i.e., LAHCID) can lead to a perception of the protection action (i.e., file a complaint), which leads the tenant to the action to file a complaint (behavioral response). On the other hand, a tenant's perception of a stakeholder could lead a tenant to not act on filing a complaint—the

behavioral response. The double arrow between the "protective action perceptions" and "stakeholder perceptions" boxes signifies that the two concepts can either overlap or inform one another in a tenants' decision-making process.

As expected, concerning the tenants' housing conditions, this investigation found that the worse the dilapidated housing condition, the more the tenant perceived their housing condition to be a threat, especially to their financial situation and physical and mental well-being. In addition, the physical conditions of the buildings appeared related to the responses tenants would receive from their landlords. Tenants with worse housing conditions and landlords who frequently neglected building maintenance would receive little positive response from their landlords about resolving the problems. In these situations, the landlords' neglect produced both a threat perception and a stakeholder perception that prompted the tenant to seek outside help, starting with input from family and friends (i.e., their primary sources of contact). Thus, identifying an observed factor (i.e., landlord neglect) and then placing it into a single PADM concept was not always feasible, a limitation to the application of the PADM theory in landlord-tenant contexts.

Another strength of the adapted PADM was its feedback loop (see the dotted line in Figure 5.1 above). The feedback loop helped explain that after a tenant acts on their perceived threat, the effect of the action they take may lead them to repeat another PADM cycle. For instance, when a tenant decides not to act on their housing issue because they perceive that complaining to the LAHCID might compound their problems with their landlord, they will find that their choice not to act does nothing to resolve their issue. Thus, the tenant is likely to consider the threat again with the information they have and contemplate different options, perhaps leading them to pursue a different choice of

response, such as choosing to write a letter to their landlord about the problem. Hence, a tenant might repeatedly go through cycles of the adapted PADM until they reach their desired response—the landlord fixes the problem. However, the exact number of times a particular tenant went through the PADM cycle to address their perceived housing threat was difficult to measure, as some of the participants interviewed could not recall every detail, and occasionally even offered conflicting narratives. This issue was complicated further when multiple problems existed initially or when new problems emerged in the process of addressing the initial problem.

Since PADM comes from the field of natural hazards research, it is a model that was designed specifically to address significant and relatively infrequent threats, such as tornados or earthquakes. In this study, the findings indicated that there were several different types of housing threats, from physical housing conditions that might affect a tenant's health (from mild to severe symptoms, possibly significant, and ongoing as long as problem is present) to the threat of being evicted for failure to pay the rent (significant and presumably infrequent). In addition, as mentioned previously, a tenant living in an apartment might have to deal with several different kinds of threats during their tenancy, and at each point, the variables might differ. For example, a particular tenant facing a housing problem might acquire new information over time from different means, or their ability to handle a problem might change (e.g., their ability to speak and write in English might improve). Alternatively, the tenant's perception of a stakeholder might change (e.g., they learn that complaining to HCID frequently succeeds in having landlords fix neglected problems). Given how factors in the decision process may differ each time a tenant deals with an issue at home over a period of time, as well as the fact that a tenant might have to

deal with different types of problems during the course of their tenancy, I found that the adapted PADM was not an ideal framework for understanding several housing problems simultaneously. In other words, although PADM is useful for perceiving behavior for a large, solitary impactful event like a tornado, it is not as useful a model for dealing with several small- or medium-sized threats occurring within a person's home.

Of course, a large impactful threat did occur while this study was underway. The COVID-19 pandemic led many tenants to face the threat of losing their homes because of a loss of income or employment. The results of this study found that the potential of losing the roof over one's head spurred some tenants to act and to seek help outside of their family and friends so that they could access needed resources to help with their basic needs. Thus, similar to how people are warned about a tornado through a public warning system, the adapted PADM's framework was able to capture certain predictors, information sources, and social cues: this study observed tenants receiving information about the temporary eviction moratorium and the chance to apply for rental funding from LAHCID, which occurred through two main sources, television and social media. However, the pandemic did not help to deconstruct what might explain why some tenants chose to act alone while others chose to act collectively, such as by joining a tenants' association or by mobilizing collectively. Regarding the latter, such collective actions were not unheard of during the pandemic, nor before its spread.⁶⁴ However, this study's data and analysis was unable to definitively identify the predictors of tenants choosing to act collectively. For the small proportion of tenants who did act collectively, each had a different story to tell and

⁶⁴ A review of newspaper articles showed that several rent strikes in 2018 were used by LATU tenants as a tactic to negotiate and successfully correct their high rent increases.

different experiences to share, which led to their collective action choice; after all, each was having to deal with a different landlord and with unique problems in a variety of areas throughout the city. In other words, the contexts varied from tenant to tenant and contexts appeared to be consequential in predicting outcomes. Moreover, the data showed that collective action was taken only minimally among the tenant participants because of the COVID-19 virus social distancing rules and people's individual safety concerns.

Significance to Landlord-Tenant Policies and Practices

One crucial finding drawn from this research is the gap between the organizational infrastructure existing for renters generally and the lack of access to these same resources by many of the tenant participants in this study.⁶⁵ While the pandemic allowed AOs and PILOs to reach larger audiences, including ones outside of their usual target populations, there were common barriers that contribute to some tenants' lack of access to resources, including age, language, and "the digital divide."⁶⁶ The majority of the Spanish-speaking tenant participants were largely unaware of the resources available to them as renters; this highlights a gap that could be filled by increased collaboration between government agencies and housing organizations. Moreover, this study's findings point to useful, workable strategies that allow tenants to have increased access to information and resources. For instance, AOs' use of different types of outreach to make their available assistance known, to meet tenants where they are (e.g., visiting them in their homes), and to educate renters about tenants' rights are all useful strategies. It was also clear that

⁶⁵ A report is being prepared to share the findings of this study with the organizations in Los Angeles.

⁶⁶ One study on the digital divide in California found that English proficiency and higher levels of education were positively correlated with online searches for health information (Nguyen, Mosadegui, & Almario, 2017).

joining a tenants' association is valuable for renters, because these associations are excellent sources of information, support, and resources (e.g., contact information to secure legal advice).

This study also sheds light on the complexity of how landlords navigate their own concerns, especially in a regulatory environment that is favorable to tenants. AOs and PILOs in Los Angeles know that renters have more protections than landlords, which frames the AOs and PILOs' position to defend vulnerable tenants. For landlords, being aware that the LARSO protects tenants has led some to seek strategies on how to select only exceptional tenants to live in their apartments, including ones who are least likely to cause trouble, a practice that often excludes the most vulnerable needing affordable homes (the poor, single-mothers with children, undocumented individuals, and people who have criminal histories would be excluded). For tenants who have problems with their landlords, they typically form their own moral perspective on who is "right" and who is "wrong" in the landlord-tenant relationship, even though they might see themselves as being most vulnerable in this relationship, because, in their eyes, their landlords could unduly evict them. This outlook can change, however, once the tenant learns more about their rights. Nevertheless, we see that each party is situationally located in a way that leads them to think they are in an antagonistic relationship—AOs, PILOs, and tenants versus landlords, and vice versa. In other words, it is possible that the housing regulations that are in place, such as the warranty of habitability and LARSO, have actually created an adversarial climate between landlords and tenants. While this study dealt with a relatively small sample of landlords, tenants, and organizations, and thus, it is difficult to substantiate this view as a broad trend, there are existing law review articles on how housing

regulations have impacted landlord-tenant relationships in states outside of California, such as New Jersey and New York.⁶⁷ These papers should be revisited by legal scholars in terms of the situation in California, as they could reveal how these regulations might be crafted more effectively to reduce conflict between stakeholders.

Limitations

This study has certain limitations that should be taken into account in calibrating the findings as well as in proceeding with related future studies. The limitations relate to the study's internal validity; sampling approach; and particular contextual factors, such as the historic pandemic taking place while the study was underway as it affected the way some tenants responded to their housing issues.

First, the scope of this examination on landlord-tenant relationships was limited. I specifically focused on low-income tenants because the theoretical framework was designed to concentrate on these tenants' experiences from their points of view (and not those of the landlords). The study aimed to capture the larger context in which tenants' took action and included the perspectives of select landlords and organizations; however, not all the tenant participants interacted with these same landlords or organizations. In other words, all tenant participants would interact with their own landlords and, if they chose to do so, would interact with different AOs or PILOs. Because of these variations, internal validity is relatively weak in this study, whereas a well-designed, quantitative study applying PADM would have stronger internal validity by testing behavioral responses for the average of the sample individuals under threat. At the same time, a

⁶⁷ For a systematic review of habitability laws, see Willis, et al.'s (2017) "Examining the strength of state habitability laws across the United States of America."

quantitative study would not capture the contextual field(s) found in this qualitative study, and, therefore, would likely miss the nuances affecting the decision making process. In addition, previous research using PADM applied the theory while focusing on large singular threats (e.g., an earthquake), whereas this research uncovered more than one perceived threat and assessed the application of the adapted PADM to a broad landlord-tenant context.

Second, the study's sample population was not representative of all low-income tenants in Los Angeles. For example, the sample did not capture a representative sample of races and ethnicities (i.e., low-income African American, Korean, Chinese, or other racial or ethnic groups). To capture a representative sample would have required a sophisticated sampling technique within a circumscribed geographic area (to account for regulatory variation); such a sample would increase representation of individual groups but still have limited generalizability due to geographic boundaries. Expanding the demographic groups also would require a larger research team with language fluency beyond English and Spanish. In addition, the sampling method in this study did not control for the types of landlords. In other words, some tenants dealt directly with their landlords while others interacted with property managers or PMCs. Furthermore, some tenants had property managers living in the same building as the tenants, which often provided easier access to the help they needed when problems arose. This variation requires a caveat about the overall interpretation of tenants' actions because different landlords/types of landlords manage their units differently. A more rigorous approach would have been to focus on

interviewing tenants who had the same landlord or, at least, the same general type of landlord,⁶⁸ although this would have further limited the scope of the study.

Third, the study design did not control for the tenants' types of units. Some of the participant tenants lived in large buildings, while others lived in duplexes or even in single rooms within larger homes. This is important because the precise living environment has implications for the kinds of interaction a tenant will have with their landlord. That said, all of the tenant participants lived in units falling under LARSO, and for this reason, the tenants had the same legal protections. Additionally, most were aware of the government agency HCID or at least knew that a "city government" sent inspectors to inspect LARSO buildings every three or four years. Thus, although the tenants were living in different types of units, all had landlords who had the same legal responsibilities under LARSO.

Fourth, the historic COVID-19 pandemic had a definite effect on the data collection of this study, forcing most interviews to be conducted over the phone or via Zoom. If the interviews had been done in person and in the tenants' homes, they would have likely captured additional pertinent information (due to observation and potentially enhanced rapport with the participants). Moreover, the pandemic affected the way the tenants acted regarding their landlord-tenant issues, especially since many were afraid of losing their homes in the middle of a deadly pandemic associated with health and employment uncertainty. Even though the pandemic led many tenants to become more aware of the community organizations and resources that could support them, it is interesting to think

⁶⁸ I unintentionally interviewed three tenants for this study who shared the same landlord. I found variations in their housing conditions, communication styles with their manager, and the actions they took to address problems they had.

about how the findings of the study might have been different had it been conducted without the full force of the pandemic hitting Los Angeles.

Recommendations for Future Research

Notwithstanding the methodological and theoretical limitations discussed above, the study's use of the adapted PADM indicates that future research could use this framework to predict tenants' actions regarding problems in landlord-tenant relationships, especially in quantitative studies. However, a quantitative study focused on a single threat perception, such as an eviction case, is the most feasible application of the adapted PADM.

There are several reasons for using eviction as a principal threat perception. First, in the context of Los Angeles, there has been a rise in eviction cases over the years, and tenants who are especially vulnerable to eviction are individuals who mostly do not have legal representation in court. Furthermore, these tenants often lack the information about where to find and retain good legal representation when needed. A quantitative study using a PADM framework could help assess where gaps exist so that more tenants would have greater access to such resources. Second, an eviction action usually happens only once between a landlord and a tenant; this is conducive to using PADM theory, since PADM works best for assessing predictors for individual perceived threats. Third, using the adapted PADM framework to assess predictors via a survey would likely help researchers analyze and clarify where and how tenants hear about the pertinent information they need, and it would also likely provide greater insights into which tenant characteristics and housing situations are the most precarious eviction scenarios. Lastly, a quantitative study could evaluate how organizations and agencies perform when they inform tenants of the resources they can access when dealing with the threat of an eviction by employing

statistical analysis that can generate results for multiple variables, potential interactions, in a path sequence. This type of analysis could help determine all of the various factors that might, for example, lead a tenant to hire an attorney instead of representing themselves.

For housing problems outside of evictions, such as landlord neglect or harassment, my investigation showed a general power dynamic at play between landlords and tenants. When tenants are empowered by learning about their rights or by hearing what other tenants have done in similar situations, the power dynamic shifts between the landlords and the tenants. The present study indicated that there might be a link between empowerment and why some tenants chose to act alone versus collectively. However, additional research is needed to understand the link between empowerment and tenant action. Since the majority of tenants in the present study, including some who were members of LATU, did not participate in collective actions like rent strikes and protests, future research could attempt to capture a larger sample of tenants who are actively involved in collective action efforts. With the post pandemic environment as a condition (with millions of renters across the United States affected by the pandemic), it would seem to be an excellent time to undertake further research on this subject with much broader tenant samples.

Lastly, research on the landlord-tenant relationship from the landlord's perspective needs to be further explored, as this is an area of research that is currently understudied. The present investigation shed light on the different types of landlords, including the varying types of property managers that owners employ to oversee their buildings. These different management approaches certainly have implications regarding how landlords and tenants navigate issues that arise between them. Here, the role of the PMCs is perhaps

the most unique because PMCs represent the landlords, but also sometimes play the role of mediator between a landlord and a tenant. Measuring exactly how common it is for landlords to hire PMCs may be difficult, especially since PMCs are business entities that frequently manage different types of buildings, such as commercial and residential properties. Moreover, PMC services will vary, depending on the size of the firm, its expertise, the number of employees, and the model it ascribes to when managing a building. However, learning more about PMCs would provide valuable information to landlords, policymakers, AOs, and PILOs. For instance, in addition to assessing other factors, such as years of experience and knowledge of the law, studying PMCs' strategies to keep the peace between landlords and tenants would provide insights into landlord-tenant conflicts frequented by landlords and create an evaluation of the functions of PMCs. This understanding could be especially useful for landlords who are thinking about hiring a PMC to manage their building. Additionally, the data would also provide policymakers with important information about the overlooked ancillary role that PMCs play in reducing landlord-tenant conflicts, including conflicts that can lead to tenant evictions. Moreover, reducing the rate of eviction proceedings would reduce court costs for all involved; after all, it can be quite expensive in both time and money to evict a tenant through the court system.

Concluding Thoughts

This study applied an adapted PADM framework to landlord-tenant relationships to illuminate the experiences of low-income tenants in the City of Los Angeles amidst both a housing crisis and a public health crisis. Specifically, this research explored the internal factors regarding tenants' homes—both the physical conditions of their housing and the

tenants' relationships with their landlords—which informed the tenant's perceptions of the problems they faced, while also evaluating how the tenants' own characteristics help explain why they chose to address their housing issues in a particular way. In addition, this study examined the external factors outside of tenants' homes to contextualize how they learn about critical resources and information when confronting a housing issue. What low-income tenants face, both inside and outside their homes, was captured well by applying the adapted PADM framework, as it provided information on environmental cues, information sources, and tenant characteristics. However, this study also showed certain limitations in terms of inferring causal relationships towards their housing problems, unless it is a single problem, such as an eviction. For this reason, more research is needed to assess the predictability of the adapted PADM to landlord-tenant situations by assessing the different factors that might predict a particular perceived housing threat.

Overall, this dissertation provided insights into the fundamental challenges and complexities of landlord-tenant dynamics that thousands of tenants face every day, especially when resources and information are limited, adversely affecting the housing status of the most vulnerable populations in Los Angeles. Ultimately, it is my hope that this study contributes to the work being undertaken to uncover housing gaps among low-income tenants in the City of Los Angeles in order to reduce evictions and homelessness and to promote healthy housing citywide.

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APPENDIX A: SELECTED STUDIES BY MATTHEW DESMOND AND COLLEAGUES

Title & Author	Data Used	Unit of Analysis	Methods and Analysis	Results	Limitations
<p>Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty</p> <p>(Desmond, 2012)</p>	<p>Records of court-ordered evictions in Milwaukee County (2003-2007)</p> <p>Milwaukee Eviction Court Study: in-person survey of tenants appearing in court during a 6-week period on 2011.</p> <p>Ethnographic fieldwork data</p>	<p>Census block groups (smallest geographic data with income and poverty information)</p>	<p>- Mixed-methods: combines statistical analysis of administrative data, survey results, and ethnographic fieldwork data</p> <p>- Offers eviction rates and compares the rates demographically</p>	<p>Women in inner-city Black neighborhoods are at risk of getting evicted</p>	<p>Court data (a) does not capture objectively reasons of eviction, (b) does not include informal evictions, and (c) some evictions are "off the books"</p>
<p>Evicting Children</p> <p>(Desmond, An, Winkler, and Ferriss, 2013)</p>	<p>- court-ordered eviction records of Milwaukee County (2010)</p> <p>- U.S. Census (2010) data on</p> <p>- American Community Survey (2006-2010) on?</p> <p>- Milwaukee Eviction Court Study (6 weeks in 2011)</p>	<p>Same as above</p>	<p>- Poisson regression model to predict eviction rates</p> <p>- logistic regression model to calculate probability of receiving an eviction judgement</p>	<p>- Neighborhoods with more children experience more evictions</p> <p>- Presence of children in court increases odds of getting an eviction judgement</p>	<p>Biasness in data and regression analysis due to unobserved factors</p>
<p>Eviction's Fallout: Housing, Hardship, and Health</p> <p>(Desmond and Kimbro, 2015)</p>	<p>- longitudinal data from Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study survey (1998-2000)</p>	<p>Mothers in Milwaukee, Wisconsin</p>	<p>- propensity score matching and weighting techniques for regression estimates</p> <p>- multiple regression and placebo regression</p>	<p>Women experience more "material hardship" a year after they were evicted and suffer from mental health problems</p>	<p>- small sample</p> <p>- low attrition rate from survey study</p>

<p>Forced Relocation and Residential Instability among Urban Renters</p> <p>(Desmond, Gershenson, and Kiviat, 2015)</p>	<p>Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS) (N = 1,086, 2009-2011)</p>	<p>Renters in Milwaukee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multiple regression - binomial regression 	<p>Low income renters are associated with high rates of mobility. Factors that explain this high rate: high exposure to forced displacement, landlord foreclosure and building complaints.</p>	<p>- data restricted to renters, did not include those who became homeowners</p>
<p>Forced Displacement from Rental Housing: Prevalence and Neighborhood Consequences</p> <p>(Desmond and Shollenberger, 2015)</p>	<p>Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS) (N = 1,086, 2009-2011)</p>	<p>Renters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - calculated prevalence on involuntary displacement - multivariate regression analysis - simple lagged regression model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from all the renters in Milwaukee, more than 1/8 experience an eviction or forced move - those evicted move to high-crime and poorer neighborhoods 	<p>- problems with generalizability, only focuses on Milwaukee renters</p>
<p>Housing and Employment Insecurity among the Working Poor</p> <p>(Desmond and Gershenson, 2016)</p>	<p>Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS) (N = 1,086, 2009-2011)</p>	<p>Renters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - matching - regression analysis, discrete hazard models 	<p>- likelihood of being laid-off after a forced move is 11 to 22 percentage points higher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - problems with generalizability, only focuses on Milwaukee renters - data may not include other unobserved life shocks
<p>Who Gets Evicted? Assessing Individual, Neighborhood, and Network Factors</p> <p>(Desmond and Gershenson, 2017)</p>	<p>Milwaukee Area Renters Study (MARS) (N = 1,086, 2009-2011)</p>	<p>Renters in Milwaukee, Wisconsin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discrete hazard models 	<p>- significant and robust predictors of eviction: family size, job loss, neighborhood crime, network disadvantage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - problems with generalizability, only focuses on Milwaukee renters - omitted variable bias - Lacked mechanisms to explain the findings. Could be coupled with qualitative research in the future.

APPENDIX B: CALIFORNIA LANDLORD-TENANT LAWS

General landlord-tenant laws that apply for rental contracts in the California:

Prices	Rent control (LARSO)
	Rent increase notification
	Duty to rerent
	Rent grace period
	Late fees
	Security deposit price ceiling
	Security deposit interest
	Security deposit return time
Health and safety	Warranty of habitability
	Remedy: renter repair and deduct
	Remedy: landlord repair and charge
	Utility shut-off
Rental unit possession	Initial possession
	Quiet enjoyment
	Reasonable access
	Default lease duration
Antidiscrimination	Marital status
	Sexual orientation
	Source of income
	Nonretaliation

Source: Adapted from Hatch (2017) and confirmed by a California bar licensed attorney that these general laws also apply to regulations in the state of California.

APPENDIX C: REASONS TO EVICT A TENANT LIVING IN A LARSO UNIT

A landlord may bring an action to recover possession of a rental unit for any reason listed below:

1. The tenant has failed to pay the rent to which the landlord is entitled, including the additional one percent each for gas or electric services if that service is paid for by the landlord. **(LAMC Section 151.06.D)**
2. The tenant has violated a lawful obligation or covenant of the tenancy, other than the obligation to surrender possession upon proper notice, and has failed to cure such violation after having received written notice thereof from the landlord.
3. The tenant is committing or permitting to exist a nuisance in, or is causing damage to, the rental unit, or to the appurtenances thereof, or to the common areas of the complex containing the rental unit, or is creating an unreasonable interference with the comfort, safety, or enjoyment of any of the other residents of the same or adjacent buildings.
4. The tenant is using or permitting a rental unit to be used for any illegal purpose.
5. The tenant, who had a written lease or rental agreement, which terminated on or after April 21, 1979 (the effective date of LAMC Chapter XV), has refused, after a written request or demand by the landlord to execute a written extension or renewal thereof for a further term of like duration with similar provisions and in such terms as are not inconsistent with or violate any provision of this Chapter or any other provision of law.
6. The tenant has refused the landlord reasonable access to the unit for the purpose of making repairs or improvements, or for the purpose of inspection as permitted or required by the lease or by law, or for the purpose of showing the rental unit to any prospective purchaser or mortgagee.
7. The person in possession of the rental unit at the end of a lease term is a subtenant not approved by the landlord.
8. The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of the rental unit for use and occupancy by: a) The landlord, or the landlord's spouse, children, grandchildren, parents or grandparents provided the landlord is a natural person and not a corporation or partnership; or, b. A resident manager, provided that no alternative vacant unit is available for occupancy by a resident manager, except that where a building has an existing resident employee-manager hired under an employee/employer agreement, who must reside on the premises as a condition of employment, who may not be under the protection of the RSO.
9. Ord. No. 176,544 Eff. 5/2/05. The landlord, having complied with all applicable notices and advisements required by law seeks in good faith to recover possession so as to undertake Primary Renovation Work of the rental unit or the building housing the rental unit, in accordance with a Tenant Habitability Plan (THP) accepted by the Department, and the tenant is unreasonably interfering with the

landlord's ability to implement the requirements of the THP by engaging in any of the following actions: a) The tenant has failed to temporarily relocate as required by the accepted THP; or, b) The tenant has failed to honor a permanent relocation agreement with the landlord pursuant to LAMC Section 152.05.

10. Ord. No. 177,901 Eff. 9/29/06. The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of the rental units under either of the following circumstances: a) To demolish the rental unit; or, b) To remove the rental unit permanently from rental housing use.
11. Ord. No. 172,288, Eff. 12/17/98. The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of the rental unit in order to comply with a governmental agency's order to vacate, order to comply, order to abate, or any other order that necessitates the vacating of the building housing the rental unit as a result of a violation of the LAMC or any other provision of law.
12. Ord. No. 173,224 Eff. 5/11/00. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is both the owner and plaintiff and seeks to recover possession in order to vacate the property prior to sale and has complied with all tenant notification requirements under federal law and administrative regulations.
13. Ord. No. 180,175, Eff. 9/29/08. The rental unit in a Residential Hotel, and the landlord is eviction to convert or demolish the unit as defined in LAMC Section 47.84 and the Department has approved an Application for Clearance.
14. Ord. No. 181744, Eff. 7/15/11. The landlord seeks in good faith to recover possession of the rental unit to convert the property to an affordable housing accommodation in accordance with an affordable housing exemption issued by the Department. If the landlord fails to record the required regulatory agreement within six months of filing for this exemption and puts the units back on the rental market, the rent shall not be decontrolled and the unit must be offered to the tenant that was displaced.

Source: Los Angeles Housing Community Investment Department, 2020

APPENDIX D: SELECTED STUDIES ON SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

<p align="center">Study Purpose (SP), Theories (T) & Concepts (C)</p>	<p align="center">Definition of Theories and/or Concepts</p>	<p align="center">Application of Concepts/Theories (A) & Methods Employed for Analysis (MA)</p>	<p align="center">Variables Measured (VM) and Unit of Analysis (UA)</p>
<p>Klandermans (1984)</p> <p>SP: Apply a social-psychological analysis by testing the expectancy-value theory to explain movement participation</p> <p>T: Expectancy-value theory</p> <p>T: Theory of willingness to participate</p>	<p>“[A]ttempts to relate action the perceived attractiveness or aversiveness of expected consequences” (Definition derived from Feather, 1982, p. 1) (p. 584)</p> <p>“A person will participate in a social movement if s/he knows the opportunities to participate, if s/he is capable of using one or more of these opportunities, and if s/he is willing to do so” (p. 584).</p>	<p>A: Mobilization campaigns of the labor movement, specifically applied to the 1979 collective negotiations in the Netherlands.</p> <p>MA: Theory empirically tested by using longitudinal study. Interviewed group of union members once a month, for 3 months.</p> <p>Design used: a variant of the separate sample-pretest-posttest-design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) (p. 589)</p> <p>Used regression analysis to see associations between variables measured: Pearson correlation and six-stepwise regression analysis.</p>	<p>VM: To test “theory of willingness to take action” was operationalized by asking question about the familiarity of the collective good “Are unions demanding shorter working hours?” (yes, no, don’t know). In what way do they want to shorten working hours? (open question)” (p. 589)</p> <p>Asked Likert like scale questions about expectation and participation to help achieve collective good, such as “my participation doesn’t matter,” “I participate because I want to support the union,” “number of participants,” and “expected success if many people participate”</p> <p>UA: Individuals</p>
<p>Klandermans and Oegema (1987)</p> <p>SP: Identify steps that individuals take towards movement participation and barriers to participation.</p> <p>C: motivation to participate</p>	<p>“a multiplicative relationship is assumed between the value of the collective good and the expectancy of success” (p. 520)</p>	<p>A: Empirical application of the Dutch peace movement in 1983</p> <p>MA: Data gathered through telephone surveys to conduct 3 days before the demonstration. Cross-sectional.</p> <p>Used logistic regression analysis to predict willingness to participate in demonstration from collective incentives (effectiveness of</p>	<p>VM: Mobilization potential (to see if they agree with goal and approach of goal), mobilization target (how they found out about the mobilization), motivations (will they participate or not?), participation (2nd interview), incentives, participation barriers, leftism of party vote.</p> <p>(Reason used telephone survey: time and money. Biasness: households without a</p>

		demonstration) and selective incentives (cost and benefits), and nonsocial factor.	telephone. Small town, however, not an alarming bias.) UA: Individuals Results: Proved that people show up in a collective action when expecting others they know to show up.
Klandermans (1993) SP: Framework for comparison of movement participation. C: motivation to participate	"...a function of the perceived costs and benefits of participation. These costs and benefits can be classified as either collective incentives or selective incentives. Typically, the goals of movement action are collective incentives. Some other relevant incentives, however, are selective, rewarding or punishing only those individuals who participate" (p. 385).	A: Empirical. Applied standards of comparison to three movements/campaigns: 1) Dutch peace movement; 2) the campaign for national peace demonstration in 1983 in the Hague; 3) and the women's movement in a Dutch town in 1981-1982. MA: Tested the hypothesis based on the standards of comparisons of different movements on the "magnitude of mobilization potentials, the composition of multi-organizational fields, organizational characteristics, and action orientation" (p. 399).	VM: magnitude of mobilization potentials, composition of multi-organization fields, organizational characteristics, and action orientation. A study that spanned 8 years. The movements had to apply similar concepts in order for comparisons to be done methodically. UA: movement
Oegema and Klandermans (1994) SP: identify and measure non-participation C: nonconversion nonparticipation	When an social movement organization (SMO) fails to transform sympathizers into active participants (p. 704) "...is the nonparticipation of individuals who are prepared to participate but somehow fail to convert their preparedness into actual action" (p. 705)	A: Empirical study. Data collected through phone interviews of the participation in the Dutch peace movement in May to Nov. 1985. Design of phone survey: longitudinal. MA: regression analysis to compare associations of the concepts measured as well as the presence of barriers. Cronbach's alpha from other studies were compared to test the reliability of the measures (p. 708).	VM: demographic variables (gender, age, education), party identification, generalized action preparedness scale, expected positive reactions of others, agreement with goals, presence of barriers (most questions asked in Likert like scales). Instead of understanding why people participate, they focus on the SMOs failure to activate sympathizers UA: individuals

<p>C: erosion nonparticipation</p> <p>T: generalized action preparedness</p> <p>T: specific action preparedness</p> <p>T: action participation</p>	<p>When sympathy dies after people change their minds and do not want to actively participate (p. 704)</p> <p>“...nonparticipation of individuals who, though once prepared to participate, have changed their minds and lost their preparedness to take action” (p. 705)</p> <p>“...an individual’s expressed willingness to support a movement, to take part in different types of collective action the movement might stage” (p. 704)</p> <p>“... a function of the existence and magnitude of grievances and the existence and appeal of a movement addressing these grievances” (p. 704.)</p> <p>When action preparedness materializes.</p>		
<p>Kelly and Kelly (1994)</p> <p>SP: Examine social-psychological factors associated with willingness to participate in a collective action</p> <p>T: Social identity theory</p>	<p>Individuals are more likely to join a "social change" group when they identify with the group the most. (Definition derived from Tajfel and Turner, 1986.)</p>	<p>A: Empirical application of the trade union members. Survey research, questionnaires filled by individuals. 7-scale Likert questions.</p> <p>MA: Regression analysis for correlates between variables and willingness to participate.</p>	<p>VM: group identification, collectivist orientation, outgroup stereotyping, perceived intergroup conflict, egoistic and collective relative deprivation, and political efficacy.</p> <p>UA: individuals</p> <p>Survey instrument provided.</p>
<p>Klandermans (2002)</p> <p>SP: Evaluate if participation to a social movement is related to group identification.</p>		<p>A: Three different social movements that measure the different kinds of identities via personal surveys/interviews. Longitudinal study.</p>	<p>MA: ethnic identification, identification with generation, gender identification, identification with neighborhood, class identification, political identification, protest participation</p>

<p>C: identity or group identification (different from collective identity and social identity)</p> <p>C: efficacy</p> <p>C: injustice</p>	<p>“[H]as two aspects: a “we” that is a definition of the group or collective treated unjustly and a “they” that is a definition of some institution or authority that is responsible for the injustice” (p. 888).</p> <p>“[R]efers to the conviction that it is possible to change the situation via collective action at reasonable costs” (p.888)</p> <p>“...arises from the moral indignation about how authorities handle some societal problem” (p. 888)</p>	<p>MA: The variables are then regressed to see correlations.</p>	<p>UA: individuals</p>
<p>Klandermans, Sabucedo, Rodriguez, and de Weerd (2002)</p> <p>SP: Tested sense of collective identity stimulates collective action participation</p> <p>C: collective identity</p> <p>C: salient collective identity</p>	<p>Place in society shared with other people (p. 237). Related to social identity which has three components: cognitive, evaluative, and affective (p. 238).</p> <p>When collective identities come to the fore based on contextual circumstances. (Based on the self-categorization theory)</p>	<p>A: Longitudinal design, allowed to test for causality, empirically applied to two groups of farmers in Spain and Netherlands – survey interviews – three times. Used face-to-face computer-assisted interviews.</p> <p>MA: Uses to tests the affective component of social identity (purpose), which is the degree of the attachment to the group or category (p. 238).</p> <p>Comparison of all components in both countries, then to prove causality they ran series of regression analyses and ANOVAs, cross-lagged analyses for longitudinal design, then OLS to see if identity processes have an impact on action preparedness and prove causality with Pearson’s Rs.</p>	<p>MA: personal identity, collective identity, salient collective identity, identity strength, politicized collective identity, engagement of activities (protest participation: measured the activities farmers engaged in and how prepared they were for protests), demographic data (age, gender, and education).</p> <p>Results: “action preparedness leads to action participation, which in turn appears to foster collective identity” (Abstract)</p> <p>Weakness: 1) does not identify the strength of the identity; 2) Non-random samples, but drawn from selected studies. Tried their best to provide a sample based on the average size of farms at national level for both countries.</p>

<p>Klandermans, van der Toorn, and van Stekelenburg (2008)</p> <p>SP: To understand immigrants' reasons for involvement in a movement</p> <p>C: grievances</p> <p>C: efficacy</p> <p>C: identity</p> <p>C: emotions</p> <p>C: social embeddedness</p>	<p>"... a sense of indignation about the way authorities are treating a social or political problem" (p. 993).</p> <p>"... an individual's expectation that collective action participation can make a difference and bring about the desired change. The more effective an individual believes collective action participation to be, the more likely the person is to participate" (p. 994)</p> <p>The degree of identity of the aggrieved group. The more the individual identifies, the more likely they will participate.</p> <p>Here, emotions are used as antecedents of movement participation and looks at fear and anger, the latter being the likely predictor to movement participation. The degree to how an individual, in this case an immigrant, embeds himself/herself in a social actions as part of civil action (p. 996).</p>	<p>A: Application of Muslim immigrants in Turkey, Netherlands, and New York</p> <p>MA: Measured variables by using scales and used Cronbach's alpha to test reliability, used factor analysis for measurement of emotions, and scale questions regarding participation of organization for social embeddedness (p. 998 and 999).</p> <p>Correlated variables with collective action participation.</p> <p>Also used structural equation modeling to find the relationships between the four variables (Chi-squares)</p>	<p>MA: grievances, efficacy, national identity, emotions, and social embeddedness</p> <p>UA: individuals</p> <p>Sampling limitation: sample, neither representative or random</p> <p>Low response rates among immigrants.</p>
<p>Jian and Chan (2010)</p> <p>SP: case study of collective action in Qidong, China</p> <p>C: Collective identity</p>	<p>"An individual's cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (definition derived from Polletta and Jasper, 2001) (p. 106)</p>	<p>A: Case study in Qidong China</p> <p>MA: Qualitative analysis,</p>	<p>MV: collective identity, framing, and collective action</p> <p>UA: event - collective action in Qidong, China</p>

<p>C: Framing</p>	<p>"Involves strategic processes that are 'deliberate, utilitarian, and goal directed. Frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose'" (definition derived from Benford and Snow, 2000) (p. 107).</p>		
<p>van Stekelenburg, Klandermans, and van Dijk (2011)</p> <p>SP: identify motivational dynamics that could explain movement participation</p> <p>C: instrumentality</p> <p>Creates an integrative framework model – Identity leads to instrumentation and ideology, which can also lead to group-based anger and motivational strength</p>	<p>Values and expectancies. Belief on the outcome if participating.</p>	<p>A: Empirical application of a large demonstration in Amsterdam. Face to face interviews, 2 minutes, and postal surveys</p> <p>MA: Structural equation modeling and hierarchical regression analysis</p>	<p>MV: instrumental motive, identity motive, ideology motive, group based anger, motivational strength</p> <p>UA: individuals</p>

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR LOW-INCOME TENANTS

Instructions:

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Edith Huarita and I am a PhD student. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me.

The purpose of this interview is to get your thoughts about your experience as a tenant. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel.

Tape Recorder Instructions:

If it is okay with you, I will be tape- or video-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all the tenants' comments without any reference to the names of specific individuals.

Consent Form Instructions:

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this paper (read and sign this consent form). (Hand respondent consent form.) (After respondent returns consent form, turn tape recorder on.)

Questions about the tenancy:

- 1) In approximately what month and year did you move into the place where you are currently living?
- 2) What is your monthly rent?
- 3) How many bedrooms and bathrooms does your unit have?
- 4) Approximately how many apartments are there in your building?

Questions about environmental cues and information sources:

- 5) While living in this place, have you seen or had problems with the physical conditions inside your apartment?
 - a) If so, what were these problems? *(Probe for all problems mentioned)*
- 6) Can you tell me how you found out about *(the problem participant mentioned in 3a)* and

what you did about it?

For each of the problems the tenant listed in 3a, ask the following prompt questions:

- What happened?
- Why?
- What's the situation like now?
- How? Or How so?
- What occurred next?

- 7) While living in this building, have you seen or had any problems with the common areas in your apartment?
a) If so, what were these problems? *(List them.)*
- 8) Can you tell me how you found out about *(the problem respondent mentioned in 5a)* and what you did about it?

For each of the common areas problems the tenant listed in 5a, ask:

- What happened?
- Why?
- What's the situation like now?
- How? Or How so?
- What occurred next?

Questions about social cues and information sources

- 9) Do you know who your landlord is? Or who owns the building you rent? *Make sure tenants are clear with distinction.*
- 10) Have you had any problems with your landlord and/or manager?
a) If so, what were they?
- 11) Can you tell me how you found out about *(the problem respondent mentioned in 7a)* and what you did about it?

For each of the problems the tenant listed in 7a, ask:

- What happened?
- Why?
- What's the situation like now?
- How? Or How so?
- What occurred next?

Questions about actions taken

- 12) Have you ever sought counsel from a lawyer about your landlord-tenant issues?
- 13) [If yes from question 9] Can you tell me what your experience with the lawyer was?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 10:

• What happened?
• Why?
• How? Or How so?
• What occurred next?

14)Have you ever sought help or advice from an organization who might help you with your housing problem?

15)[If yes from question 11] Can you tell me what your experience with the organization was?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 12:
• What happened?
• Why?
• How? Or How so?
• What occurred next?

16)Have you ever sought help or advice from the city (or county) housing department?

17)[If yes from question 13] Can you tell me what your experience with (*said agency*) was?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 14:
• What happened?
• Why?
• How? Or How so?
• What occurred next?

18)Have you ever you been involved with a tenant union?

19)[If yes from question 15] Can you tell me what your experience with the tenant union was/is?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 16:
• How did you get involved?
• What happened? or What happened next?
• How? Or How so?

20)Have you ever participated in a rent strike? (*Explanation: A rent strike is when you decide to protest against your landlord by not making your rent payments.*)

21)Can you tell me what your experience with the rent strike was?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 18:
• How did you get involved?
• Why?
• What happened? or What happened after the rent strike?
• How? Or How so?

22)Have you ever participated in a group protest that is not a rent strike?

23)Can you tell me what happened and what your experience with the group protest was?

Ask the following prompt questions for question 20:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did you get involved?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What happened? or What happened after the protest?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How? Or How so?

Questions about the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on tenants:

24)How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you and your housing situation? (Examples: health, loss of work, child at home/no school, reduced or no income, etc.)

25)Have you heard about the rent moratorium? If yes, how did you hear about the rent moratorium?

26)*If tenant could not pay rent:* What has your landlord done when you could not pay rent?

27)*If tenant could not or will not be able to pay rent:* What do you plan to do when you cannot pay rent?

a) Have you sought other resources, such as rent relief from the City of Los Angeles?

Questions about the tenant characteristics:

28)Can you tell me your age?

29)Can you tell me what your ethnic/racial background is?

30)Do you know what your landlord’s ethnic/racial background is?

31)Can you tell me what is the highest level of school you have completed?

32)Do you work? If yes, what line of work are you in? Part time or Full time? More than one job?

33)What is your relationship status?

34)Do you have children living with you?

35)Do you receive government assistance for yourself or any members of your family? Tell me about the government assistance that you receive (Example: Snap, CalFresh, or housing subsidy.)

Debriefing:

Read all of the following aloud to respondent:

Thank you very much for participating in this study. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

The purpose of this interview is to better understand tenants’ perceptions of their experiences inside and outside of their rental unit. We are interested in your opinions and your reactions. In no way is this interview designed to individually evaluate a tenant’s ability. The task is not diagnostic, nor can it provide a measure of the “quality” of your performance. Your only requirement was to do the best job that you could.

The results of this research will provide useful information to urban planning, sociology, and socio-psychological educators as well as organizations here in Los Angeles. This information will help them understand how the landlord-tenant policies are affecting your interactions with your landlord/manager and other tenants when you face housing issues.

You will be kept anonymous during all phases of this study including any writings related to this study, published or not. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows: (1) individual participants' results will be pooled with group results; and (2) participants should not place any identifying information on data collection instruments. (Such identifiers include name, social security number, specific birth data, telephone number, etc.)

Is there any other information regarding your experience that you think would be useful for me to know?

Again, thank you for participating. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

Protocolo de entrevista para inquilinos de bajos ingresos

Instrucciones:

Buenos días (tarde). Mi nombre es Edith Huarita y soy estudiante de doctorado. Gracias por tomarse el tiempo de su apretada agenda para reunirse conmigo.

El propósito de esta entrevista es obtener su opinión sobre su experiencia como inquilino en los últimos 12 meses. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Me gustaría que se sintiera cómodo al decir lo que realmente piensa y cómo se siente realmente.

Instrucciones de grabadora:

Si te parece bien, grabaré nuestra conversación. El objetivo de esto es que pueda obtener todos los detalles pero al mismo tiempo poder mantener una conversación atenta con usted. Le aseguro que todos sus comentarios serán confidenciales. Recopilaré un informe que contendrá todos los comentarios de los inquilinos sin ninguna referencia a los nombres de individuos específicos.

Instrucciones de formulario de consentimiento:

Antes de comenzar, tómese unos minutos para leer este documento (lea y firme este formulario de consentimiento). (Entregue el formulario de consentimiento del encuestado). (Después de que el encuestado devuelva el formulario de consentimiento, encienda la grabadora).

Preguntas sobre la tenencia:

- 1) ¿Aproximadamente en qué mes y año se mudó al lugar donde vive actualmente?
¿Cuanto es su renta mensual?

Preguntas sobre señales ambientales y fuentes de información:

- 2) Mientras vivía en este lugar, ¿ha visto o ha tenido problemas con las condiciones físicas dentro de su apartamento?
a) Si es así, ¿cuáles fueron estos problemas? (Ponlos en una lista.)
- 3) ¿Puede decirme cómo se enteró (el participante con problemas mencionado en 3a) y qué hizo al respecto?

Para cada uno de los problemas que el inquilino enumeró en 3a, haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas:

- ¿Que pasó?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo es la situación ahora?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Qué ocurrió después?

4) Mientras vivía en este edificio, ¿ha visto o ha tenido problemas con las áreas comunes de su apartamento?

a) Si es así, ¿cuáles fueron estos problemas? (Ponlos en una lista.)

5) ¿Puede decirme cómo se enteró (el encuestado del problema mencionado en 4a) y qué hizo al respecto?

Para cada uno de los problemas de áreas comunes que el inquilino enumeró en 5a, pregunte:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Que pasó?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo es la situación ahora?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Qué ocurrió después?

Preguntas sobre señales sociales y fuentes de información:

6) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿tuvo algún problema con su dueño y / o manager?

a) Si es así, ¿cuáles fueron?

7) ¿Puede decirme cómo se enteró (el encuestado del problema mencionado en 6a) y qué hizo al respecto?

Para cada uno de los problemas que el inquilino enumeró en 7a, pregunte:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Que pasó?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo es la situación ahora?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Qué ocurrió después?

Preguntas sobre acciones tomadas:

8) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿alguna vez buscó el consejo de un abogado sobre sus problemas de propietario e inquilino?

9) [En caso afirmativo (si) de la pregunta 9] ¿Puede decirme cuál fue su experiencia con el abogado?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 9:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Que pasó?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo es la situación ahora?

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Qué ocurrió después?</i> |
|--|

10) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha buscado ayuda o consejo de una organización que pueda ayudarlo con su problema de vivienda?

11) [En caso afirmativo de la pregunta 11] ¿Puede decirme cuál fue su experiencia con la organización?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 11:
--

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Que pasó?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Por qué?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Cómo es la situación ahora?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Qué ocurrió después?</i> |

12) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha buscado ayuda o consejo de la ciudad (o del departamento de vivienda)?

13) [En caso afirmativo de la pregunta 13] ¿Puede decirme cuál fue su experiencia con (dicha agencia)?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 14:
--

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Que pasó?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Por qué?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Cómo es la situación ahora?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Qué ocurrió después?</i> |

14) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha estado involucrado con un sindicato de inquilinos?

15) [En caso afirmativo de la pregunta 14] ¿Puede decirme cuál fue / es su experiencia con el sindicato de inquilinos?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 16:
--

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Cómo te involucraste?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Que pasó? o ¿Qué pasó después?</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?</i> |

16) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha participado en una huelga de alquileres? (Explicación: Una huelga de inquilinos es cuando se decide a la protesta contra el dueño por no hacer sus pagos de alquiler.)

17) ¿Me puede decir cuál fue su experiencia con la huelga de alquileres?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 17:
--

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>¿Cómo te involucraste?</i> |
|---|

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Que pasó? o ¿Qué pasó después?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?

18) En los últimos 12 meses, ¿ha participado en una protesta grupal que no sea una huelga de alquiler?

19) ¿Me puede decir qué pasó y cuál fue su experiencia con la protesta grupal?

Haga las siguientes preguntas rápidas para la pregunta 19:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo te involucraste?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Que pasó? o ¿Qué pasó después?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Cómo? O ¿Cómo es eso?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ¿Por qué?

Preguntas sobre las características del inquilino:

20) ¿Me puede decir su edad?

21) ¿Puedes decirme cuál es el nivel más alto de la escuela que has completado?

22) ¿Cuál es su estado civil?

23) ¿Tienes hijos viviendo contigo?

24) ¿Recibe asistencia del gobierno para usted o algún miembro de su familia? Hábleme de la asistencia gubernamental que recibe.

Debriefing:

Read all of the following aloud to respondent:

Muchas gracias por participar en este estudio. Su tiempo es muy apreciado y sus comentarios han sido muy útiles.

El propósito de esta entrevista es comprender mejor las percepciones de los inquilinos sobre sus experiencias dentro y fuera de su unidad de alquiler. Estamos interesados en sus opiniones y sus reacciones. De ninguna manera esta entrevista está diseñada para evaluar individualmente la capacidad de un inquilino. La tarea no es diagnóstica, ni puede proporcionar una medida de la "calidad" de su desempeño. Su único requisito era hacer el mejor trabajo posible.

Los resultados de esta investigación proporcionarán información útil a los educadores de planificación urbana, sociología y sociopsicología, así como a las organizaciones aquí en Los Ángeles. Esta información le ayudará a entender cómo las políticas de propietarios e inquilinos están afectando sus interacciones con su dueño y otros inquilinos cuando se enfrentan a los problemas de vivienda.

Se le mantendrá en el anonimato durante todas las fases de este estudio, incluidos los escritos relacionados con este estudio, publicados o no. Los procedimientos para mantener la

confidencialidad son los siguientes: (1) los resultados de los participantes individuales se agruparán con los resultados del grupo; y (2) los participantes no deben colocar ninguna información de identificación en los instrumentos de recolección de datos. (Dichos identificadores incluyen nombre, número de seguro social, datos de nacimiento específicos, número de teléfono, etc.)

¿Hay alguna otra información sobre tu experiencia que creas que sería útil para mí saber?

Nuevamente, gracias por participar. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR AOs AND PILOS

Instructions:

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Edith Huarita. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me.

The purpose of this interview is twofold: 1) to understand what resources from your organization tenants use to address their housing issues; and, 2) to list the ways tenants have been involved with your organization when implementing a strategy addressing tenants' housing issues. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really know and think.

Tape Recorder Instructions:

If it is okay with you, I will be tape- or video-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all the comments from organizations without any reference to individuals.

Consent Form Instructions:

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this preamble (read this consent form). (Hand respondent consent form.) (After respondent returns consent form, turn tape recorder on.)

Questions about the respondent and organization:

- 1) What is the title of your position in this organization?
 - a) As ____, what is your role in the organization?
- 2) What is your organization's mission? *(Request any printed information or annual reports if not available on organization's website)*
 - a) What causes does your organization advocate?
 - b) How does your organization advocate for these causes?
 - c) What population or populations does your organization serve?

Questions on how their resources help tenants with their landlord-tenant issues:

- 3) I am interested in knowing the types of resources your organization has that are geared towards helping tenants in the City of Los Angeles, the degree to which tenants use them or not and whether they use them individually or collectively. Resources can be material (funding or use of space/equipment), human resources (mentoring/training leaders or providing a mailing list), social-organizational resources (like forming a coalition or networks), cultural (like preserving movement history and putting together workshops), and moral resources (like creating allies with other organizations or political members). From the types I have mentioned, can you tell me what types of resources your organization has? If I have missed any type of resource, please let me know.

For each of the resource mentioned, ask the following question:

- 4) You mentioned this (resource), can you tell me more about how tenants have access to it or how tenants use the resource?

ONLY for social-organizational resources ask the following questions:

- 5) Does your organization collaborate with other organizations on landlord-tenant issues?
 - a) non-profit organizations?
 - b) What about city agencies?
- 6) Why do you collaborate with them? What are the advantages? Are there any disadvantages (If yes, probe for full answer).
- 7) Have these collaborative efforts addressed housing issues?
- 8) How do you and the other organizations collaborate? What does collaborating with them look like? (Weekly meetings?)
- 9) Are the tenants a part of this collaboration?

Questions about advocacy strategies that tenants join them in:

- 10) I am also interested in knowing what advocacy strategies your organization uses and how tenants are a part of the strategy. Advocacy strategies are strategies that help achieve favorable policies. Strategies can be internal, where the strategies are implemented inside your organization, such as utilizing direct contacts or drafting a legal text and external strategies are more public, where your organization might have put together demonstrations, informed the public with media interviews, or provided press releases. That said, what advocacy strategies has your organization employed when addressing landlord-tenant housing issues?

For each of the advocacy strategy, ask the following questions:

- 11) How does your organization implement these strategies?
- 12) Are tenants a part of these advocacy strategies?

Questions related to COVID-19 pandemic:

- 13) I am also interested in how your organization has helped tenants with their housing issues and struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic. Can you share how the pandemic has affected tenants?
- 14) What are the resources that your organization has provided to tenants?
- 15) How has the organization helped advocate for policies at the city-level to assist tenants with their concerns? How have tenants been involved in this endeavor? Have these efforts been successful in securing resources specifically addressing problems related to Covid-19? Tell me about it.

Debriefing:

Read all of the following aloud to respondent:

Thank you very much for participating in this study. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

The purpose of this interview is to better understand how tenants are involved with organizations when addressing their housing issues. We are interested in your opinions and your reactions. In no way is this interview designed to individually evaluate an organization's ability. The task is not diagnostic, nor can it provide a measure of the "quality" of your performance or your organization's. Your only requirement was to do the best job that you could.

The results of this research will provide useful information to urban planning, sociology, and socio-psychological educators as well as organizations. This information will help them understand how the landlord-tenant policies are affecting your interactions with your landlord/manager and other tenants when you face housing issues.

You will be kept anonymous during all phases of this study including any writings related to this study, published or not. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows: (1) individual participants' results will be pooled with group results; and (2) participants should not place any identifying information on data collection instruments. (Such identifiers include name, social security number, specific birth data, telephone number, etc.)

Is there any other information regarding your experience that you think would be useful for me to know?

Again, thank you for participating. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR LANDLORDS

Instructions:

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Edith Huarita. Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to meet with me.

The purpose of this interview is twofold: 1) to identify the resources you use as a landlord that aim to help you manage the rent control units you own; and 2) to understand your perspective on how you and your tenants approach housing situations. There are no right or wrong answers. I would like you to feel comfortable with saying what you really know and think.

Tape Recorder Instructions:

If it is okay with you, I will be tape- or video-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but at the same time be able to carry on an attentive conversation with you. I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. I will be compiling a report which will contain all the comments from organizations without any reference to individuals.

Consent Form Instructions:

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this preamble (read this consent form). (After respondent reads or confirms he/she read consent form, turn tape recorder on.)

Questions about the participant and multi-family building(s) owned in Los Angeles:

- 1) How long have you been a landlord?
- 2) How many buildings do you own that are subject to LARSO in the city of Los Angeles?
- 3) Approximately how many renters do you rent to?
- 4) For your vacant units, how do you advertise vacant units available to rent?
- 5) How is/are your units managed?
 - a) *If by a rental management company: Why did you decide that your building be managed by a rental management company?*

- b) *If by a manager*: Does your manager live on the premises? Why did you decide that your building be managed by a manager?
- i) Has your on-site manager ever caused you any problems?

6) What are the challenges of being a landlord who owns a building subject to LARSO?

Questions about resources landlord uses:

- 7) What resources, such as a landlord association, do you use to help with managing your rent-control units?
- 8) To help with staying up-to-date with rent regulations, from where or from whom do you obtain this information?
- 9) Have you ever been contacted by city agencies, such as Los Angeles Housing Department?
 - a) If yes, what did they contact to you about? (Probe for full responses)
- 10) Have you ever collaborated with the Los Angeles Housing Department or other city or county agency?
- 11) Are you a part of a landlord association?
 - a) If yes, why are you a part of this association? What resources does this association provide to you?

Questions about their relationship with renters:

- 12) Tell me about your relationship with tenants?
 - a) What is your relationship with renters like?
- 13) When situations or conflicts arise, such as when the renter has broken a lease agreement, how do you approach the situation with the tenant?
- 14) Have you ever attempted to or evicted a tenant?
 - a) What was the situation like for you?
 - b) What was the reason(s) why you sought to evict the tenant?
- 15) *If landlord evicted a tenant legally*: Did you hire an attorney to help you with this situation?
 - a) What was the situation like for you?

Questions about resources provided to renters or observed resources renters use:

- 16) Have you ever provided renters with information about their tenants' rights?
- 17) What resources have you seen tenants use to help them with their housing situations? (This can consist of hiring lawyers, receiving advice from organizations, drafting a letter, etc.) *List them.*

For each of the resource mentioned, ask the following question:

- 18) You mentioned this (resource), can you tell me more about how tenants have access to it or how tenants use the resource?

Questions about other activities renters performed and observed by landlord:

- 19) Have tenants ever retaliated against you? If yes, how did they retaliate? *List them.*

For each of the ways tenants have retaliated, ask the following question:

- 20) You mentioned the tenant did this (form of retaliation), can you tell me more about this?
- 21) How was this situation resolved?

Questions about rent policies:

- 22) In your opinion and from your experience and observations, what policies have been helpful with renting to tenants? (This can include rental agreement policies or city policies.)
- a) What about policies that have not been helpful?

Questions related to COVID-19 pandemic:

- 23) How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you?
- a) How has the rent moratorium policies in place affected you as a landlord? *This can be related to difficulties paying utilities and mortgages.*
- b) Are there resources you used that helped mitigate these challenges?
- 24) Have you had renters who were unable to pay their rent due to the COVID-19 pandemic when the rent moratorium was not in place?
- a) If yes, how have you approached the situation?

Debriefing:

Read all of the following aloud to respondent:

Thank you very much for participating in this study. Your time is very much appreciated and your comments have been very helpful.

The purpose of this interview is to better understand landlord-tenant relationships from the landlord's perspective. We are interested in your opinions and your reactions. In no way is this interview designed to individually evaluate an organization's ability. The task is not diagnostic, nor can it provide a measure of the "quality" of your performance. Your only requirement was to do the best job that you could.

The results of this research will provide useful information to urban planning, sociology, and socio-psychological educators as well as organizations. This information will help them understand how the landlord-tenant policies are affecting your interactions with landlord/manager and other tenants when facing housing issues.

You will be kept anonymous during all phases of this study including any writings related to this study, published or not. Procedures for maintaining confidentiality are as follows: (1) individual participants' results will be pooled with group results; and (2) participants should not place any identifying information on data collection instruments. (Such identifiers include name, social security number, specific birth data, telephone number, etc.)

Is there any other information regarding your experience that you think would be useful for me to know?

Again, thank you for participating. (TURN TAPE-RECORDER OFF.)

APPENDIX H: RECRUITMENT FLYERS

DO YOU LIVE IN A RENT CONTROL APARTMENT IN LOS ANGELES CITY?

If YES, please consider participating in this project and share your experience! I want to hear your story and how COVID-19 has affected your rental situation:

- What are ways you address your housing problems?
- How are the resources in your community helping or not helping with your housing issues?

**Participants
in this study
will receive a
\$40 Gift Card**

**Interested in participating
in this study? Please call/
text Edith @ _____
or e-mail: _____**

Edith D. Medina is a researcher from University of California, Irvine and is recruiting participants for her project on how tenants experience and address their housing issues, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants in this project will contribute to research in helping assess and improve housing experiences for tenants in the City of Los Angeles.

The interview will take around 30 minutes via telephone or Zoom at a day/time convenient for you. To be eligible, you must be at least 18 years of age, have lived in your rent control apartment for at least 1 year, and you are low-income. If you participate, there is no anticipated direct benefit, but you will be compensated with a \$40 gift card!*

**For L.A. city, if you earn less than \$63K a year, you are considered low-income.*

Don't know if your apartment is under rent control? No problem. Visit <http://zimas.lacity.org> and input your address. If building was built before October 1978, you live in a rent control apartment!

¿VIVES EN UN APARTAMENTO DE CONTROL DE RENTA EN LA CIUDAD DE LOS ANGELES?

Se le pide que participe en este estudio para compartir su experiencia como inquilino/a, especialmente durante la pandemia de COVID-19. ¡Dinos qué piensas!

- ¿De qué maneras resuelve sus problemas de vivienda?
- ¿Cómo le ayudan o no le ayudan los recursos de su comunidad a resolver estos problemas?

Los participantes en este estudio recibirán una tarjeta de regalo de \$40

¿Interesado en participar? Por favor llame o envíe un texto a Edith al _____ o correo electrónico: _____

Edith D. Medina es investigadora de la Universidad de California, Irvine y está buscando participantes para su proyecto sobre cómo los inquilinos resuelven problemas de vivienda y como fueron afectados durante esta pandemia de COVID-19.

Los participantes en este estudio contribuirán a la investigación para ayudar a evaluar y mejorar las experiencias de vivienda para los inquilinos en la ciudad de Los Angeles.

La entrevista durará como 30 minutos y será por teléfono o Zoom en un día/tiempo conveniente para usted. Para ser elegible, debe tener al menos 18 años de edad, haber vivido en su apartamento de control de renta por al menos 1 año, y tener bajos ingresos. Si participa, no hay beneficio directo, ¡pero recibirá una tarjeta de regalo de \$40!*

**Si gana menos de \$63 mil dolares al año, se lo considera de bajos ingresos.*

¿No sabe si su apartamento está bajo control de renta? No hay problema, contacte a Edith para averiguar si usted vive en un apartamento de control de renta. Los edificios construido antes de octubre de 1978 estan bajo control de renta.

APPENDIX I: #ONEVERYFRIDGE FLYER



Ensuring Access to Justice and
protecting the right to healthy housing
in Los Angeles County

TENANT DO'S AND DON'TS SI'S y NO's DE LOS INQUILINOS

<p>WHEN YOU MOVE IN</p> <p>DO: read and understand what you sign.</p>  <p>WHEN YOU MOVE OUT</p> <p>DO: Give 30 days' written notice. DO: Ask for a move out inspection and take pictures</p>	<p>CUANDO SE MUDA A LA UNIDAD</p> <p>SI: Lea y entienda lo que está leyendo</p> <p>CUANDO SE MUDA DE LA UNIDAD</p> <p>SI: De una notificación de 30 días SI: Pida una inspección y tome fotos</p>	 <p>DON'T: Never sign anything you don't understand. NO: Nunca firme documentos que no entienda. NEVER: Sign these without a lawyer: NUNCA: Firme estos sin un abogado:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Estoppel Certificate ➤ Voluntary Vacate Agreement
	<p>DO: Take pictures to document the condition at the unit at moving in and if anything breaks. See numbers on reverse to report bad conditions to the right agency and to find a lawyer.</p> <p>SI: Tome fotos para documentar las condiciones cuando se mudó y si algo se quebró. Use los numeros al otro lado de esta hoja para reportar malas condiciones a la agencia indicada y para contratar un abogado/a.</p>	 <p>DO: Pay the rent on time. SI: Pague la renta a tiempo. DON'T: Pay cash. NO: Pague en efectivo.</p> <p>DO: Get valid receipts. SI: Obtenga recibos validos</p>
<p>Fight for stronger laws</p> <p>Join the LA Tenants Union 1st Monday at 7:00 p.m. 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 8th floor www.latenantsunion.org</p>  <p>Other Tenants Rights Groups www.acceaction.org www.congress.org www.cesinaction.org www.housinghumanright.org www.housinglb.org www.inquilinosunidos.org www.pasadenatenantsunion.com www.power-la.org www.saje.net www.uniondevecinos</p>	<p>Luche por leyes más fuertes</p>	  <p>DO: Talk to a lawyer at the first sign of trouble</p> <p>SI: Busque un abogado a la primera señal de un problema</p> <p>Beware of notaries and paralegals that pretend to be licensed attorneys.</p> <p>Cuidado con notarios o paralegales que pretenden ser abogados con licencia</p>

Eviction Defense Network

1930 Wilshire Blvd. | Suite 208 | Los Angeles, CA 90057 | phone 213.385.8112 | fax 213.385.8181

Web: edn.la A California 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

Walk in Services. Open Monday through Friday 9AM to 6PM.

If you have papers from the court walk in during office hours. Expect to wait.
If you do not have papers from the court then come Tuesday at 8PM to fill out intake. Listen to the general presentation from 7PM to 8PM.
Individual consultations from 8PM until we are done. Or come to the Thursday ACCE Clinic or the Saturday Clinic at the Church of the Epiphany. See reverse for times and locations.

Rev. 2/12/2019

TENANTS – LEGAL RESOURCES

INQUILINOS – RECURSOS LEGALES



AT THE FIRST SIGN OF TROUBLE WITH YOUR LANDLORD WALK INTO ONE OF THESE LOCATIONS
AL PRIMER AVISO DE UN PROBLEMA CON EL DUEÑO VENGA A UNO DE ESTOS LOCALES

MON / LUNES	TUES / MARTES	WED/MIERCOLES	THURS/JUEVES	FRIDAY/VIERNES	SAT/SABADO
INQUILINOS UNIDOS 1709 W. 8 th Street, LA 90017 (213)483-7497 4:00 p.m.-6:30 p.m.	SAJE 152 W. 32 nd STREET Los Angeles, CA 90007 (213) 745-9961 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	INQUILINOS UNIDOS 1709 W. 8 th Street, LA 90017 (213)483-7497 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	ACCE* 3655 S. Grand Av. #250 Los Angeles, CA 90007 (888)964-8086 6PM Staffed by Eviction Defense Network	INQUILINOS UNIDOS 1709 W. 8 th Street, LA 90017 (213)483-7497 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	CES* 7377 Santa Monica Bl. West Hollywood (213) 252-4411 10:00 a.m.
UNION DE VECINOS 346 S. Gless St. Los Angeles, CA 90033 (323) 616/6416 (call/text for appt) 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.	LEGAL AID FOUNDATION* Karsh Family Center 3750 W. 6 th St. LA 90020 (323)801-7987 2 nd Tues/2 nd Martes 6:00p.m.	LA-CAN 838 E. 6 th St. LA 90021 (213) 228-0024 5:30-6:30p.m.	UNION DE VECINOS 346 S. Gless St. Los Angeles, CA 90033 (323) 616/6416 (call/text for appt) Second and Fourth Thursday only 6:30PM Eastside Residents Only	UNION DE VECINOS 346 S. Gless St. Los Angeles, CA 90033 (323) 616/6416 (call/text for appt) 5:00 p.m. - 8:00p.m.	CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S LAW CENTER and VCHC* 720 Rose Avenue Venice CA 90291 3 rd Sat 10a.m.-12p.m.
	Eviction Defense Network* 1930 Wilshire #208, LA 90057 (213) 385-8112 Registration 6PM Presentation/Consult @ 7PM	UNION DE VECINOS 346 S. Gless St. Los Angeles, CA 90033 (323) 616/6416 (call/text for appt) 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.			ALL PEOPLES COMM. CTR* 822 E. 20th St, LA, 90011 10-noon
		CES* 7377 Santa Monica Bl. WeHo (213) 252-4411 7:00 p.m.			CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY* 2808 Altura St. Lincoln Heights CA 90031 (213)385-8112 1PM-4PM Staffed by Eviction Defense Network
					LACCLA* Casa del Mexicano 2900 Calle Pedro Infante Los Angeles, CA 90063 (323) 538-2818 4p.m.

BY APPOINTMENT/CON CITA SOLAMENTE (If you can't get through then go to one of the walk in clinics listed above)
 City of Los Angeles Residents (213) 986-8266 (Los Angeles Tenants Union)
 City and County of Los Angeles: Free consultations – walk in – see above. Paid consultations send an email to info@edn.la or leave a message at 213/385-8112 x 224*
 Santa Monica Residents (310)899-6200 (LAPLA Santa Monica)* (310)394-0848 (Santa Monica's for Renters Rights)
 West Hollywood Residents (323) 549-5841 (Bet Tzedek Legal Services)*
 County of Los Angeles – People/Tenants with Pets 949/682-8507 (Heart LA)

AFTER AN EVICTION IS FILED / SI HAY DEMANDA DE DESALOJO

SHRIVER PROJECT*	SELF HELP CENTERS*	EVICTION DEFENSE NETWORK (EDN)*
111 North Hill Street. Room 115 M-Th 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closed/Cerrado 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Friday/Viernes 8:30a.m. – 12:00 p.m. <i>Arrive at 7:30AM/Llegue a las 7AM</i>	Court were your case is filed M-Th 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Closed/Cerrado 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Friday/Viernes 8:30a.m. – 12:00 p.m. AFTER YOUR ANSWER IS FILED GO TO THE EVICTION DEFENSE NETWORK <i>DESPUÉS DE QUE SU CONTESTACIÓN SEA ARCHIVADA VAYA AL EVICTION DEFENSE NETWORK.</i>	1930 Wilshire Bl. #208, Los Angeles, CA 90057 Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. (closed all court holidays check on lasuperiorcourt.org) (213) 385-8112 FREE CONSULTATION. REPRESENTATION ON A SLIDING FEE SCALE. PAYMENT PLANS AVAILABLE. <i>CONSULTA GRATIS. COSTO DE LA REPRESENTACIÓN BASADO EN SUS INGRESOS. PLAN DE PAGOS DISPONIBLES.</i>

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY: The following agencies offer a limited number of appointments.
 City and County of Los Angeles: Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles call 800/399-4529*
 City and County of Los Angeles: Eviction Defense Network. For a free consultation walk in. Paid consultations send an email to info@edn.la or leave a message at 213/385-8112 x 224*
 Santa Monica Residents: Santa Monica Office of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles call (310)899-6200*

Fair Housing and Bad Conditions/Discriminación y Malas Condiciones



*Staffed by Attorneys
 Hours of operation and fees listed subject to change without notice.
 Edited 6/9/19

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice (213) 977-7500
- Bet Tzedek Legal Services (323) 939-0506
- Eviction Defense Network 323/863-5015 or stopbadlandlordsnow@edn.la or info@edn.la
- Inner City Law Center (213) 891-2880
- Saban Community Clinic (323) 653-1990
- Legal Aid Foundation (800) 399-4529
- Neighborhood Legal Services (800) 433-6251
- Shelter/food/financial assistance: 211
- *Refugio/comida/asistencia financiera: 211*
- Discrimination/Discriminación**
 - Housing Rights Center (800) 477-5977
 - Fair Housing Foundation (800) 466-3247
 - Fair Housing Council San Fernando (818) 373-1185
- Rent Control Enforcement**
 - Los Angeles (866) 557-7368 or dial 311
 - West Hollywood (323) 848-6450
 - Santa Monica (310) 458-8751
- Housing Conditions/Malas Condiciones**
 - LA county Health Dept. (888) 700-9905 or 211
 - City of L.A. Housing Dept. (866) 557-7368 or 311
 - Call 411 for your City's Code Enforcement Dept
- Private Attorneys**
 - Andres Alatorre (562) 863-5200
 - Frances Campbell and Nima Farahani 818/999-4242
 - Eric Castelblanco 213/386-6004
 - Duran & Cedillo 323/881-1031 (no evictions)
 - Elder & Spencer 213/631-8391 (no evictions)
 - Excelsis Law, P.C. 213/940-0300 (no evictions)
 - Clemente Franco 213/213-2500
 - Antonio Gallo (800) 719-2551
 - Husbell & Stamer 626/985-9600 (no evictions)
 - Phillip Koebel 626/629-8199
 - Claudia Medina 213-479-1161
 - Naudi Law Group 424/274-2086 (no evictions)
 - Alfredo Nava (310) 941-1085
 - Anibal Valdez Ortega (310) 709-0241
 - Quadros & Cuellar LLP 213/603-0000
 - Riley Law Group 310/284-8822 (no evictions)
 - Jesus Rodriguez 213/629-2399
 - LA County Bar Lawyer Referral Service (888) 642-6735

Source: Eviction Defense Network