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# A leader's impact on sense of community in one venue at the London 2012 Olympics

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A LEADER'S IMPACT ON SENSE OF COMMUNITY  
IN ONE VENUE AT THE LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

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by  
Laura Grouchy  
May 2013

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Accepted by:  
Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning, Committee Chair  
Dr. Greg Ramshaw  
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## ABSTRACT

The importance of creating and maintaining sense of community in workplaces is becoming an increasingly essential facet to help restore bonds and develop support systems which can create happier and more efficient employees. The focus of this research will be on how leadership influences sense of community within one venue at the London Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG). This problem is of interest to scholars because Organizing Committees are rapidly growing, temporary and have symbolical strong cultures. In-depth interviews, participant observation and a big five-inventory questionnaire were administered to eight full-time employees at the same venue in London Olympic Organizing Committee. All study participants were with LOCOG for a minimum of four months and a manager of their own department i.e. catering, event services, or security.

The findings from this study were themes of the leader possessing competencies that developed sense of community, the ability to identify with the team, and a strong intrinsic bond. These themes have implications for all work environments and can be applied to numerous settings such as camp environments. The development of a sense of community can assist in creating an enjoyable work environment for employees. A leader's role is shown to be a determinant in how sense of community is created; this can assist organizations in building a corporate culture that decreases absenteeism and turnover of employees.

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family and friends who helped me finish what I had started.  
Citius, Altius, Fortius

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thesis and graduate work has been a collaborative effort by many. I would like to firstly thank my chair Dr. Skye Arthur-Banning, it's hard to imagine it's been 3 years since you came to Vancouver 2010 and convinced me to start this crazy process. I wouldn't have began at Clemson without you, and I would not have finished at Clemson without your on-going support. So, Thank you. To my committee, Dr. Greg Ramshaw and Dan Anderson, I know I was not a traditional student and you still put up with me. Thank you for all the guidance and help in developing this document; It wouldn't have been completed without your ideas and support. I would also like to thank the best roommates a person could have; Sherry, Teresa, Kindle, Rory and Wiley. I couldn't have done it without your roof and support system. Thank you for making me feel so welcome and making these last 4 months memorable.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In recent years there has been a shift in the interactions of adults, which has created a new focus on development of friendships at workplace rather than in neighborhoods or geographical regions (Pretty & McCarthy, 1991). One of the reasons for this new focus may be that the average American work week has increased drastically from 1980 (Lightman, 2005) which has created this dependence on our work environment for social interaction. Activities we participate in at work are important because work has been found to be a determinant of adult identity and life satisfaction (Kohn & Schooler, 1983).

With the workplace becoming a primary facet of an individual's life, it is important to find out how to predict whether the interactions the individual has with the organization are enjoyable. A method to discover this is to explore the level of sense of community the employees have within the organization. Sarason was one of the first to use the terminology of sense of community in his book, *The Psychology Sense of Community: Prospects for a Community Psychology* (1974). In this book he defined it as "a perception shared by others, a willingness to maintain interdependence by giving others what one expects and a feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure" (Sarason, 1974, p.157). The key part of his definition is the affective quality that one belongs. Sense of community at work is related to the workers sense of

membership, participation and identification with work or a work related group (Klein & D'Aunno, 1986). The sense of community theory, created by McMillian and Chavis (1986), can assist in assessing the level of community through the frameworks of membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. These frameworks can be used to describe how a sense of community works dynamically to create and maintain emotional bonds between members of groups or organizations.

This study aims to focus on understanding the perceptions of a leader's impact on sense of community in the work environment of the London Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG). It is important research because people who work for organizing committees come from a variety of countries and cultures and many arrive in a foreign place with no friends or families. The importance of developing healthy relationships with co-workers to replace that isolation is an imperative component of the organizing committee workplace. Another reason for a sense of community is the long hours; working for LOCOG will involve sacrificing free time and preparing to work constantly and closely with co-workers. If there is a level of sense of community, it may prevent employee affective commitment and burnout (Weaver & Yancey, 2010). Developing a sense of community is important because of the high stress field that these employees are working in. Olympic Organizing Committees are stressful environments because they are rapidly growing, temporary organizations with a high level of symbolic meaning all of these items can be taxing on a corporate culture and affect employees attitudes (Xing &



Chalip, 2009). A high level of sense of community can assist employees with their daily work life.

Currently there are many studies of sense of community in neighborhoods and schools but limited research has been done on how leadership affects sense of community. Leaders should have a direct effect on the sense of community developed by employees because supervisors assist in building a sense of group purpose and identity. Leaders may also model supportive and participative behavior, which encourages employees to model this behavior to others (House, 1981).

Leadership should influence the level of sense of community experienced by employees because a leader creates the organizational environment that employees have to work in. This was seen in Royal & Rossi's (1996) study on sense of community in schools and workplaces where it was found that students in high schools with divided facilities sensed a negative relationship among faculty members, which negatively impacted the sense of community they felt on campus. In an organizational structure, a teacher is similar to that of a manager, thus this research is comparable to workplace and organizational behavior studies. Therefore LOCOG's working environment can be related to that of a school and the teacher related to a venue manager.

For this research study, leadership will be defined using the five-factor model (FFM) (Judge et al. 2002). This is the concept that personality is related to leadership and the 'big five traits' (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness) are predictive of a leader. Thus, a leader will possess a high correlation of

extraversion, conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness and a low level of neuroticism.

This study will discover how leadership influences sense of community within one venue at the London Olympic Organizing Committee. The London 2012 Olympics were chosen as the venue because of the researcher's involvement with the organization. Therefore the purpose of this study is to discover if there is a relationship between sense of community and leadership at a venue within the London Olympic Organizing Committee.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work has always been an important component of a person's life. Work is what pays the bills, provides people with a sense of a purpose and is a defining quality of our life. However, many individuals are spending increased time at work with over 10 million Americans spending 60 hours or more at work (Gavin & Mason, 2004). Juliet Schor's research in the *Overworked American* discussed how the average employed person works 163 hours more per month today and these additional hours are creating overworked and burnt out employees (1993). This increase in time spent at the workplace has lead individuals to depend on their occupation for more than just income. It has created a dependence on the workplace to fulfill needs that are no longer being met in an employee's home life.

This majority of time being spent at work creates individuals who find most of their satisfaction, sources of identity and support in their workplace. This is a change from earlier years where individuals met those needs from their neighborhoods or families (Ahlbrant & Cunningham 1979). The ability for employees to find satisfaction, identity and support in workplaces is a new and important focus for organizations.

The work place is an important community to study because not only is a significant amount of time invested in our jobs but previous research has shown that workplaces have an impact on personal satisfaction (Kohn & Schooler, 1983). Job characteristics such as powerlessness or control, monotony or variety can influence our

well-being and happiness (Price, 1985). An example can be seen in an individual who has little control over their job and heavy demands are placed upon them, which can create a high level of psychological distress.

Increased hours spent at work begin to form an individual's identity because it becomes the only identity they have. When an individual is asked identifying questions such as tell me about yourself, the answer is likely explained in terms of their occupation. The kind of work one has is thus a statement of who the person is as an individual and demonstrates that their work is meaningful to them (Price, 1985).

### **Sense of Community**

Seymour Sarason first used the terminology sense of community in his book, *The Psychology Sense of Community: Prospects for a Community Psychology* (1974). In this book, sense of community was defined as a “perception shared by others, a willingness to maintain interdependence by giving others what one expects and a feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure” (Sarason, 1974, p.157). The key part of this definition is the affective quality that one belongs. The idea that one belongs was further researched by Macionis who wrote an article about the ‘search for a community’ and how communities can involve friendship rather than just families and kin. This distinction began to include workplaces, geographical regions and schools into community research concepts (Macionis, 1978).

The geographical side of community research found attention by many researchers but Ahlbrant and Cunningham (1979) were one of the first who studied the

geographical neighborhood and how this influences one's commitment and satisfaction to that neighborhood. Their study discovered that those who defined their neighborhood as a small community instead of just a geographical area were more loyal and had higher sense of sociability with their neighbors. This research focused on the geographical location of individual and the sense of community a neighborhood can form.

A shift in the definition of sense of community began by Gusfield who discussed the differences between two terms of community, the first was the geographical notion of community- a neighborhood, town, city; and the second was 'relational', focusing on human relation without reference to the location. This was when modern societies began to define community as more focused on similar interests and skills than living arrangements (Gusfield, 1975). For example individuals who enjoyed soccer began to relate to other individuals who enjoyed soccer not just the people who lived next door. This transition to a relational sense of community made it more difficult for people to quantify how and what tied these groups of people together and the need for a method to measure levels of sense of community was becoming apparent.

The first steps to transform this idea and definition of a sense of community into a measurement were by Doolittle and MacDonald in 1978. They developed a 40-item sense of community scale (SCS) which reviewed neighborhood and community behaviors and attitudes at the social organization level. It was constructed based on five factors; supportive climate, family life cycle, safety, informal interaction, neighborly integration

and localism. These five factors began to identify measurable components of community and allowed for researchers to quantify the idea of community.

The sense of community scale was a foundation for Glynn's research in 1981; he developed a 120-item community questionnaire, which would assess the psychological sense of community of residents living in three different cities. This study was given to communities in Kfar Blum and Israeli Kibbutz and two Maryland communities. The goal of the research was focused on a psychological rather than geographical side of sense of community. It was developed to provide an operational and meaningful way to define psychological sense of community. Through this questionnaire it was discovered that there are six predictors of sense of community these are; objective evaluation of community structure, supportive relationships in community, similarity and relationship patterns of community residents, individual involvement in the community, quality of community environment and community security (Glynn, 1981).

Following Glynn, Riger and Lavrakas (1981) decided to review the benefits to neighborhood attachment and began a new focus for sense of community. Their research studied the benefits of sense of community and neighborhood bonding. Two empirically distinct but correlated factors arose from this research, social bonding and behavioral rootedness. Social bonding referred to the ability of one to feel like part of the neighborhood and how well socialized the respondent was in regards to the number of neighborhood children they were able to identify. Behavioral rootedness referred to the commitment to the geographical house/area, an example was the time spent in the

residency. These factors allowed a distinction to be created and citizens were able to then be sorted into groups based on their sense of community and attachment to their residency. This study began to identify constructs that McMillian and Chavis would later use to define sense of community.

McMillian and Chavis developed a symbiotic definition of sense of community, which could be related to both relational and geographical communities (1986). They were one of the first researchers to develop a theory-based definition of sense of community. McMillian and Chavis described sense of community as a: perception with an affective component; a “feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and the group, and a shared faith that members needs will be met through their commitment to be together” ( 1986, p.9). They used four dimensions, which would assist in solidifying their definition of a sense of community. These were membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection (McMillian & Chavis, 1986).

### **Membership.**

Membership was described as a feeling of belonging or the investment one has made to become a member. The five attributes of membership are boundaries, emotional safety, a sense of belonging and identification, personal investment and a common symbol system. These all contribute to discovering who is a part of the community and who is not willing to be part of the community (McMillian and Chavis, 1986).

One of the attributes of membership is boundaries. Boundaries are described as the difference in the people who belong in the group and the outsiders. Boundaries allow for the group to feel a sense of emotional safety and create intimacy based on the understanding that only members are allowed in the group (McMillian and Chavis, 1986). In social psychology, boundaries have been seen to protect personal space and are normally created by certain language, dress, or rituals that all members of the group participate in, which separate them from other groups. Berger and Neuhaus (1977) view boundaries as creations of social distance. This is a source of protection against threats that can be necessary when people are vulnerable. In order to develop a community, the group must have a level of group intimacy this is created by maintaining secure boundaries that protect the emotional safety of the group (Doolittle & Macdonald, 1978).

To be considered an insider of the group and to act as a member, one must have the personal belief that they do belong and can identify themselves as a member of the group. Members must feel they fit into the group and be willing to sacrifice for the betterment of the group. Role identification is an important component and statements such as “It is my group” or “I am part of the group” are examples of how these feelings are expressed to others (McMillian & Chavis, 1986).

Personal investment is another component of membership that contributes to a person’s feelings of sense of community. McMillian (1996) discussed that earning a place in a group creates a more valuable membership. If one works for their place and they understand that other members have worked for their place as well, it makes



membership more attractive. For example, hazing rituals in fraternities strengthen group cohesiveness and builds a larger personal connection to the fraternity (Peterson & Martens, 1972).

The final attribute of membership is the idea of items such as names, landmarks and symbols that create a common identification system. A common symbol system helps maintain boundaries which assist in the forming of a sense of community. Symbols that bring people together and help build strong memberships can be seen with an organization like the Olympics, as they have many symbolic relevant figures such as the torch and the Olympic rings (Xing and Chalip, 2009).

### **Influence.**

The second frame in the sense of community framework is influence. This is the notion that in order for one to feel connected to the group, they must have some personal influence over the decision-making process in the group (Burroughs & Eby, 1998). This balance cannot outweigh other members of the groups influence though, or it can create disharmony. Influence is a bidirectional concept because cohesiveness is determined by the ability of the group to influence the members (Kelley & Woodruff, 1956).

It has been found that the contradictory forms of influence can work together and that the most influential group members are those who acknowledge other's needs, values and opinions and implement consensus decisions rather than individual opinions (Chavis et al., 1986). A member's ability to acknowledge and meet needs of members will allow for harmony to develop and a cohesive group environment to form.

In relation to cohesiveness and influence, it has been found that there can be a positive relationship between group cohesion and pressure to conform. Although one must be careful when exerting influence that is intended to shift a person's viewpoint. When someone's viewpoint is different than the group norms and there is pressure to change their personal viewpoints, it can create internal tension in the person. This can lead to the individual reducing the tension by distorting the group's norms or to dissociate their personal idea of disagreement with the groups approval. For example if a person is giving a speech and the group applauds, an individual who does not approve of the speech may dissociate the applause with approval and believe it is a thank you for the speaker showing up (Kelley and Woodruff, 1956). In order for the construct of influence to be a positive measure, there must be a balance in the conformity and group cohesion.

The concept of influence focuses on the positives of conformity, the idea that an individual is not alone in their feelings and that others can relate to their feelings and experiences. For example, if a hockey team loses their final game, other players on the hockey team will be able to relate those emotions of sadness that their season is over, yet outsiders may not understand why the conclusion of the season was so disappointing. The desire to obtain feedback and reassurance that what they see and feel is seen and felt by others is an important concept of a community. The similar behavior of a group indicates that there is an attempt to validate its member's feelings and establish group norms.

Influence is bidirectional in the sense that along with conformity the idea of personal choice is important in communities. The need to appreciate and encourage

individual differences is just as important as conformity by the group. The ability for an individual to maintain some control over the community and believe their opinion will be heard and matter creates a more engaging community. The ability of a member of a community to have forms of choice will assist in allowing individuals to develop an increased level of respect and trust in the organization (Burroughs & Eby, 1998).

In conclusion, influence is an important component of sense of community. The balancing act of group cohesion and personal freedom is something each community needs to address and the most successful and attractive communities are those that succeed at balancing conformity and influence (Obst & White, 2005).

### **Integration and Fulfillment of Needs.**

The third frame in the sense of community framework is integration and fulfillment of needs which translates into the idea of reinforcement. This is the focus that a member in a group must feel needed and the group association must benefit the individual. The attribute of reinforcement is related to the focus on social support and an acknowledgment of the contributions and achievements an individual puts forth (Burroughs & Eby, 1998). There are numerous reinforcements that can build a strong sense of community, one of these is the status of being a member or competence of the community; people wish to be associated with groups that can offer the most rewards (McMillian and Chavis, 1986).

The most important consideration with integration and fulfillment of needs is that people do what benefits them. People want to be associated with the group that will

benefit themselves. This can be difficult to maintain in large groups, because each member has a different perceived benefit. Thus, one of the most important attributes of fulfillment of needs is the idea of shared values. Shared values provide an integrative tool to develop cohesive communities. People with shared values will find that they have similar needs, priorities and goals thus, creating a belief that by forming together they will be able to meet those needs more effectively (Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978).

The concepts of reinforcement and need fulfillment are primary functions that can form a strong community. Reinforcers, such as membership success or competence of the community are all important to maintain a desired membership. A strong community is where individual values are shared among members and these values are met by the individual and group as a whole (McMillian and Chavis, 1986).

### **Shared Emotional Connection.**

Shared emotional connection is an important component to create a community; it is the idea of an indescribable feeling that unites the community. This can be seen in the community members shared history, contact hypothesis, quality of interaction, investment and spiritual bond (McMillian and Chavis, 1986). The first attribute of a shared emotional connection is the idea of a shared history. Although members of the group do not need to have necessarily participated in the history, they must identify with it. The ability of members to interact and bond over a shared history will help with strengthening of the community bonds. The history of an organization and member's attachment to this history helps dictate the importance of the organization to the

individual. An example of this is countries celebrating the day they achieved independence, such as how Canadians celebrate and have a holiday every July 1st, the day that they were independent from British rule.

Another important concept of a shared emotional connection is that of contact hypothesis; the suggestion that the more interaction individuals have with the group, the more likely to bond with the group. A scheduled meeting or continuous interaction will assist in building bonds because this will allow for the members to deepen their bonds. Quality of interaction is related to contact hypothesis because it dictates the bonds that develop will reflect the type of interaction members will have. For example, the more positive an experience the higher level of cohesion (Hyde & Chavis, 2007).

Investment is a key component of the shared emotional connection framework this determines how important the history and status of the community is to an individual. From investment there can be a reward or humiliation and the presence of these feelings can have a significant impact on the decision to remain/join the community. This suggests that by identifying oneself with a community, part of that community's identity influences the outsider's perception of the individual. For example, if an individual plays for Duke basketball and Duke is perceived to have a very successful basketball team the individual will then be perceived to be good at basketball as well.

Finally the attribute of a spiritual bond is one of the most important aspects of the community experience. This is present in all communities although the level of bond can differ. Attempting to describe a spiritual bond is difficult because it is more than a

feeling, it is a deep emotional connectedness that outsiders cannot relate to and have a difficult time explaining. The spiritual bond is the idea that the individual and community members are joined together in some form and can relate to each other differently than outsiders of the group. This spiritual bond can elevate the community to a new level of connectedness and trust (McMillian, 1996).

The attributes of shared emotional connection are important in the framework of a sense of community because it involves deep seeded emotional attachment to the group. The constructs of shared history, contact history, quality of interaction, investment and the creation of a spiritual bond are key constructs in building a sense of community (McMillian and Chavis, 1986).

### **Sense of Community Components Related**

The framework for sense of community has been identified as membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. These elements are used to describe how a sense of community works dynamically to create and maintain emotional bonds between members of groups or organizations.

The frame of membership has five attributes that seem circular and maintain a cause-effect relationship; these are boundaries, emotional safety, personal investment, sense of belonging and common symbol system. Boundaries allow for intimacy and thus create emotional safety; from emotional safety members will be personally invested in the community, which has a consequence of creating a sense of belonging and

identification in the community. This will facilitate a common symbol system, thus helping define the communities' boundaries (McMillian and Chavis, 1986).

The attributes of influence relate because when one resists a member's influence or tries to dominate the community, they are less influential. Leadership is provided to the individuals who listen and then implements the consensus of the group. Thus, individuals in the group are able to have control over their opinions by allowing someone else to influence the group with their viewpoints. The final attributes of influence, suggest that people who have the freedom to voice their opinion and assist in decision making will allow for a consensual validation that strengthens community norms (Burroughs & Eby, 1998).

Integration and fulfillment of needs are related in the degree a community can facilitate a person-environment fit. The ability for a community to assist meeting the needs of their members will build a stronger sense of community. The most successful communities are those that are mutually beneficial.

The shared emotional connection attributes are related in the belief that contact and high quality interaction will create a higher shared emotional connection. High-quality interaction can be defined as events with successful closure, a feeling of sharedness of the event, or the amount of honor given to members at these events. This element suggests that connections with others related around a shared purpose and perceived common backgrounds will develop a high emotional connection (Dionigi & Lyons, 2010).

All of the elements of sense of community can work together in a variety of ways and these inner workings vary by community. An example of how a community can form through the sense of community frame can be seen in the creation of a soccer team. A group of students may realize that they want to play soccer; this is the identification of a similar need that is currently missing (integration and fulfillment of needs). Thus, the students post a flyer welcoming people to join their soccer team and identify a meeting time and location. Following the first meeting, all of the people who show up become part of the team, thus the membership boundaries are set and the group begins practice weekly which builds their contact hypothesis. If the soccer team starts to win, the success as a group will create a shared valiant event. The team members will continue to show up to practice and put forth effort which can be related to personal investment; the longer the soccer team plays together the more admiration and honor they receive (gaining status as a member) finally the soccer team may wish to choose a symbol to reinforce their membership so they purchase matching shirts (common symbols, and influence because they all do this).

Sense of community theory is important because individual leisure is being replaced by workplace activities thus, a community is being created through the workplace and being able to understand how that community is formed is important to leaders (Pretty & McCarthy, 1991). In recent years, it has been found that the development of a community in daily activities is an integral part of life and provides more than just an escape but influences a whole lifestyle (Putnam, 2000). The promotion



of social ties and enriching work relationships can assist in developing individual's quality of life and community stability (Dionigi & Lyons, 2010).

Sense of community theory allows for professionals to test and measure the community bonds that are formed between groups and the ability to create a sense of community in the workplace will allow for an improvement in the quality of life of individuals (Burroughs & Eby, 1998). Sense of community has been seen to associate with lower levels of mental, social and health disorders and that the creation of a community can build resilience and develop positive change in an individual (Hyde & Chavis, 2007). This was seen in Dionigi and Lyons (2010) study on older adults exercise intervention. It was found that there were multiple layers of community that contributed to the wellness and enjoyment of the exercise intervention for these older adults. The community that was formed by the exercise intervention promoted positive changes in these older adults' lifestyles such as incorporating physical activity into their routines and building new relationships (Dionigi & Lyons, 2010).

### **Leadership.**

Leadership means different things to different people, and thus there are many definitions of leadership that vary in personality traits, actions, and abilities. Leadership in this study will be defined as possessing the big five personality traits and be placed in the position of venue manager for an Olympic venue. The term leader will be interchangeable with the title of the role, which is venue general manager or venue manager. For the purpose of this study they will have the same definition of a leader.

There has been evidence that suggests almost all personality measures can be reduced or measured under the five- factor model of personality (FFM), which has since been labeled the “Big-Five” (Judge et al., 1999). The “Big Five” traits are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. This model began its development in studies involving the natural language trait terms (John et al., 1988). This form of study focused on language and was time-consuming, thus it became less researched in the 1960’s, which was partly the reason for the shift of focus on to implicit personality trait theory. Implicit personality theory (IPT) refers to the expectancy for traits to occur. For example, talkative individuals are likely to be social as well (Borkenau, 1992). The investigation of whether the Big Five may be related to co-occurrence likelihood ratings was under-taken by Hakel (1969). In this study, the likelihood of co-incidence was computed by asking how likely it was for an individual with trait A to possess trait B. Each factor was clearly identified by one of the big five factors of personality and provided evidence that the factors in trait ratings may reflect personal IPT (Hakel, 1969).

The IPT controversy stopped research of FFM but it was revived in 1981 by Goldberg who took a lexical approach to the study. In his search, it was discovered that there are 4,500 trait terms in English and that individual differences in these will have been recorded in language at one point and encoded in trait terms; the decoding of these terms allows Goldberg to discover dimensions of personality. In order to conclude if this was correct or not, it was tested to see if one can extract the same basic factors from

analyses of any language (McCrae & John, 1992). This lexical tradition is based on theoretical assumptions that traits can be matched with accuracy by anyone on the basis of their daily experience. Therefore it has shown that these assumptions of traits are of sufficient social importance to be recognized by each culture and found in every language. Analysis of language is systematic and theoretically guided scientific observation and that is how most of personality questionnaires have been created (Briggs, 1992). Most personality questionnaires are formulated around the “big five”. This is seen in the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI; Hogan, 1986), the NEO personality inventory (NEO-PI; Costa & McCrae, 1988) and the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John et al. 1991) these specifically analyze the FFM and were developed based on this lexical approach.

### **The “Big Five” Defined.**

The “Big Five” traits include neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. All of the five factors have faced debate and complications but the least controversy exists around the trait of neuroticism. Neuroticism represents individual differences rooted in the likelihood for one to experience stress and how one reacts when facing this stress (McCrae & John, 1992). A high score of neuroticism is likely to experience chronic negative affects and are prone to development of psychiatric disorders (Zonderman et al, 1989). Neuroticism is associated with tension, depression, frustration, guilt and self-consciousness. This can create low self-esteem, poor control of impulses and ineffective coping techniques (Costa & McCrae, 1988). Individuals that measure low in neuroticism do not necessarily have

high positive mental health, but they are normally found to be calm, relaxed, even-tempered and possess a high level of emotional stability. An example of this can be seen in a leader who is calm in a crisis situation.

Extraversion is a well-known and identified trait but has a variety of definitions. It is normally referred to as a quality somewhere between warmth and dominance (McCrae & Costa, 1988). People who are cheerful, enthusiastic, optimistic and energetic do not necessarily have a low level of anxiety or depression, but cheerful people seem to be dominant, social and warm (McCrae & John, 1992). Costa and McCrae (1988) identified broad concepts of extraversion such as positive affectivity, energy, ascendance, warmth and gregariousness. Those who measure low in extraversion are normally described as quiet, reserved, shy, silent and withdrawn.

The third trait in the “big five” is agreeableness it has been used to involve the more humane aspects of humanity. It is associated with characteristics such as altruism, nurturance, caring and emotional support on the positive side. Individuals ranked low in agreeableness may be found to possess characteristics of hostility, indifference to others, self-centeredness and jealousy (McCrae & John, 1992). This is a highly evaluated dimension and involves the blending of multiple attributes including trust, modesty and compliance.

Conscientiousness is another highly evaluated dimension. It is a classic dimension of defining a character, such as “good” versus “evil”. These moral overtones have sometimes created confusion in this factor but it is an important dimension of individual

difference (McCrae & John, 1992). Attributes of conscientious individuals can be neat, well-organized, diligent, and achievement oriented.

Openness is the final trait in the “big five” and holds the most controversy; this is based in its disparity between languages and questionnaire studies (McCrae & John, 1992). Lexical studies of trait adjectives for openness in English and German have shown items such as intelligent, imaginative and perceptive (John, 1990a). Researchers using questionnaires have found broader definitions of openness including creativity, intellectual interests, need for variety and unconventional values (McCrae & Costa, 1988).

The FFM is a trait theory; it focuses on a “view of the world that sees the essence of human nature in individual differences” (McCrae & John, 1992 p. 199). The FFM provides personality psychology a replicable phenomenon that can be explained. It also has created tools that can be used in a variety of circumstances such as creation of operationalization models. The appeal to the model is found in its ability to integrate a wide range of constructs, which creates an ease of communication between researchers of different backgrounds. It is comprehensive and efficient in providing a global description of personality in five traits (McCrae & John, 1992).

### **Five Factor Model and Leadership.**

The FFM can be applicable to a large body of literature of which one area of focus is in leadership effectiveness and emergence. The big five-trait perspective in leadership focuses on traits of individuals or individual differences that are predictive of leadership.

Judge, Bono, Ilies & Gerhardt (2002) conducted a meta-analysis examining relationships between personality and leadership and used the five-factor model of personality as a framework. These researchers conducted a literature search of articles using the terminology personality and leadership. They narrowed the articles from 998 studies to 78 studies, which focused on the FFM and had data necessary to calculate correlations between leadership and personality. The selected articles studied a variety of backgrounds, including that of students' leadership in a classroom, peer nominations of leadership for formal and informal groups, military leadership, and leadership behaviors shown in a variety of classroom and work settings (Judge et al., 2002). Through this literature search they were able to find a relatively strong multiple correlation between the Big five traits and leadership ( $r=.39-.53$ ). This research has shown that the FFM can be predictive of leadership emergence and leadership effectiveness (Judge et al. 2002).

Through the meta-analysis, extraversion was identified as the strongest correlated personality factor for emergence of a leader and has been found particularly in social leadership (Costa & McCrae, 1988). Extraversion in the context of a leader is referred with attributes such as active, assertive, energetic and not silent or withdrawn. Extraversion was found to be a strong predictor of leadership in middle to high management in a variety of organizations including police and university institutes and this correlation supports the Judge et al., (2002) meta analysis (Kornor & Nordvik, 2004).

The next personality trait in the five-factor trait model, which was highly correlated with being predictive of a leader, is conscientiousness (Judge et al. 2002). Conscientiousness has a variety of definitions focusing on the art of being careful, or

acting in accordance with ones conscience. It includes elements of self-discipline, deliberation, organizations and a need for achievement (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991).

Neuroticism is another fundamental trait in the big five. It is the tendency to experience emotional states. There is a predictive link to leadership when measured negatively; subsequently a low-level of neuroticism will contribute to defining a leader. This low-level of neuroticism is often described as emotional stability. There are individuals who tend to be calm, even tempered and less likely to be tense or quick to anger (Matthews & Deary, 1988).

Openness to experience is another important personality trait that correlates with leadership. Openness is defined as using an active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, attention to inner feelings, and intellectual curiosity (Costa & McCrae, 1992). An active imagination is suggestive of creativity and creativity is linked to effective leadership (Sosik, Kahai & Avolio, 1998).

The last personality trait of the big five is agreeableness. The trait of agreeableness has been found to be ambiguous in its link to leadership. Agreeableness is the tendency for one to be compassionate and cooperative (Judge et al., 2002). Agreeable people are generally considerate, friendly, generous and willing to compromise. Bass (1990), discussed how agreeable individuals are modest and leaders are not modest thus, it is unlikely quality for a leader to possess.

## **Leaders and the Work Environment.**

Leaders have the ability to influence workers directly and indirectly by the culture and climate they create. Climate is described as a person's internal representation of the constructs that influence motivation and behavior (Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008). The organizational climate can relate to practices and procedures that are shared amongst members and that indicate the behaviors that guide employees. Founders and top leaders in the early stages of an organization have extensive control over the development of an organization. These individuals formulate strategies, policies and structures, which impact the culture of the workplace (Schein, 1992). Leaders do not solely have an impact during the formation of an organization but throughout the organization's lifespan. All organizational levels continuously change the climate and influence is by their interpretation of the policies, goals and strategies of the corporation (Grojean et al, 2004).

Leadership in the specific sport environments can be seen to relate to formal organizational contexts. A sport team can be viewed much like the makeup of any other formal organization in that the roles, goals and positions are well laid out. For example, a sports team has (a) an unequivocal identity, (b) a roster of players including positions or statuses, (c) a planned program of activity and a division of labor to achieve specified goals, and (d) procedures for replacing members and for transfer of members (Ball, 1975). If sport teams can be seen as a professional organization, the coach's role can be determined to be management. A coach's role includes a variety of management like tasks including organizing, planning, budgeting, public relations etc., however, of



these goals, one of the most important is their impact the coach can have on leadership within the team. (Barrow, 1977).

Much like a coach, an employee's direct supervisor is the most influential person in that employee's performance, well-being, attitude and overall satisfaction (Perry et al., 2010). Research conducted by Feldman and Khademian in 2007 studied the informational and relational engagement that leaders bring to employees and how this develops a community of participation enabling effectiveness and inclusion. The relational work side is the idea that leaders have the ability to create connections between people and the feeling of belonging. Thus the relational work side can allow a manager to influence an environment and legitimize a sense of belonging. This is important in the creation of a work community (Feldman & Khademian, 2007).

Leaders should influence the level of sense of community experienced by employees because they create the organizational environment that employees are faced with. This was seen in Royal & Rossi's 1996 study on sense of community in schools and workplaces where it was found that students in high schools with divided facilities sensed a negative relationship among faculty members, which negatively impacted the sense of community they felt on campus. In an organizational structure, a teacher is similar to that of a leader thus this research may be comparable to workplace and organizational behavior studies.

## **Olympic Organizing Committee Environment**

Although a leader's effect can be seen in most work environments, the constructs of an Olympic Organizing committee differ from "normal" organizations. Olympic Organizing committees are short-term corporations that last less than six years. The majority of employees are hired less than a year in advance of the Olympics opening ceremonies (Frost, 1991). Sport mega-event organizing committees have three challenging characteristics; they grow rapidly, they are temporary and they are accountable for event symbolisms (Xing & Chalip, 2009). The summer Olympic Games is one of the world's largest and most popular mega-sport events. Although there has been much research conducted on the Olympics, most of it is focused on history (Barney, Wenn & Martyn, 2002) or impacts (Cashman, 2006). While there have been past accounts from Olympic executives on their personal struggles with hosting the game (Furlong, 2010; Ueberroth, 1985), the viewpoints of the workers who execute the event is missing. Human resource literature has suggested some of the challenges employees face would be rapid growth of the organization, the temporary nature of the organization and the symbolically significant environment (Xing & Chalip, 2009).

### **Rapid Growth.**

Rapid growth has been studied primarily in entrepreneurial ventures and shown that rapid growth and employee work life is a determinant for venture success and that this growth does affect the experiences that employees have at the organization (Gilbert, McDougall & Audretch, 2006). Rapid growth of an organization has been seen to

increase stress due to its expanding demands and constant change (Kotter & Sathe, 1978). This was seen in the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee (BOCOG). The organization was launched in 2001 with 35 staff, it grew to 319 by 2004, 1,133 in 2006 and finally 7,500 people planned to work for BOCOG in 2008 (Xing & Chalip, 2009). This rapid growth can give employees a feeling that their skills and organizational systems are inadequate to the growth. This feeling is increased by new employees who are introduced into the system and face a higher level of stress (Hambrick & Crozier, 1985).

In order to cope with rapid growth, an organization can combat employee stress by preparing them by providing information of what is to come and support to assist in addressing the needs of the new organization (Hall & Mirvis, 1995). Rapidly growing organizations can also benefit from a more flexible decision-making structure which can assist in allowing employees to be able to complete their job and feel in control of portions of their work (Kazanjian & Drazin, 1990). Olympic employees based on these studies are likely to feel stressed and frustrated over the constant growth in the organization. However, coping mechanisms such as social bonding or building of a sense of community by employees and leaders may assist in dealing with these frustrations.

### **Temporary Organizations.**

Temporary organizations are described as workplaces that have a short life-span. These are organizations that bring individuals from different backgrounds and skill-sets to complete a project. While there are many organizations throughout history that act in

this manner such as construction companies (Eccles, 1981) and theater groups (Goodman & Goodman, 1972), the research on these work environments is minimal. Similarly, uncertainty in Olympic environments is seen by a rapid assembly of staff who have not previously worked together (Kanter, 1995). The main difference in an Olympic short-term committee is that there is a limited continuance in this career field. Most employees are local and brought in at entry or mid-level management and have limited event experience and their future experience does not lie in the event world (McDonald, 1991). This is a unique characteristic because in fields like theater or construction, the workers bring relevant skills from past employment and the skills they learn in their new short-term role can be applicable to their next job.

There has been a focus from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to ensure transfer of knowledge within Olympic Organizing committees and to assist in creating future opportunities for previous games employees. Since the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games there has been an application of project management software and employment of ad-hoc groups of international event experts (Xing & Chalip, 2009). This has helped but either way, Olympic Organizing committees will be staffed with local people and the majority of employees are from outside of the sport industry and have little experience organizing an event like the Olympics (Xing & Chalip, 2009). This is where one of the problems arises with the Olympic games. The Olympics are a one-time event for the majority of employees this could affect the employees attitudes, expectations and morale. Also it has been seen that temporary employment that is not tied

to future career based skills or job prospects has led to employee insecurity and dissatisfaction (Feldman et al.,1994). This idea of employee insecurity and dissatisfaction makes the social dynamics of the workplace more important to these employees and that the informal working relationships will be more important than the formal work relationships (Xing & Chalip, 2009).

### **Symbolically Significant Environment.**

The Olympics has a well-established history and hold meanings to audiences and stakeholders that surpass just the sport. Symbolic systems are located everywhere in the Olympics from the logos, the phases or other representations such as the flame, five rings or manta ‘Celtius, Altius, Fortisu’ (Faster, higher, Stronger). These symbols add meaning and purpose to The Olympics that can act as symbolic glue across a large and diverse group (Glynn, 2008). The symbolic focus from sport mega-events provides employees a basis for understanding their experiences and the motivation to have these experiences (Xing & Chalip, 2009). This symbolism may provide employees with an additional value in their work because of the social and cultural meaning associated with the event. The degree of recognition of the symbols will be related to the degree by which they associate their efforts with the symbolization. This was seen in Xing and Chalip study, (2009) when they conducted a case study on the 2008 Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG) and found common themes from employees in their work context including; the Olympics are great and grand, the Olympics are valuable for China and BOCOG is uniquely high profile. These

characteristics demonstrated how these employees related to BOCOG and how the symbols that are associated with the Olympics were associated with their work place. One of the coping strategies that was found during this study was that these twelve employees interviewed view their work as an opportunity to live idealistically and passionately. This was enhanced because they had a sense that they were creating history (Xing & Chalip, 2009). This idea of once in a lifetime chance or the instituting of the importance of the history of the event has been seen to build an effective culture for event organization (McDonald, 1991).

The sense of community theory formulated by McMillian and Chavis (1986), is the basis of the research into if a leader, defined by possessing the big five traits can influence the community built in Olympic Organizing Committees. LOCOG has specific struggles that it faces as an organization such as the stress of the organizations rapid growth, short-term nature and the symbolically significant attributes of the environment. These challenges need to be combatted by a bonding of the employees, so there is not a sense of isolation or loneliness. This study focuses on the contribution a leader can make in the forming of a sense of community. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to discover how leadership influences sense of community within one venue at the London Olympic Organizing Committee.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Research Approach**

This research study took a qualitative approach to explore the influence a leader (leader will refer to the individual in a venue general manager position at the venue) has on the sense of community in the London Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG). The goal of qualitative research is to acknowledge the subjective nature of human experience and the meanings people attach to their experiences is their reality (Hemingway, 1995). This study employed a phenomenological approach; from this viewpoint, the study was focused on human behavior and their lived experience about the concept or phenomenon. Phenomenology is a method and philosophy. Phenomenology is not as simple as reporting one's experiences but aims to explain a deeper meaning that is important to the experience no matter which specific individual has had the experience (Schram, 2006). Phenomenology connects the interpretation and description of the experience.

One of the foundations of phenomenology is the concept of "essences" within shared experience. The idea of essence is constructed in the structure of the lived experience and is revealed in a way that allows one to grasp the significance and nature of this experience in a normally unseen way (Patton, 2002). Through analysis of shared

experiences, essences will provide the basis of where the phenomenon is comprehended by different people.

A researcher conducting a phenomenological study must ensure that human behavior occurs and is understood only in the context of relationships to people, events, situations, also that in order to comprehend how people perceive and act with objects of experiences, one must understand their daily life. Another important component for a researcher to understand is the phenomenon, they must understand the people's experience of or with that phenomena. The final concept for a researcher studying phenomenology is the idea that language is a central medium through how meaning is constructed, it is important to understand the language and meaning the participants place on this language. The researcher's role is to describe in detail the meaning of the experience as the participants reveal it. The individual and their relation to the experience will define reality. The concept of objectivity is displayed in phenomenology studies through a lens of the participants experience rather than a focus on casual relationships (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Participants**

The study participants were individuals who were employed by the London Organizing Committee (LOCOG) for the 2012 Olympics at the time of six months prior to the Opening Ceremonies of the Games. In phenomenology the sampling is limited to those participants who have experienced the same phenomenon. Thus, the studies focus is



on those participants who have experienced the social and psychological effects of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998).

The goal of this research is to explain how a leader influences sense of community in Olympic organizing committees, therefore the participants will be functional area managers assigned to the same venue at the London Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG). Functional area managers are lead planners in an area of expertise, such as food and beverage, sport, event services etc. The venue manager is the leader of the venue as a whole, and each venue will have at least one functional area manager from each service, which can range from six to twenty-five managers. In this study the leader will not be interviewed as the focus is on the perceptions of the functional area managers, those reporting to her. From the organizational chart (appendix 5) one can see the level of the venue manager and how the functional area managers and the researcher were all at an equal level and reported to the venue general manager.

Phenomenology has no set number of participants yet Creswell (1991) suggests anywhere from five to twenty-five interviews are necessary to show a clear picture. Once the researcher stops hearing new data and begins to see the same conceptual issues arise again and again they have reached a saturation of the data (Henderson, 2006). This study included eight participants. This number was selected because that is the number where saturation was felt to have been reached by the researcher as participants were not highlighting any new data, it all seemed repetitive. For this study, participants were determined by their venue assignment and having worked at the selected venue for at

least two months. This two-month period has been selected because venuization will have taken place. Venuization is the concept of decentralization in which the functional organization of technical and support staff and services at each venue are moved to sit and report to the venue manager (Xing & Chalip, 2009).

All participants signed an informed consent form, which outlined the purpose of the study to review the relationships that develop while working with a short-term sports organizing committee. These informed consent forms also outlined all confidentiality information. All information discovered was maintained confidential by the researcher. This occurred by the Olympic venue selected not being revealed and the roles of each participant not being disclosed or associated to any comments. All of the interviewees were given pseudonyms and presented using this pseudonym rather than the participant name. All field notes were kept locked in a desk where the researcher had the only key and all digital recordings are password protected on the researchers personal laptop.

Contact with these participants was established through the researchers' role as an insider in the organization. The idea of an 'insider' is that an individual has improved and prolonged access to a social setting of its members (Coy, 2006). The researcher was employed by LOCOG and worked alongside these managers prior to and during the data collection time. This had advantages in the data collection procedures, as there was already a level of trust and contextual understanding.

## **Role of the Researcher**

As previously mentioned, the researcher was an 'insider' in the organization and worked along side the participants. Through this, I experienced the phenomenon and can discuss my experiences in relation to it. My experiences will have an impact on this research as I have worked at a previous games and came into this position, a functional area manager, aware that I would be conducting research and may have modified my behavior to reflect this. My experience began at Vancouver 2010, working as a deputy venue manager. In this role, I spent 2 years preparing for the Olympics and Paralympics. The venue manager that led my team in at this Olympics was a kooky character, he did not have the traditional skills of a leader and I believe our team bonded over rolling our eyes at him more than working with him. This was seen by his inclusion of coordinated dances and nursery rhymes in meetings and not being the most supportive venue general manager. His deputy managers seemed to support the team more than he did, and most tasks appeared to be completed by these individuals rather than himself. In reflection of that experience, I did realize his untraditional leadership skills helped the team bond together, but was interested to see if the same bond would have occurred with a traditionally successful leader.

I started collecting observations upon my start at London 2012, which was a year in advance of the games. I was assigned to the researched venue the whole time of my employment and all of the functional area managers were my co-workers and the venue general manager was my supervisor.

## **Data Collection Procedures and Instrument**

The data was collected using a variety of methods including field observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews and a short survey, the Big Five Inventory. The combination of these methods allowed for a full picture of community creation at LOCOG to develop. These collection techniques have seen to be employed, in other sense of community studies (Dionogi & Lyons, 2010; Davidson & Cotter, 1991).

The field observations were collected through the creation of a notebook of observations that the researcher kept. As an insider, the researcher was immersed in the LOCOG community and recounted first-hand the environment and social relationships of the group. This role of an insider generated more in-depth and revealing data because of the rapport that was developed amongst co-workers (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007). These direct observations allowed for one to be inductive and able to rely less on prior conceptualization of the setting. Another reason for using observational techniques is that one can see items that may escape awareness of other individuals in the field (Patton, 2002). The participant observations recorded observational data as well as the researcher's interpretations of those observations. The observations were written following any major events or meetings involving the complete venue team. The focus will be on interactions between the leader (venue manager) and functional area managers. A template of the observation techniques is outlined in appendix 2.

The next data collection procedure used was semi-structured interviews. The use of a semi structured design was employed because of the research conducted by

McMillian & Chavis (1986) there is a domain of inquiry to develop questions around the topic and it is a purposeful method to get specific data (Richards & Morse, 2007). For the semi-structured interview script, open-ended questions were used and arranged according to Seidman's (1998) interview protocol. Therefore, the interview was broken into three parts life history, experiences/meanings associated with the phenomena and reflections of the phenomena. The first part on life history was a focused on past Olympic Games experience, time employed by LOCOG and previous work experiences to assist the researcher in developing an idea of their experience in organizations and particularly Olympic environments. The next part focused on the participant's idea of community and relationships that have been formed in their community. It focused on how their leader influenced the environment they worked in. Finally the conclusion of the interview was a reflection of the meanings of the community or lack thereof formed and the relationships that have been built and how their leader has affected these relationships. This question format assisted in uncovering if the employees felt a sense of community at work and how this sense of communities is developed (The interview questions are in appendix 3). Throughout the interviews, questions were supplemented in the interview outline with planned and unplanned probes to uncover the nature of the person's experience with sense of community at LOCOG (Richards & Morse, 2007). The goal of the interview process was to understand how participants make meaning of their experience. The interview structure allowed them to make sense to themselves and the interviewer (Seidman, 1998).

The semi structured interview data collection took place from April 2012 until September 2012. Eight LOCOG functional managers were interviewed; all of the participants had been assigned to the designated venue for at least two months. These interviews took place outside of work either during lunch hours or outside of the workday. The interviews took place at a quiet, not distracting location such as private meeting rooms. The interviews took place when there was no one else present and confidentiality was maintained by ensuring the location was secured from any passerby's. The times and dates of collection were based on convenience for the researcher and the participant. The interviews took from twenty minutes to forty-five minutes. They were digitally recorded and later transcribed verbatim.

The findings for this research was developed from the data collected. The focus for the study was discussing the viewpoints of participants and attempting to make sense of their experiences through the application of the sense of community theory , which was discussed in my literature review(Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the participants were not asked direct questions about sense of community, rather questions about their experiences and which allowed for meanings of community to emerge from the interview data. This study was primarily exploratory and its purpose was to investigate the phenomena of leaders influence in community development at LOCOG.

In order to measure the five-factor model of personality (FFM) of the leader, this study employed the Big Five Inventory (BFI), constructed by John, Donahue, and Kentle in 1991. This measurement tool was required as the study was primarily exploratory and

when beginning this research there was a concern that participants would not consider the venue general manager a leader. Thus, this BFI would assist in providing a scale for the researcher to understand if according the literature they are a leader or not. This is a 44-item scale which represents the big five traits. This inventory allowed for a brief, efficient and flexible assessment of the five factor dimensions. This short scale prevented the participants from experiencing subject boredom and fatigue (John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI employs the use of short phrases based on trait adjectives, which are known to be indicators of the Big Five, thus the BFI items are brief but avoids ambiguous pitfalls. BFI items are rated on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1 disagree strongly to 5 agree strongly. There has been sufficient testing conducted to demonstrate its reliabilities. This is documented in John & Srivastava (1999), who suggest that “There have been alpha reliabilities of the BFI scales typically range from .75 to .90 and average above .80; three-month test-retest reliabilities range from .80 to .90, with a mean of .85. Validity evidence includes substantial convergent and divergent relations with other Big Five instruments as well as with peer ratings” (John & Srivasta, 1999 p. 22). The BFI was given to participants to complete following their semi-structured interview, as to not influence them to consider the venue manager throughout the interview. The BFI has been used as a peer evaluation tool in many studies regarding personalities and both self reporting and peer reporting are generally accepted practice for the BFI (Shiota et al., 2006). The BFI is enclosed in appendix 1.

## **Data Analysis**

All of interviews were coded manually, this was chosen because of the limited amount of raw data and the researcher's preference in the ability to manipulate the data into visual categories through Microsoft word and by hand (Basit, 2003). The manual coding took place first by breaking down the interviews into a table in Word and including two additional columns, one with a number associated in it, and the other a blank column for the research to input codes. Throughout the document the researcher would code a statement and if that statement matched a previous code, I would input a code and then the number that matched the previous code to check how consistent the phases/words were.

In a phenomenology study, the core of the analysis process is identifications of themes to describe the structure of the experience (Creswell, 2007). This theming occurs through the coding process, the goal of coding is to "fracture" the data and formulate categories that allow for comparison between items in the same category, this will aid in development of theoretical concepts (Strauss, 1995). This study employed the techniques of inductive analysis and constant comparison in its data analysis; this involved using a word processing program and going through the data and coding it into categories and topics, using flags and colored text. Then, the categories and topics were integrated into themes and subthemes. Finally, categories were removed or adapted; which allowed the main themes to be developed (Henderson, 2006). The combination of these themes



allowed for the study to have a rich description of the essence of the leader's role in sense of community building.

Finally, the Big Five Inventory (BFI) was analyzed by measuring the levels that the co-workers rated their leader. Due to the small sample size (eight peer reviews) this was an easy process of comparison. If the leader is found to be rated to have relatively high correlations with the big five personality traits (or low in the dimension of neuroticism) they can be considered to have the traits that are predictive of a leader (Judge et al. 2002).

### **Credibility, Accuracy and Reliability**

Credibility in phenomenology exists in the researcher's ability to describe and discuss the subject's experiences in a way that people who have had the experience can recognize it as their own and if the reader has never had the experience the goal is for them to understand what the participants experienced.

This study used a variety of sources and methods to collect data, which reduced the risk that the conclusions of the research reflect biases or limitations of one source, it allowed for the researcher to have a broader and more secure understanding of sense of community in LOCOG. Accuracy was ensured in the interview data because all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Following the transcription, the interviews were returned to the participants to ensure that the information recorded was accurate. The use of the researcher's observation notes and the interview transcripts provided a well-developed image of how a leader can influence sense of community.

Reliability was achieved by using an external auditor during data analysis to ensure that the analysis highlighted the essence of the data. The external auditor and the researcher had similar coding and agreed that the codes associated with the data, matched the essence from the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

The goal of phenomenology is to provide descriptions rich in detail that provide insight into the phenomena being studied. The strength in phenomenology is not to predict outcomes but to describe in detail the experience of sense of community. The stories shared by participants allowed for readers to connect to the phenomena, and understand the complexities in creating this environment for organizing committee employees (Seidman, 1991).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand how a leader influences sense of community in the London 2012 Olympic Organizing Committee. This study involved interviewing eight individuals employed by LOCOG working at a specific venue. The researcher was an insider in the organization who was fully integrated as a functional area manager, thus a co-worker of all the participants. The results will discuss the participants, setting, the Big Five Inventory and general themes that developed from the interviews. The results and data analysis focused on the leader's impact on sense of community, and although there was a lot of data collected, only data involving the leader's impact was analyzed.

#### **Descriptions of Participants**

Eight functional area managers agreed to participate in this study. These functional area managers all worked full-time for London Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG) and were managers of a certain function at the same venue, i.e. Security, Catering, Event Services. All of these functional area managers reported to the same leader or venue general manager.

Table 1 highlights the demographics of the participants. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. There were four males and four females interviewed and all interviewees were employed in fulltime positions, not including their

position at LOCOG, for approximately three to twenty-five years. In the chart below, the information related to the time employed by LOCOG references the time they had been employed by LOCOG at interview time.

A pseudonym was also provided to the leader for the venue general manager (Claire), which allows for the identity of the leader to remain confidential. Although Claire was not a direct participant, she was a main focus of this research thus her demographic information is important. This study did not include Claire in the interview process simply because the intent was to grasp the participant experiences and therefore as the leader, her information was not necessary. Without interviewing Claire, some general demographic information that the researcher was aware of was that she was 40 years old, had no Olympic experience previously. She had managed large teams and large venues in the United Kingdom for many years, even running the Brit awards for numerous years. She was employed by LOCOG for about 3 years at the end of the Paralympics.

Table 1. Characteristics of Participants (n=8)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Kate<br/>Female<br/>Age: 34<br/>Lived in London: 2 Years<br/>Nationality: Canadian<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 4<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: Worked for Vancouver 2010<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 16 months</p> | <p>Jess<br/>Female<br/>Age: 38<br/>Lived in London: 8 months<br/>Nationality: British<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 2*<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: N/A<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 8 months</p> |
| <p>Mark<br/>Male<br/>Age: 35<br/>Lived in London: 2 years<br/>Nationality: British<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 3<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: N/A<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 20 months</p>                          | <p>Brody<br/>Male<br/>Age: 39<br/>Lived in London: 5 months<br/>Nationality: American<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 3<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: N/A<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 5 months</p>  |
| <p>Mary<br/>Female<br/>Age: 40<br/>Lived in London: N/A (lives 45-60min away)<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 3<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: N/A<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 6 months</p>                                | <p>Jake<br/>Male<br/>Age: 35<br/>Lived in London: 24 months<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 5<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: Spectator<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 24 months</p>                     |
| <p>Craig<br/>Male<br/>Age: 27<br/>Lived in London: 9 months<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 4<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: Worked for Vancouver 2010<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 9 months</p>                            | <p>Ann<br/>Female<br/>Age: 39<br/>Lived in London: 18 months<br/>Companies employed by in last 10 years: 3<br/>Previous Olympic Experience: N/A (FIFA 2010 World Cup)<br/>Time employed by LOCOG: 18 months</p>    |

\* Currently on secondment from public industry to LOCOG

## **Description of Setting**

Throughout the interviews, participants highlighted challenges in relation to the environment in which the participants were working in and how this environment may have contributed to the leaders success or failure in creating a sense of community. As an insider in the organization, the researcher was enabled to experience the phenomenon with the participants. Through this experience, the researcher can confirm that LOCOG had some specific challenges that a normal organization may not face. There were four items that seemed to be repeated by participants and related to by the researcher; the organization being short term and having a set deadline, the size of the organization, the excessive hours that the participants felt they worked, and how the Olympics were not just a job.

### **Rapid Growth**

One of the qualities of an organizing committee is the rapid growth of the organization. While working at LOCOG, in the researchers first day orientation there were over 200 people in the orientation program. This program ran twice weekly at this point in time (one year away from Opening Ceremonies). As the start of the Olympics moved closer, the orientations started to run daily, and thus, at about 6 months prior to the opening ceremony, there was close to 200 people starting a day. This creates a large amount of new people in one organization, and LOCOG seemed to compartmentalize and create separate areas for each of these new people or departments to work. This was explained

by some of the participants in their interviews, such as Kate in reference to her significant other who was employed by LOCOG as well,

“Because we’ve never worked in the same building, the teams we both work on never ever come into contact with each so for all intensive purposes we almost work for separate companies” (Kate)

LOCOG was spilt into three separate buildings in the same area in Canary Wharf, London, United Kingdom. Using three separate buildings was necessary due to the size of the organization but this did create a distinctive barrier between functional areas. One either worked at 10 Upper Bank or the Barclays Building or Canada Square and as an employee, one would have to carry three security identification tags to enter each building. Mark highlights how in the LOCOG organization there are many facets and departments that it is harder for a single employee to understand, or name all of the departments in the organizations:

“Some things that I guess are still quite mind bending is how big things are, and how small a cog we are in the whole process of the games, you know like, even random stuff like there is somebody who gets on the tube with me every morning and she’s got a chef de mission’s bag or whatever, and I know that’s quite a fairly big part of the games, and I’ve sat through presentation, but I have no concept of what they do” (Mark)

The idea of rapid growth in the environment is an important concept to understand because a lot of the participants interviewed listed this as one of their main frustrations with their job. The idea of being frustrated with the rapid growth can be seen by Craig and Ann’s statements,

“Umm, a bit frustrating it’s just such a large organization that has been thrown together so fast, with new additions like weekly trying to get their feet, trying to figure out exactly what they’re doing and how they fit into the pieces of the puzzle, it starts to get pretty frustrating if your working on a pretty large project, but you keep getting deferred to people who are brand new, oh no this person is working on it now, and you keep having to rehash everything you’ve been working on...” (Craig)

“Kind of the staffing structure LOCOG has had, where a lot of people come in new, and then you have to go over stuff.. I know you’ll never get away with that in any organization with new people joining but maybe the rate at which new people have joined and the amount of new people that have joined and have not always been up to speed..... That’s just the nature of the organization... I guess” (Ann)

These feelings of frustration were repeated by many participants and highlighted one of the challenges that a venue manager would be faced with in creating a community.

### **Short Term Organization**

LOCOG has a date that the organization ceases to operate. The bid was awarded in 2005, Opening Ceremonies were on July 25, 2012 and the organizing committee would not delay that date without significant anger from the IOC. As an insider, the researcher experienced the hiring process and the steps the organization takes to prepare the employees for their redundancy. When one is hired at LOCOG they are provided with a detailed employment contract including a set end date, which was confirmed three times by LOCOG. Once upon hire, again in May 2012 in preparation for the final cluster of test events, and finally at the start of the Olympics in July 2012. Each time, the employee has to verify they understand their redundancy date and package. This contributed to a constant feeling of being near the end. Participants referred to the short timelines in



LOCOG in relation to their contracts being short-term and the project-taking place over a short time period. Craig and Jess highlight these notions:

“We’re all contracted out, so we’re all just here for a good time, not a long”

(Craig)

“It is the nature of the project, because people have travelled from all over the world to be here for this project, and so, you know, they want to make the most of their time London, the most of meeting people and so do I.” (Jess)

Not only was the idea of the participants having short contracts, it was suggested that workers would be able to handle a more intense timeline. This was important because the Olympic organization is set up as a series of timelines that must be met. Brody clearly articulates this notion by:

“You have a short window to grow into the role, and look again It’s because are working at such accelerated times, it was a bit challenging” (Brody)

The constant reminder of the short nature of the organization was a continued theme in the participants interview; this caused the participants to feel a certain urgency throughout their time of employment at LOCOG.

### **Excessive Hours**

The idea of working excessive hours was not a surprise to many people in the Olympic Organizing committee. Most people expected their hours of work to increase near games time, but it seemed a lot of participants did find the hours they were working 6 months to a year away from the games surprising. One of the participants, Jess, who was on a

secondment, and was employed by a public agency, had an interesting comparison to bring between her current role at LOCOG and her previous role with the public agency,

“I’m normally on flexi-hours, and flexi-days off here and there. And at a different project, obviously you can’t take time off whenever but I didn’t quite appreciate how hard people work, and how hard I’d have to work and the hours.” (Jess)

Kate discussed how during test events last summer, in her functional area, she and her team did not get to enjoy as many of the events due to the nature of the workload,

“I think during test events, last summer [a year prior to Opening Ceremonies] we were working crazy hours there was a group of us that would be there till midnight some nights”

Even during test events, the idea of lots of employees having to work until midnight is excessive in an organization. The hours that employees felt they must put in to complete their daily tasks were unexpected and excessive. This forced many of the participants to put their outside of work life on hold. This can be seen by Jake, who highlighted his struggle with the workload and a social life

“Sometimes in the case of this job, it meant working excessive hours that tends to mean social life takes a bit of a backseat....Umm so yea, I would say in a way work dominated.” (Jake)

With employees working so many hours and spending most of their day with their co-workers, a leader may find it challenging to get participants to attend events outside of work hours.

### **Olympics are more than a job**

It is obvious that the Olympics are an internationally recognizable event and with employment in this organization there are certain perks and an association of being an amazing career opportunity. As an insider in this organization, the researcher has seen the reaction when one is explaining their job and states they've worked for the London 2012 Olympics, most people will react very positively and want to figure out how you got to do something so great.

Many participants in this study felt that the Olympics were something big and an amazing thing to be a participant in. This can be seen in Brody expressing how even with all the hardships, it's the Olympics, you push through. "I think the Olympics is a big thing, the fact that it's the Olympics you're automatically going to keep the work and bring that little extra bit of effort and energy", This sentiment was echoed by Mary, who felt "there was a complete sense of excitement about what was going to happen and unlike any other job I had done before".

The participants also highlighted that the Olympics brought out the best and brightest employees. Not only had they worked hard to be in their positions, but there was a general sense of their co-workers deserving to be in these positions as well,

"Just as in genuinely, I can't think of anybody as an idiot.... compared to other workplaces there are those kind of people you see and think how did they get this job" (Mark).

The Olympics are a big, life-changing event for all the employees and individuals involved in with the Games. The leader's role is to assist them with succeeding in their job and also to help them find a balance with the constant stress in the environment.

### **Big Five Inventory (BFI)**

One of the components that all the participants filled out was the Big Five-Factor Inventory. This was the 44-item inventory that was designed to rank the venue managers possession of the five traits; extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism. This scale was provided to participants following the semi-structured interview. The possession of a high level of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and a low level of neuroticism is indicative of leadership.

#### **Extraversion**

Extraversion on the Big Five Inventory included items such as talkative, full of energy and has an assertive personality. All eight participants ranked the venue manager highly on extraversion including mainly strongly agrees and agrees. The mean ranking of Claire's extraversion out of 5, was 4.37 (SD .41).

#### **Agreeableness**

Agreeableness was strongly correlated to the venue manager's personality. This factor included items on the scale such as is helpful and unselfish with others, is generally trusting and is considerate and kind. This factor was seen to be ranked strongly agree to

agree on the majority of the participants inventory, the mean for agreeableness was 4.25 out of 5 (SD .75).

### **Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness is shown to display qualities of being a reliable worker, persevering until the task is completed, following plans and doing things efficiently on the BFI.

Conscientiousness was the venue manager's highest ranked trait; this can be seen in the mean of 4.7. The standard deviation was also the lowest at .27.

### **Openness to Experience**

The concept of openness to experience was one of the least strongly correlated trait, it included items on the scale like is original, comes up with new ideas, is curious about many things, is ingenious and is sophisticated in art, music or literature. This trait received a mean of 3.5 out of 5 (SD .29).

### **Neuroticism**

This trait is described on the BFI as being depressed or blue, being tense, worrying a lot, and being moody. This trait on the scale requires a low ranking for one to be considered a leader. Our venue manager's ranking was 2.1, out of 5 (SD .51).

### **General Themes**

To more fully understand the employee's experiences and feelings of community developed from the leader in LOCOG, all the interviews were analyzed as a collective body of data. In a phenomenology study, the core of the analysis process is identifications of themes to describe the structure of the experience (Creswell, 2007).

This theming occurs through the coding process as the goal of coding is to “fracture” the data and formulate categories that allow for comparison between items in the same category which will aid in development of theoretical concepts (Strauss, 1995). This study employed the techniques of inductive analysis and constant comparison in its data analysis. The combination of these themes allowed for the study to have a rich description of the essence of the leader’s role in sense of community building. There were three major themes that developed: competencies possessed by the leader, identifying with the team and finally the idea of an intrinsic bond. View appendix 4 for the theming diagram.

### **Competencies**

The first main theme that emerged from the interviews was competencies that the leader possessed. How these qualities made the participants feel a stronger bond with the team and a stronger bond with the leader. The subthemes under competencies that seemed to repeat from participant to participant were the idea of the leader being supportive, approachable, welcoming, respectful and understanding the functional area managers jobs.

#### **Supportive**

One of the main themes that came up time and time again was the idea of the leader supporting or assisting for the functional area managers. The leader created an environment where the functional managers felt they could be honest with her and receive the support necessary to accomplish their goal. As an insider and co-worker of the

functional area managers, I can attest to feeling the leaders support in many of my issues. The Olympics are a constant battle of budget concerns and what is required to perform one's job. The leader's job is to balance the books, yet ensure all the functional areas are performing at a high level. This is can be an arduous task. There were many instances where the leader supported my decision that I had reduced headcount as much as possible. Instead of pressuring me, she accepted that and fought for me at a higher level, thus, allowing me to feel supported.

Other functional areas felt this reach of support; this can be seen in quotes from Craig, Kate and Mary.

“And I think Claire is always really good, if you have something really important she will support you in trying to get that message out as much as possible” (Kate).

“Claire has been pretty supportive on everything I've been doing; so that's great. I've had to bring her in on a couple things when they has actually been a strained relationship between functional areas” (Craig).

Mary's quote encompassed many of the competencies Claire possessed and how these influenced the team to conduct them selves in the same manner,

“I think that Claire did a good job of building a strong team, and a strong team is not just a team full of very experienced people, but also a team very open to everyone in the team, very welcoming, very caring and people were caring, they did care about other people and what was happening and supportive of each other, so yeah I think she definitely influenced the way that the team worked across the whole venue.” (Mary).

## **Approachable**

Another sub-theme in competencies was that the leader possessed the competency of approachability. Most of the functional area managers felt they could walk up to the leader at any time and get her attention or assistance. This was believed to be a more unique quality as they were under the impression that many other venue managers at other venues did not seem to have this same quality. This can be seen in Mark's interview,

“Yeah, again very good, I feel that I can always grab her if I need to, and again I am not aware that's common, I don't think that's the case at certain venues. She is very approachable, very helpful as well, and I don't think I've ever asked her for something that she, well, she might not have been able to do, but she's not like forget it, she has always been able, or been willing to help” (Mark).

The idea that not only can you approach her, but also she will try to support you and assist you seemed to be an important component to participants. This idea that the leader will make herself available was discussed by Jess and Brody as well.

“We can sit down and have meetings, there is pretty much not an functional area that I haven't been able to sit down with, I think that comes down from Claire, even the ones that everyone felt were traditionally challenging for us, really weren't, you know, because there was always a very good open door policy. So I think she got that ball rolling” (Brody).

“She is always accessible if that makes sense. So yeah, if you ring or e-mail, you know your going to get a response within 24 hours, and you know, if you ring she is going to answer the phone. So you know, professionally she is always there in order to deal with any problems that come up”(Jess).

The concept of approachability seemed to be a key cornerstone of the leadership style that Claire presented. She placed importance on being accessible and approachable to all her functional area managers, which in turn helped the functional area managers bring this quality of accessibility to others.



## Welcoming

The idea of being welcoming is a difficult concept to explain. This is the idea of being able to walk into a room where you know no one and feeling like you do fit in and you are not the odd one out. The ability to create this feeling is important in a team atmosphere. My time working with Claire even as a new employee, I never felt out of place or not invited. Claire, the leader of our venue, did a very good job at creating an environment where anyone could show up, and she would talk to them and introduce them and make sure they were included in the conversations. This feeling started with her, but was passed through the team and that helped new members feel invested in our team. This can be seen in how the events were organized and the main goals of the team,

“I think one of the reason our venue ended up with such a strong bond within the team is because of the things that we did socially, Claire made a conscious effort to organize nights out, to introduce new members of the team as and when they came on board, so there were some quite significant milestones we did in our team building where new people were coming on board but we then made sure we had a social engagement very close to that, always tried to make people feel that they were welcome to the team, even if some people where on the fringes of the team i.e. they were like people for the Paralympics team working on another venue during the Olympics, Claire always tried to make sure they were invited to something, they felt welcome”(Jake).

This idea of feeling welcome is taken one step further when Kate discussed her first day with the venue team,

“It was funny because I think one of my first meetings was actually going to the venue, I remember going and I didn’t know anyone, and it was my 2<sup>nd</sup> time on the park, and the first time I had been on the park wasn’t even with LOCOG, That’s always weird you’ve been there for awhile, but you don’t anyone from these teams, but you know what your doing because you’ve worked on other ones, and that kind of thing.. but when I got there everyone was quite friendly, I think it was actually you who started talking. It’s just funny those connections with individuals but I would say as a whole this team is quite welcoming.” (Kate).

This competency of being welcoming was mentioned by many of the participants in my research and many of the functional area managers felt strongly about the idea of being a welcoming team and the leader bringing that to inspire others to act the same. This can be seen in Mary's strongly worded quote,

“And when you hear other stories from other places, you know you can see the difference that was, without a shadow of a doubt, everyone felt included.” (Mary).

### **Respect**

The idea of respect was a constant sub-theme. Many of the participants mentioned the respect that they had for Claire (the leader) and the respect the leader had for them. This bi-directional understanding of respect was important in the formation of the bonds of the team. The Olympic environment is full of competing interests; every functional area services a client group. One of the main roles of the venue manager is balancing each clients interests and making decisions based on whose need or requirement is greater, in her opinion. This idea of listening and decision making can be seen below,

“I believe I can stand up to her what I believe in, representing my clients and my professional side of things, so if something is not right professionally for me and my clients I can say that, and I believe she will respect my opinion in what I say, and professionally she will look at the situation and she will make a call whether it's for or against us, but you know she does a good job in listening to opinions and is quite a mutual manager that can see both sides you know of the argument if you like then make a good call” (Ann).

Jess further supported the idea of competing interests and respect and support from the leader,

“I respect them, I know they are objective I know if they could they would...so I sent an e-mail to Claire, we're not going to find a mutually agreeable solution here, can you please arbitrate, and sent her the e-mail thread. And she came back

and said fine, I'll find out what's going on and I'll step in and have a word, so that's what she is doing, so, you know, I know she'll be objective, from a judicial perspective, if they are deciding which way or how things should be run or disagreements between people, I respect them even if I don't like the decisions they make, they are doing it with the right approach, and I know that they will consider both sides."

This concept respecting and understanding the decisions the venue manager makes is an important concept, but she had to earn that respect from the functional area managers, and Jake had a strong opinion of how she became so respected.

"I think she almost demanded respect, from the way that she worked, she didn't demand respect physically on the spot, saying to people you will respect me. She breed respect by the fact she worked very long hours, she was very detailed, very through, and I think a lot of people recognized that without prompting to." (Jake). Every participant interviewed highlighted the idea of respect either providing it to the leader or being given respect from the leader. This sub-theme seemed to be constant and an important part of the environment to the participants, as it helped them feel that their voice mattered.

### **Understanding of Job**

As a subtheme of competencies, the concept of the leader actually understanding and accepting what each functional area does as a job was an area that the participants felt was important to them and made their job easier and more enjoyable. The ability for the leader to make them feel like they were not working under her but with her was also something that seemed to make individuals feel more invested in the team, this idea of being equal can be seen from Mary,

“I wanted to support her in those things, as we all did and yeah, I found that when I was working, I always felt an equal colleague to her, not, a subordinate. If that’s the right word.” (Mary).

The idea of having support from the venue manager and the venue manager promoting how important the work that the functional area managers do, helps breed respect and acceptance in a venue team.

“I think from a venue management perspective, everyone’s been very respectful I know sometimes [My functional area’s] stuff can be seen like yeah, yeah, yeah, whatever, but I think Claire puts a lot of emphasis on it and that obviously seeing as that’s what we are focusing on. I think she is really respectful of it and does support us in what we need to do and understands the importance of what we do which I think is fantastic.”

Brody presented an interesting viewpoint on the subtheme of understanding one’s job; he explained how the leader completely understood his role,

“Claire, is probably one of the best Venue General Managers at work, I think because she has a background similar to mine in Catering, she knows the game to a point that it kept me honest, she understood where maybe some other functional area leads wouldn’t really understand why we couldn’t deliver something or do something for them.” (Brody).

The leader understanding his role was a contrast to the functional area managers, because they did not understand what exactly he did or what he did not do. This had a wider

impact on his ability to feel accepted by the community. This can be seen in a quote when asked to explain further how the functional area leads not understand affected him,

“We’re not operators, so I think a lot of people didn’t understand that, which I understand you know, that’s fair, I also think, because I came on board so late from everyone else.... but I think by the time the Olympics came around, people were a lot more comfortable that we were going to deliver what we said we were going to deliver department wise, and I think that is when it came a little easier to integrate with people and feel a little more comfortable” (Brody)

It took the functional area managers fully understanding his role and accepting that they would deliver what was promised for him to begin feeling part of the community. This is an area that was not mentioned by other functional area managers, but was not explored in any other interviews, as this was one of the last interviews conducted. The leader understanding the role of the functional area managers and placing importance on each job helped each participant feel that they contributed to the community and thus a sense of community.

### **Summary of Competencies Theme**

The theme of competencies that the leader possessed presented itself numerous times in the data and the idea of the leader being supportive, approachable, welcoming, respectful and understanding the functional area managers jobs seemed to have an impact on how they bonded with other functional area managers and the leader themselves. The feeling of these items helped the functional area managers feel more like part of the team and enjoy their Olympic experience.

### **Identifying with Team**

The idea of the leader encouraging and promoting other functional areas to identify with the team and each other was another theme that presented itself in the data. The subthemes associated with this was the idea of no competition being present in the venue, the leader being honest and trustworthy, promotion of working together, and the possession of a common symbol.

## **No competition in venue**

The idea of no competition present can be directly associated with the environment of the Olympics, the nature of it being short-term, temporary and all staff having the same end date. The leader does have an impact on the creation of a feeling of competition amongst venue functional area manager due to their competing interests and the politics that may be presented within the environment. The leader can breed competition or create a welcome environment. The comparison between a venue team where there is competition between department managers and a venue with no competition can be seen in Kate's perception of a venue she briefly worked with to ours,

“Whereas another venue team is so dysfunctional, they never have any venue meetings, so no one has a chance to talk to everyone all together, certain people within venue management team don't speak to each other, which doesn't matter how good you are at disguising that, people know. And there is such a struggle for power and that kind of thing and I think that sort of reflects in the environment...after working with them for a couple of months and then you see the difference [from them to our venue team] in this it's completely black and white.” (Kate).

In contrast to the feelings at that venue, many participants discussed how they felt no need to compete and could just do their job,

“Personally for me as I looked around, there was no office politics, there was no, there may well have been, but I didn't see it, there was no, one up-manship, because as much as everyone had the same point of working towards, at the same point most people had the same point of termination and finishing as well, so you didn't have to prove anything beyond what you were doing, so it was quite a refreshing place to work.” (Mary).

Jess echoed this sentiment

“I find it extremely social able, I like the way that everybody is here to do a job, and it's not about competing to try and get a promotion. That sort of thing, so effectively the people that are here want to be here, enjoy being here, you can tell just by they general determiner and how they interact with you.” (Jess).

The idea of not having to compete with others or show off what one can do allows for individuals to just bond and be socialable. This is an important concept for a venue team to feel because once people stop focusing on how to beat another department and just focus on their job, they can be more successful at identifying as a team member than trying to separate themselves.

### **Honest and Trustworthiness of the Leader**

In order to identify with a person or team, one must trust that the identity they are presenting is truthfully and honest. If they do not believe the leader or feel comfortable with them, they will not be able to relate to the community and bond. The feelings of honesty and trust for Claire (the leader) can be seen by Mark's willingness to be honest with her and not hide the truth,

“I don't think I've ever asked her for something that she, well, she might not have been able to do, but she's like forget it, she has always been able, or been willing to help. And you know, and that is the stuff to be pretty honest that you feel you can and go ask for stuff rather than just ignore it” (Mark).

The relationship between a leader and their team is very important and having the relationship based in trust and understanding helps team members understand how they fit in the structure.

“I think there was a good trust relationship there. [Venue Manager and himself] I felt more comfortable with our understanding of our relationship and understanding expectations of me in terms of the team.” (Jake).

The respect of the leader's honesty to them can be seen in their ability to relate to the leader as well,

“The other thing I really like about Claire, she is realistic and she has these moments where she is like... Well that’s not just going to work, or that is ridiculous.. Which I think is nice because you see the human side, I think it’s hard when you see that person that never shows that human side or doesn’t have that moment that is like what are these people doing...I think she shows that but still in a professional way, it’s really important” (Kate).

The ability for the leader to show her human side and express in a professional manner her honest opinion about work items unite the team and makes them feel they can express honesty back to the leader.

### **Personality Traits in Common**

The idea that an employee and their leader have similar traits was considered important to many of the participants. This can be seen in the reason they choose to work at the venue or just how they became more integrated and identified within the venue team. Due to the nature of the work of the Olympics, the long hours and amount of time spent working with the venue manager (leader) it was important for the functional area manager’s personality to be able to relate to the leaders and thus, identifying more with the team. Statements made by Kate, regarding her time at LOCOG, highlighted one of the major issues between her and the venue manager at another venue.

“I worked on a couple of other test events, a lot of the venue teams I really did love, and I think a lot of it comes down to venue management cause they’re kind of the ones that shape it. But there was one test event that it was so unorganized which wasn’t so much the venue teams fault, but I swear If I had to do that venue at games time... it just turns out the personalities on that venue I didn’t have as much in common with them, I didn’t enjoy as much, but again the manager there now gets along with them really well. And I guess it’s just a personality thing” (Kate)



Kate went on to discuss how she had bonded with the leader at our venue, and explained how our leader's approach to work allowed her to feel more comfortable and happier in her role,

“I really like Claire, she is realistic and she has these moments where she is like, well that's not just going to work, or that is ridiculous. Which I think is nice because you see the human side, I think it's hard when you see that person that never shows that human side or don't have that moment that is like what are these people doing, you know what I mean? I think she shows that but still in a professional way, it's really important, but that's just what works for my personality.” (Kate)

Other participants felt this bond with the leader as well and it helped them feel more comfortable in the LOCOG environment, this was addressed by Mary and Ann.

“I enjoyed it, as I say, I probably share quite a few of the same traits as her in my management style, so I felt very comfortable straight away.” (Mary).

“I think I don't know maybe it's just personalities in each team and who connects with who and whatever but I think they've been fun and people have wanted to come based on the connection within the team.” (Ann).

The idea that a functional area manager's personality relates to the leaders personality seemed to help the functional area managers feel more comfortable and more willing to be part of the team as a whole. This increased their desire to be a part of the venue and identify with the venue.

### **Working Together**

As an insider in the organization, the idea of working together is a common concept, to solve problems there are multiple functions or departments involved. One of the struggles in the Olympic environment is the idea of dual reporting. In dual reporting, each functional area manager reports not only to the venue general manager (or leader) but also to a cluster manager in their department. For example the security manager would

report to Claire (the leader) and a cluster manager in the Security department. Department managers need to constantly balance the priorities and goals of the venue and the priorities/goals of their functional area or department. As a functional area manager, there is a balance between both interests. One cannot forget their functional area priorities and only do what the venue needs because there are repercussions. If one functional area manager agrees to stay later on venue to help out a single venue, it could have implications for other managers in their function. For example, if the security manager agreed to watch the exit gates at our venue, which was not in the security plan, but knew it was a gap in our venue and stepped up to assist, other venues would hear of this and would put pressure on their security managers to do the same. This could force security to expand their operating plan to include this at all venues, which they were not originally scoped to do.

Putting the venue first without abandoning our functional area plans was an important concept that the leader helped the functional managers manage. She focused the departments on the idea of working together in a balanced method and putting the venue first without us feeling like we were abandoning our functional area operating plans, this can be seen in a quote by Mary,

“We were all different teams but in one bubble, but I think we weren’t afraid as a team to look at things and say okay, they may have done that there at another venue a different way but what is going to work best for us, and our team.”

This idea of working together and it assisting in forming a strong bond and identity as a team was confirmed by Jake

“Claire built a very strong team, I think whilst there were personality clashes within the team, I think the way that people were able to resolve issues was very professional, very successful and I don’t think we had an massive underlying major issues essentially it all led to everyone pulling together and being a big team, on the whole everyone felt apart of and so we effectively created...our own community.” (Jake).

The leaders encouragement of everyone working together and making decisions together created an environment where people felt they contributed and thus, identified with the team. This was made clear by Brody,

“[Claire could] lash out in two ways you can really be a control freak about it or you can be very inclusive, and I think she [Claire] has always led with a very inclusive mindset. She always been keen to get people around the table everyone, and trust me I’ve been in work environments where you were dictated to by a small group of people when you really should have been part of the decision making process, so that’s a big thing,” (Brody).

The ability to bring the team together and make them feel like they are one unit is a key in being able for one to say they are the venue rather than their department title. Mark expressed how before starting to work and sit with the venue, his friendships and relationships were more associated with department area, but now when asked if he identifies with the venue, he answered with, “Oh completely yes. I am the venue” (Mark).

### **Common Symbol**

The desire for the team to want to have something to take away from this experience or an item to remind them of their time at our venue is something that is a physical representation of the bonding of the team. As an insider, I know I felt the desire to purchase these items and wear or showcase them proudly to others. It was a one-of a kind

item that only people at our venue would have access to. The main item that our venue created was a water bottle which was unique to our venue and was spearheaded by the leader.

The team had a positive response to the water bottle and felt it helped them identify with the venue and help our clients identify with the venue. This can be seen from the perceptions of some of the functional area managers with having the water bottles,

“But I do think as I said it is one of the small pieces that helps, similar to the water bottles, but yeah I mean it’s always fun to have a little token or a little special thing that is maybe unique to your group. Or something like that and I think specially as it gets bigger if you saw people with that water bottle you’d know oh they were at your venue or you’d know you have something in common with them.” (Kate)

“I think it has for the people who have actually bought them [water bottles], it’s cool cause like venue management has done it, you guys have done it, We got a bunch for our people...and I guess it just shows venue management that the functional areas that do really truly want to be integrated into the team” (Craig). Mary also suggested “the fact we wanted to have reminders like water bottles” of our venue demonstrated that we built a team spirit. These reminders and desire to have something similar demonstrated that our venue want to have similar items and be seen as an integrated team.

### **Summary of Identifying with the team**

The identification with the team was important to the participants in this research and the leader; this helped create a higher sense of community in the participant’s opinion. This presented it’s self in the idea of no competition between functional area managers being

presented in the venue, the leader being honest and trustworthy, the ability for the team to work together and the possession of a common symbol.

### **Intrinsic Bond**

The final theme of an intrinsic bond is the deep-rooted link that the participants felt in being associated with the venue and leader. The subthemes of intrinsic bond were shared experiences, possession of a common goal, tone of social activities/meetings, the positive association with the venue and the ‘wanting’ to be here. These are all formed through the leader’s role.

### **Shared Experiences**

The Olympics is an environment that has many struggles and frustrations and as a result, the coping mechanism that most employees’ use is discussing their issues with co-workers and in turn relating to their co-workers through their successes and frustrations. This idea of sharing experiences was seen to create a stronger bond, mainly because no one on the outside can relate to what it is these employees are going through. This was seen by Ann discussing working for LOCOG,

“It’s like a mad crazy world that only people in LOCOG can relate to.. oh yea yea.. People outside have no concept, but you wouldn’t expect them to. I don’t share any of the crazy mad stories that my friends all work in the same organization have and go through, so.. yeah no they don’t get it, but Olympics are a special thing. You know? To be part of it and share it with work colleagues to go through the pain of it and then the enjoyment of it you know, you really only have that direct kind of bonding with the kind of people you work with on a daily basis I think.” (Ann).

Her expression that LOCOG is a crazy mad world that only people in LOCOG can relate to highlights how different the environment is to a normal workplace. She also expresses

how only the people you work with on a daily basis will understand what struggles you face.

The people you work on a daily basis require an opportunity to understand the struggles that are faced by each department, thus, Mary suggested that the venue meetings hosted by the leader were key to understanding people's roles and thus relating to them.

“There was a venue team meeting which helped you understand other peoples pressures, experiences and meant that you weren't, you weren't doing a solo job, you were all sharing that experience, so yeah it was good.” (Mary).

The idea of sharing experiences and experiencing things as a team is further highlighted by Jake,

“I think the rewards you get from the relationships that you build with people, I like to think I had a good relationship with pretty much everybody who worked with the venue from an functional area perspective. ... Obviously the experience is the prove it through, a lot of special experiences and the fact we sharing it together as a team, yes you have your personal moments but the majority of moments you end up sharing with someone else, and they are kind of like things that live on in the memory” (Jake).

The events spearheaded by the leader helped create this bond over shared experience.

### **Common Goal**

One of the common subthemes that arose was the idea that we are all working towards a common goal; the goal of ensuring our venue ran smoothly during the Olympics. The Olympics also has greater common goals throughout the whole games, such as ensuring London as a city is put on display for the world. These common goals helped our team

come together and form an intrinsic bond because all the participants bought into this idea. The formation of a common goal comes from leadership, our leader, Claire gave us our directive and we all believed in that common goal. This was presented in the data as seen below; this comment from Brody is speaking in relation to the leader forming the team,

“I would say 99% has been absolutely brilliant on the professional level and a lot of them on the personal level as well, I think, we’ve been very fortunate, like I’ve said I’ve had experience in event management it’s very rare to have a team that is sort of having the same goal and can communicate so effectively from my end of the job obviously.” (Brody).

The sentiment of sharing a purpose and that helping the team bond can be seen in a quote from Jess, “We [The venue] are all working towards one goal, in a close proximity, operationally we’re working together, so yeah you could say that there is a community.”

This highlights how the common goal allowed us to form together as a community.

Lastly Mary agreed that “Everyone had the same goal, everyone had the same dateline”

This common goal was important to the participants and me as an insider. The leader set the tone of the environment and thus our goals.

### **Tone of Social Activities and Meetings**

One of the items that seemed to build this intrinsic bond further was the leader’s desire to have outings, meetings, and general socials to allow for people to get to know each other and her outside of the working environment. The importance in this was not just the activity but the tone conveyed in these meetings. Her desire and tone for these socials and meetings was noted by many of the participants,

“Yeah, I think I think that, kind of sense that we are a team, and Claire, Venue Management are really good at fostering that.... Claire was very keen to get that team, even just on an informal level you know to get to know each other” (Mark).

“Umm I think one is Claire has always given me the time of day from when I just started till now there has never been a change in that. And I think that makes a big difference that when the VGM will always have a biweekly meeting or something like that. That makes a big difference but even think just the emphasis on social activities.” (Kate).

The connection to the leader’s style and tone was further seen from Ann,

“It was mainly the management, just had a really good connection, just loved the sense of humor, just loved the way the meetings were run. I originally sat on 14 venue teams, so I saw the dynamics of lots of different styles of management, running meetings lots of different people I came into contact with, and the venue was the one I just connected with more than anything. I just loved the way the meetings were run, the tones of the meetings, the way they were managed, and that was my biggest driver in selecting [this venue] as my venue for games time.” (Ann).

Jake had an interesting point on how the leader made the participants feel by their participation in the activities and meetings,

“Cause potentially if you were in a job then you go to work, you finish work, you go home and go away to a different social life, a lot of us were kind of like living our social lives in the venues for most of the time certainly in the run up to games. In my opinion if you look at some of the people who consistently did not go to most social aspects because they had other commitments, they were quite possibly the ones that weren’t so much of the venue experience as a whole. “ (Jake)

The tone set by the leader was felt by the participants and impacted the intrinsic bond that all of the participants had to her as the leader and to other functional area managers.



### **Positive Associations with Venue**

The positive association with the venue is related to how the interviewees felt external people perceived the venue. As an insider, it is easier to feel a stronger bond and deeper bond to a venue that is successful and looked at as a trailblazer. This subtheme is the idea that the leader helped create a venue that other people looked up to and that our team looked at proudly. This was seen from Jess who discussed what she had been hearing in regards to our venue;

“you hear things from other people about your venue and how it operates and how it works and everything I’ve heard is positive, so I think we’re considered organized, and we’re sort of on the ball operationally, but also, as a team I think we’re starting to gel very well.”

She went on to discuss how Claire helped formulate this appearance to other people,

“She wants to ensure that everything is like if we’re not one step ahead then at least we’re doing the best we can to be meeting targets and things, a bit like that sort of desktop we did yesterday, I don’t believe any other venues are doing that and she’s brought that in because she wants to you know test more scenarios and test it on venue but I haven’t heard others doing that in their venues, so I was saying I’m doing this, and they were like, Oh, we’re not doing that, and I think that is because she wants to go that one step further and make sure she has got everything covered and I really respect that”

This opinion of the leader paving the way and forcing us as a venue to appear more organized was seen by Mary as well,

“If I take the fire place for example, when it came back that everyone else was going to write this fire plan, we had already done it because Claire had said this is something we’re going to have to do, we’re going to have to accept that, we’re going to have to get on with it, but what works best for us, what is going to work best for our venue, and our team. So, you know it wasn’t a negative, it was just a challenge that we all had to overcome, and again challenges that everyone worked together to achieve an answer for, create a stronger team spirit, or a stronger community.” (Mary).

The leader's ability to work hard and encourage us to complete tasks that made the venue look organized helped the team bond intrinsically because we felt one step ahead. As an insider I can attest that the leader pushed us to go above and beyond and it worked out favorable for the venue and the venue team at the end of the day.

### **'Wanting to be here'**

The concept of wanting to be here or the desire for the participants to be at LOCOG, was an important subtheme that appeared in the data. Many individuals choose to work at our venue and were excited by the opportunity to work with our leader. This desire to be apart of our venue led to a deeper internal bond because this was what they choose. This was seen by Jess in her comments about "everybody wants to be part of it" in reference to socializing with the venue and being associated with it. The idea of having a choice to be invested and deciding to invest in the team was discussed by Craig as well,

"Well I mean, our venue management team [Claire] is pretty good at trying to include everyone, and making sure that everyone wants to come out to the dinners and wants to be part of certain things, I think they're pretty influential for it, because if you have a bad venue management team no one really wants to go out or do anything really. Other than that it's just kind of been a personal choice of trying to invest in the venue team and making sure to get out"

The idea of choosing our venue over others was seen by Ann

"Amazing to be fair I picked this venue as my venue, as one of the planners we were asked to select our, choose our venue where we would want to work and I had a choice of [Two venues], based on the people that where there, that was my driver in to where I wanted to be, not the sport, not the venue, nothing, it was my whole basis.... so those things collectively added together making me want to be part of our venue team."

The participant's willingness to join the venue and desire to be a part of the team helped create this intrinsic bond and most of these feelings developed from the leaders influence on the team.

### **Summary of Intrinsic Bond**

The theme of an intrinsic bond formed by the leaders efforts was seen in the ability of the team to have shared experiences, work for a common goal, the tone that the leader set a meetings and social activities, the positive associations with the venue and finally the desire for the participants to 'want to be here'.

### **Summary of General Themes**

When all of the participant interviews and observation notes as an insider were analyzed, three main themes were discovered that contributed to a sense of community. The participants and researcher agreed that competencies possessed by the leader helped them form a sense of a community. This was seen in the leader possessing competencies such as a supportive nature, being approachable, being welcoming, respectful and finally understanding the functional manager's jobs. Second, the ability for the participants to identify with the venue team allowed for a stronger sense of community and belonging. This can be seen in the environment being developed without competition, the leader being honest and trustworthy, having personality traits similar to that of the leader, the idea of working together and a common symbol. These qualities allowed participants to identify themselves as members of the community and develop a deeper connection to the community and members inside of it. Finally, participants feeling an intrinsic bond

created a feeling of sense of community. The leaders ability to create shared experiences, common goals, set an enjoyable tone in meetings and social activities, the venue having a positive association and the members 'wanting to be here' created this intrinsic bond. The leader was instrumental in the formation of all of those subthemes.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

The findings of this study support that a leader can influence sense of community in the workplace through their actions or activities they coordinate. This was seen in the participants of this study developing a sense of community that they felt the leader helped create. The work place is an important component of a person's life and with the average employed person working over 163 hours more a month, there is a higher level of overworked and burnt out employees (Schor, 19993). This increase in time spent at work highlights why it is important for leaders to acknowledge the influence they have on subordinate attitudes and sense of community.

With this increase in time at work, individuals have been finding most of their satisfaction, sources of identity and support in their workplace (Ahlbrant & Cunningham, 1979). The ability for a leader to recognize this and help build this support and satisfaction is an important focus for organizations. An organization like the Olympics face more challenges than a normal organization such as rapid growth and short term existence and as a result, there is a need to hold employee satisfaction at a higher level (Xing & Chalip, 2009). The participants in this study highlighted these challenges as part of their working environment, but also addressed the excitement and the idea that the Olympics were more than a job. This building of relationships and legitimatizing a sense

of belonging was an important component of community creation that allowed them to connect to their job and work enjoyment (Feldman & Khademian, 2007).

In the Big Five Inventory analysis, it was found that all of the participants considered the venue general manager a leader. This leader possessed high levels of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness; she was rated low on neuroticism, and inconclusive on openness to experience. The inconclusive rating on openness to experience does not detract from her consideration as a leader because in the five-trait model there has been controversy regarding this particular trait and the literature has not fully supported its inclusion in the model (McCrae & John, 1992). In the BFI analysis, the trait of openness is related to artistic interests and literature which many participants indicated a neither agree nor disagree rating as they were unsure of her level of interest in music, art and literature.

According to the Big Five the venue manager was a leader and a leader can influence workers directly and indirectly by the culture and climate they create in the organization (Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008). One of the themes that the participants identified was that the competencies the leader possessed being a significant community-building tool. These competencies of being supportive, approachable, respectful, welcoming and understanding the job of their subordinates can be related to the five-factor model.

The idea of the leader being supportive can be seen as a form of agreeableness in the five-factor model. This can be seen from the definition that agreeableness involves

being human and the desire to avoid unnecessary conflict. This is associated with nurturance, caring and emotional support. Supportive as a competency is strongly related to the trait of agreeableness. The subthemes of the leader being welcoming can be related to the trait of extraversion. Extraversion is related to warmth, cheerful and social people. Thus, the leader creating an environment that was welcoming and friendly was related to her possession of the trait of extraversion. This was demonstrated in her ability to start a conversation with all new employees and in social situations constantly moving around the room to interact with everyone there.

Another one of the competencies that the interviewees linked to the leader was that of being approachable. Approachability can be related to the trait of emotional stability. Emotional stability is the inverse of neuroticism and relates to calm, relaxed and even-tempered personalities. The participants indicated they were able to discuss serious items and felt able to approach the leader because she would not react negatively or be moody, she would be willing to help. This associates with approachability. The ability for a leader to be approachable helps build a sense of community because the participants feel as if they can talk openly with the leader and through that, each other. If the leader was not present or able to interact with the department managers there would be a feeling of being isolated and a lack of bonding within the group.

The subtheme of respect can be seen to relate to conscientiousness, as the participants indicated that the leader earned their respect from their ability to be well organized, hard working and thus having a conscientious attitude. The dedicated nature

of the leader to the venue inspired the participants to match her level of conscientiousness. This hard-working attitude led to longer hours for all participants and the leader, which in turn, created more time working together. The leader's dedication toward the venue and that she cared about the outcome of decisions ingrained that dedication in the participants. The whole venue being hardworking and wanting the venue to be the best it could, brought the team closer because they were all dedicated to this vision.

The concept that these traits can relate to attitudes of subordinates was seen in the participant data. Overall, it was seen that participants had a stronger sense of community because the leader possessed these qualities. This is similar to the study conducted by Smith and Canger, where they looked at the aggregated attitudes of subordinates in relation to the personality of the supervisor (2004). The results of the Smith and Canger study discussed that subordinates had increased positive job-related attitudes when their supervisor possessed higher levels of emotional stability, extraversion and agreeableness.

The leader possessing a high average level of agreeableness (average of 4.25 out of 5) and low level of neuroticism (2.1) were positively related to satisfaction with the leader. This was seen from the interviewees expressing their happiness with the leader's ability to be approached and the supportive attitude she demonstrated to all department managers. Extraversion is associated with subordinate turnover intentions and supervisor conscientiousness was linked to subordinate affective commitment. Thus, when participants identified the leader as possessing these competencies, it helped build a sense



of community and reduced turnover intentions, affective commitment and increased their satisfaction within the work environment. This can be seen in how the participants chose to work at Claire (the leader's) venue and demonstrated their commitment to the venue by putting it's needs first and identifying with the venue.

The themes of identifying with the team and intrinsic bond seemed to align with the concept of McMillian and Chavis' sense of community definition. This was the idea of a perception with an affective component; a "feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and the group, and a shared faith that members needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (1986, p.9). They used four frames to create their definition, which included membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection.

Throughout the data analysis, one of the themes that was discovered was the idea of identifying with the team. This relates to the concept of membership described in McMillian and Chavis, sense of community framework (1986). Membership is a feeling of belonging or the investment one has made to be a member. This can relate to my participants theme of identifying with the team because they highlighted many of the same attributes as membership in the subthemes. The attributes of emotional safety, a sense of belonging and a common symbol system were found in the sub-themes of the identifying with the team.

The idea of emotional safety, which relates to boundaries developed in the group, coincides with group intimacy and trust (McMillian & Chavis, 1986). Honesty and trust

are important cornerstones of emotional safety and this relates to my participant data as many of the participants commented on the leader being trustworthy and honest which likely helped the team bond together. The leader's ability to demonstrate her honest opinion to the participants and make them feel that they could trust her created a level of emotional safety. This emotional safety allowed the group to develop a closer friendship and felt protected in this group. The researcher noticed this emotional safety during meetings in which the leader expressed her honest opinion regarding policy decisions from the directors. There were issues with our venue's build, and the leader was of a practical mindset where she approached the issues looking at the group benefit as a whole, not just from the director's mindset. The leader creating an environment void of competition assisted in developing a level of emotional safety for the participants because they did not feel the need to prove themselves against their co-workers. This was important for the venue to bond and helped further their level of sense of community. This creation of boundaries is a type of social distance. This is a source of protection against threats that can be necessary when groups are vulnerable. This level of group intimacy allows of members to feel protected and be able to feel safe in their belonging to the group (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977).

The idea of a sense of belonging was another attribute of the membership frame. This was the idea of the group identifying as a team and believing they do belong to the group. One of the key areas for this is that members must feel they fit into the group and be willing to sacrifice for the betterment of the group (McMillian & Chavis, 1986). The

participant data in the working together subtheme, relates to the idea that what is the best for the venue is best for everyone, and putting the venue before their department needs. The department working together was encouraged by the leader, this was seen by the catering department in our venue extending the lunch and dinner service hours to ensure that all the departments' staff would have time to sit down and enjoy their meals. This was outside of catering's department operating plan, as they were not supposed to serve meals for longer than three hours, but for our venue the catering manager made the exception to increase these hours.

Her leadership style focused on an inclusive environment, which helped guide the team to approach conflicts with conversation. The leader helped arbitrate many conflicts of interest by first getting the individuals involved to sit in a room and discuss the outcomes, positive and negative for both departments. This was seen when there were issues with field of play protection coverage in that the sport manager was concerned about safety of the field of play during the bronze and gold medal events. The sport manager, with the assistance of the leader, approached the event services manager and all together a resolution was found. This made all parties feel their voices were heard rather than just making a decision without consulting the affected departments. The inclusive environment that the leader created allowed the team to invest in the venue and thus identify with it, many of the participants ended their interviews with statements like "Oh completely yes. I am the venue" (Mark). This is a clear role identification statement. This

identification with the venue allowed for their identity and success to be intertwined with the venue.

The final attribute in membership was the idea of a common identification system. The common symbol system is another supportive measure in the creation of boundaries. This was seen in the leader getting water bottles for the venue team. Many functional area managers purchased and used the water bottles to identify themselves as team members. These water bottles were items that provided the team with a clear memory of the venue and were a nice item to have throughout the Olympics and identify new additions to the venue.

One subtheme under the identifying with the team theme did not fit into the membership component, but could be placed into the integration and fulfillment of needs frame under McMillian and Chavis framework (1986). This was the idea of shared personality trait. This concept of the functional area managers feeling a stronger bond because of their shared personality traits with the leader can align with the idea of shared values and a person-environment fit. The participants felt that sharing personality traits with the leader helped them to relate to the venue and the leader. These similar traits reinforcement and fulfilled the needs that the participants required and brought them closer because there was a sense of belonging. This was seen in social outings that the leader planned as it was always easy for the functional area managers and leader to talk and get along because they possessed similar traits, such as extraversion. One of the venue team's outings was bowling and the leader created an environment of friendly

competition and relaxed atmosphere, where all the department managers engaged with each other. During the bowling outing the managers were seen joking around with each other through trash talk, laughing at their bad throws and just socializing in a stress-free environment where they did not discuss work the whole evening.

Shared personality traits can fit into the integration and fulfillment frame; this frame also suggests that people will do what benefits them. People want to be associated with a group that will benefit themselves. Thus, one of the attributes is shared values. Individuals with shared values will find that they have similar needs, priorities and goals, thus creating a belief that by forming together they will be able to meet those needs more effectively (Doolittle & Macdonald, 1978). The subtheme of common goals under the intrinsic bond theme relates to the idea of shared values. The idea that the participants all had the same goal allowed them to relate to each other and receive assistance in reaching these goals. This was seen on the venue because everyone was working towards making the venue a success for the athletes, volunteers and spectators. All of the interviewees working together rather than independently allowed for a better experience for all the clients and a more enjoyable work environment for the participants. Such as how all of the department managers worked together to help each other reach met their targets, such as security covering gates longer in the morning to give event services some extra time with getting their staff to the venue, or how workforce provided functions with additional bottled water on days where the temperature rose.

Another construct in the sense of community theory was that of influence. Influence is the notion that for one to bond with the group they must have input in the decision-making process of the group (Burroughs & Eby, 1998). The idea of having influence over decision-making was discussed under the identifying with the team theme in the data because many of the participants related to working together and the leader empowering them to make decisions for their functional area. This allowed them to feel able to contribute and thus bond with each other and the leader. This bond developed because people were able to have their opinion heard by the leader and other department managers. For example when there was an issue with the placement of the scoreboard on pitch 2, all of the departments sat down together and chose a location that was mutually beneficially. Throughout the researchers time at the venue, all of the departments worked together and sacrificed what they could to help other areas. This was demonstrated by the other departments pitching in to help when there was a shortfall in the event services contractors. Event Services monitors security positions that separate back of house (athlete change rooms and press workrooms from the spectators. On a day where transportation was significantly delayed all of the other departments sent any volunteers they had to assist with coverage of these important positions. This was a clear demonstration of some functions sacrificing their operation to ensure the venue would be able to open.

Shared emotional connection is one of the most important components to create a community; it is the indescribable feeling that unites the community. This is defined by

the attributes of shared history, contact hypothesis, quality of interaction, investment and spiritual bond (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The leader in this research helped create these feelings in the LOCOG community. Although they were referenced under varied names, they relate to the same concepts. McMillan and Chavis' sense of community theory discusses the idea of a deep-rooted bond similar to that of a shared emotional connection which relates to the theme of intrinsic bond (1986). The subthemes that arose under this category were the concepts of shared experiences, tone of meetings and socials, a positive association with the venue and finally the desire to be at the venue, 'I want to be here'.

In the sense of community theory, the idea of a shared history is to help strengthen community bonds. If there is an event or a feeling that all the community members can relate to and feel strongly about they will develop stronger community bonds. In the participant data this can be seen in the concept of shared experiences. The participants bonded over experiences that were enjoyable such as BBQ's on the balcony of the venue. They also bonded over difficult issues such as problems with licensing that sent us all running for the hills. These are events that the leader either created or helped us work through allowed for the team to bond and develop a stronger relationship. The idea of the most important memories at the venue being shared was something that helped the participants feel closer to their co-workers.

Contact hypothesis and quality of interaction attributes were two areas that the leader focused her efforts on. The participants consistently mentioned the tone of

meetings and socials and how positive the leader made these activities. This tone was set by the leader adding their personal touch for the team such as bringing baked goods into every meeting and circulating cards for birthdays. The ability for a group to have a scheduled meeting or continuous interaction helps deepen bonds. This quality of interaction is related to the contact hypothesis because it dictates the bonds that develop will reflect the type of interaction members will have, thus, the more positive the experiences the more cohesive the community (Hyde & Chavis, 2007). A constantly repeated phrase was the pub night, bbq or social, there was always an activity and the tone that the leader set at these events allowed for the participants to relax and get to know each other outside of work, which allowed for them to develop a stronger relationship. As an insider one of the experiences I enjoyed the most was the transition between Olympics and Paralympics, the leader got our Olympic team and Paralympic team together and we had a large football (soccer) game then a BBQ on the balcony. This balcony had a view of the entire Olympic Park, as we stood up there, relaxing, looking out on the park and our view reflecting on the experience of the Olympics. There was a sense of accomplishment with the conclusion of this momentous event and a sense of excitement over the Paralympics about to begin, all of us sat up there in the stands for hours talking about how much fun the Olympics were and I realized this event really was once in a lifetime, and these people are the only other ones who understood what we had gone through to get to this point.



Investment is another attribute in the shared emotional connection framework. In the data this is seen as the positive associations with the leader. Investment is the concept that the identity the community possesses will influence the outside perception of the individual (McMillian & Chavis, 1986). In the participant data, the leader was associated with success and organization at the venue. The result of that was a sense of respect gained by other venues and from the interviewees. In this respect, the leader's hard work allowed for the whole venue and participants to appear more successful. This allowed for the identity of the venue and community to be one that outsiders admired and imitated, thus, the perception of the community was a positive association and this helped the community bond together. The leader was so dedicated to the venue this was described by Jess in her discussion of the additional exercises she created to help prepare our deputy managers for the Games.

The last component of shared emotional connection was that of a deep emotional connectedness or the idea of a spiritual bond. This is a hard concept to define because it's a deep emotional connectedness that outsiders cannot relate to and insiders have a difficult time explaining. This is the ability of the group to interact with each other differently than they would outsiders of the group. This was a feeling that the researcher felt conducting the study and the participants alluded to and was found in their desire to want to be apart of the venue (McMillian, 1996). The participants desire to be in this venue and work with this leader showed that the emotional connectedness arose from her leadership. They had choices of venues to work at, or options to leave and all of the

participants wanted to work with this venue, this leader and be apart of this team. This suggests that they had more than just a relationship with these people; there was a strong connection that had developed as a result of the environment that the leader had created

The sense of community theory translates well to the themes discovered in my results. The ties between this theory and my data demonstrates that the leader develop the sense of community theory can create a sense of community and bonding in their employees.

One interesting concept that arose from one interviewee was his indication of feeling a lack of a sense of community. This participant was an outlier. Through his participation, he alluded to all of the themes and subthemes and felt that the venue general manager was a leader, but he went on to explain that he did not fully associate with the venue. When the interview was conducted, he was beginning to feel a sense of belonging, but had not experienced the feelings of sense of community yet. He suggested that the main reason for this might be the timeframe of his hiring. He started at LOCOG during test event season, which is a particularly busy and stressful timeframe for all functional area managers and he felt that no one had time to sit down with him and show him the ropes. Following that, he explained he was always playing catch-up and attempting to inform the other functional area managers exactly what he did. Another factor was his stressful family circumstance; he was the only participant with a son and wife, and a son and wife who lived in a foreign country. These items may have affected how he felt, and they may be more influential than a leaders reach; time and family

circumstances seem to be contributing factors to the reason he felt a lack of sense of community.

### **Implications**

Since this study was restricted to participants from the London Olympic Organizing Committee, the implications for practices gained from this study may be limited to that context; however they can be looked at to relate to other short-term, and rapid growing organizations such as summer camps or festivals. The findings of this study demonstrate that a leader can impact sense of community and help to develop a stronger bond in subordinates. Thus, a focus on the selection of the leader may be an important practice for organizations, if organizations in hiring practices use questions that associate with measurements of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience and neuroticism, one can hire someone who has the ability to be considered a leader. They would then have someone who likely possesses the competencies of being supportive, approachable, welcoming, respectful and have an understanding of the jobs of their subordinates. This can assist organizations in reducing turnover and creating happier and healthy employees.

The implications of this research relate to how other organizations that share similar characteristics can assist in building their teams. The importance of building a sense of community can assist in retention and affective commitment. This was seen in McCole, Jacobs et al. study, where they looked at the relationship between seasonal employee retention and sense of community. Camps have many of the same challenges of

organizing committees; they come together for a short time period (normally one summer). In addition, they have rapid growth, in the sense that they normally have two to ten full-time staff throughout the year and jump to over a hundred for camp season (2012). This study looked at how a sense of community influences the intention of counselors to return to camp the next year. They suggested that understanding the framework of sense of community can impact organizational development decisions, including training design and policies. Staff training was one of their main techniques to help developed sense of community (McCole, Jacobs et al., 2012). This research on a leader's role could be an area of focus for organizations to help provide their leaders with development techniques and informing the leaders of the direct impact they have on sense of community and the ability of their personality and habits to influence how the employees develop sense of community may assist camps for example. This is an important area to look at as today's society is making it more difficult for seasonal and short-term organizations to retain and attract seasonal employees. If they develop a sense of community and connectedness through their training, or leadership development tools, they can increase the motivation to work for this type of environment. The Olympics does have a level of consistency, much in the same way that camps counselors return to their camps, some employees follow one Olympics to the next. The Olympics is an experience like none other and many of the participants in this study discussed having an enjoyable experience and wishing to repeat this by moving on to the next Olympics.

## **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was the idea that a sense of community may have developed by other means other than leader influence. One of these possibilities is that training and recruitment initiatives used by LOCOG could have fostered a sense of community; this was found in the Garden Festival Wales. This festival was a short-term organization formed for the National Garden Festival Wales running from May-October 1992. In this study, it was found that the induction and training procedures in the handbooks provided to employees assisted in building their organizational climate rather than the manager (Meudell & Gadd 1994). However, with such a large organization like LOCOG, this is likely not the case since there are multiple venues and large training program created it would be hard for workers to bond to such a engineered process.

A second limitation is that research has suggested there are a variety of determinants of workplace sense of community. These are suggested to be individual employee characteristics, job characteristics, leader characteristics, work group characteristics, organizational characteristics and extra-organizational characteristics. Some of the referents addressed in this framework were friendship network at work, functional subgroups of the organization, organization as a whole, profession/job class/union and work site or community (Klein & D'Aunno, 1986). Individual characteristics may relate to sense of community because the more homogeneity existing in the group, the increased likelihood to feel belonging to the workplace. Demographics such as income, age and education can also influence sense of community, if an

employee feels secure in their role; they are likely to have a higher sense of community (Klein & D'Aunno, 1986). Job characteristic is defined by skill, variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback provided on the job. The higher these skills are rated, the higher employee satisfaction and thus sense of community are likely to be. Workgroup characteristics relates to the perceptions and appreciation of the group and sense of involvement within it. An organizational characteristic is an extension of the supervisory and subgroup practices. Extra-organizational characteristics, which are considered the environmental factors that can support or disengage a community these are activities planned by the organization, such as a hockey team or pub night. External environmental shifts such as a new government policy influencing salaries are external events that may challenge the relationship of the group (Klein & D'Aunno, 1986).

Another possible limitation was the sample size of the study. There were only a limited number of individuals interviewed; this may have hindered the ability of the researcher to draw significant relationships from the data. In addition, the lack of prior research on the topic of sense of community in Olympic Organizing Committees may have hindered the research, as there is a lack of foundation for understanding the basis of the phenomena. Thus, the research study conducted was primarily exploratory rather than explanatory.

A possible limitation of the study is the concept of self-reported data. In this study, the researcher collected the data and analyzed the transcripts. Due to the researchers 'insider' status and connection to the Olympic Organizing Committee, there

was a limited ability for it to be independently verified although the participants confirmed the data. Another limitation was attribution; due to the level of involvement the researcher had in the community, positive sense of community building events such as pub nights, bbqs and socials may have been attributed to the leader's role, when in actuality it is an outside event that influenced this camaraderie. Finally as an insider, there may be bias on the level of importance placed on community building events because the researcher is searching for a leader's influence, it may produce errors in the research assumptions.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future studies could examine the link between sense of community and leaders in long term, rapid growth environments. Such studies may provide information to the industries involved and help the Olympics understand the results of the present study through comparison. Comparing the short-term and long-term organizational influence of a leader would help solidify that a leader can build sense of community in any shape, size or form of organization.

A possible direction for future research may involve the fit between leaders and subordinate personalities which might include reviewing how the matching of similar traits and skills assist in developing a bond between employees and their leader, or if this is hindered. The use of traits to look at bonding may be important considerations in hiring or reporting lines for organizations.

Other interesting areas to approach would be retention and employee turnover in organizations where individuals identify a high sense of community. Past studies have identified the benefits of sense of community to retention but it would be worthwhile to review this in more stressful environments. In short-term organizations, it would be interesting to review if sense of community is the factor that makes employees want to conclude their contract or if individuals just stay because the contract will be over soon.

Finally, it would be interesting to look at where these connections go and how long does sense of community last. In addition, it would be interesting to determine if the relationships fade away over time or to determine if people still bond with those they experienced the event with. Employing a longitudinal study of a workplace or a short-term environment may be an interesting step to further this body of research.

### **Summary**

The importance of creating and maintaining sense of community in workplaces is an increasingly important facet to help restore bonds and develop support systems, which creates happier and more efficient employees. This research on the role a leader plays in creating a sense of community especially in the London 2012 Olympic Organizing Committee (LOCOG) has demonstrated that a leader's personality and the events they host can help people bond together and enjoy their experiences in the workplace. One of the participants, Mary, ended off with a great quote on how the leader inspired her, "if I went on to led teams in the future how would I do it, would I try to create what Claire had created in her team? Certainly for some of us the answer is yeah."



## APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

### The Big Five Inventory

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to your manager. For example, do you agree that the venue manager is someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

|                           |                           |                                    |                        |                        |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Disagree<br>Strongly<br>1 | Disagree<br>a little<br>2 | Neither agree nor<br>disagree<br>3 | Agree<br>a little<br>4 | Agree<br>strongly<br>5 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

I see my venue manager as someone who...

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>___ 1. Is talkative</p> <p>___ 2. Tends to find fault with others</p> <p>___ 3. Does a thorough job</p> <p>___ 4. Is depressed, blue</p> <p>___ 5. Is original, comes up with new ideas</p> <p>___ 6. Is reserved</p> <p>___ 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others</p> <p>___ 8. Can be somewhat careless</p> <p>___ 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well</p> <p>___ 10. Is curious about many things</p> <p>___ 11. Is full of energy</p> <p>___ 12. Starts quarrels with others</p> <p>___ 13. Is a reliable worker</p> <p>___ 14. Can be tense</p> <p>___ 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker</p> <p>___ 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm</p> <p>___ 17. Has a forgiving nature</p> <p>___ 18. Tends to be disorganized</p> <p>___ 19. Worries a lot</p> <p>___ 20. Has an active imagination</p> <p>___ 21. Tends to be quiet</p> | <p>___ 23. Tends to be lazy</p> <p>___ 24. Is emotional stable, not easily upset</p> <p>___ 25. Is inventive</p> <p>___ 26. Has an assertive personality</p> <p>___ 27. Can be cold and aloof</p> <p>___ 28. Perseveres until the task is finished</p> <p>___ 29. Can be moody</p> <p>___ 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences</p> <p>___ 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited</p> <p>___ 32. Is considerate and kind</p> <p>___ 33. Does things efficiently</p> <p>___ 34. Remains clam in tense situations</p> <p>___ 35. Prefers work that is routine</p> <p>___ 36. Is outgoing, sociable</p> <p>___ 37. Is sometimes rude to others</p> <p>___ 38. Makes plans and follows through with</p> <p>___ 39. Gets nervous easily</p> <p>___ 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas</p> <p>___ 41. Has few artistic interests</p> <p>___ 42. Likes to cooperate with others</p> <p>___ 43. Is easily distracted</p> |
|--|---|

\_\_\_\_22. Is generally trusting

\_\_\_\_44. Is sophisticated in art, music or  
literature

BFI scale scoring (“R” denotes reverse-scored items):

Extraversion: 1, 6R, 11, 16, 21R, 26, 31R, 36

Agreeableness: 2R, 7, 12R, 17, 22, 27R, 32, 37R, 42

Conscientiousness: 3, 8R, 13, 18R, 23R, 28, 33, 38, 43R

Neuroticism: 4, 9R, 14, 19, 24R, 29, 34R, 39

Openness: 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35R, 40, 41R, 44

## Appendix 2

### **Observation Guide**

Date of Observation

Start time                      End Time

Location

Members present:

(presented as fraction 3/12 Functional managers and leader)

Activities engaged in:

Interesting conversational points:

sense of the feelings experienced by members:

## Appendix 3

### Interview Guide

Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_

Start time \_\_\_\_\_ End Time \_\_\_\_\_

Consented to interview being recorded \_\_\_\_\_

1. How long have you lived in the UK?
2. How many full-time employed positions have you had in the past ten years?
3. Do you have any experience with the Olympics before being employed by LOCOG?
4. How long have you been employed by LOCOG?
5. How would you define community?
6. Describe how your experience has been working for LOCOG?

If not addressed: Describe your experience with focus on the venue that you are assigned to

7. How do you relate to your co-workers?
8. How do you relate to your venue manager?
9. Describe how your work life influences your personal life (if at all)?
10. How do these experiences contribute to your idea of community?
11. Is there any contexts or situations that influence your experiences of community?

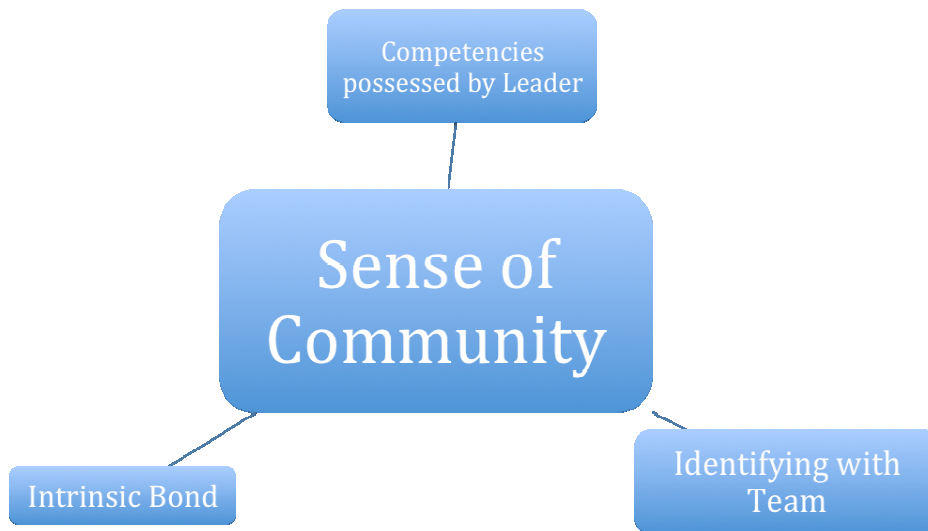
If not addressed: any people who influence your sense of community

12. What has been the most challenging part of working for LOCOG?

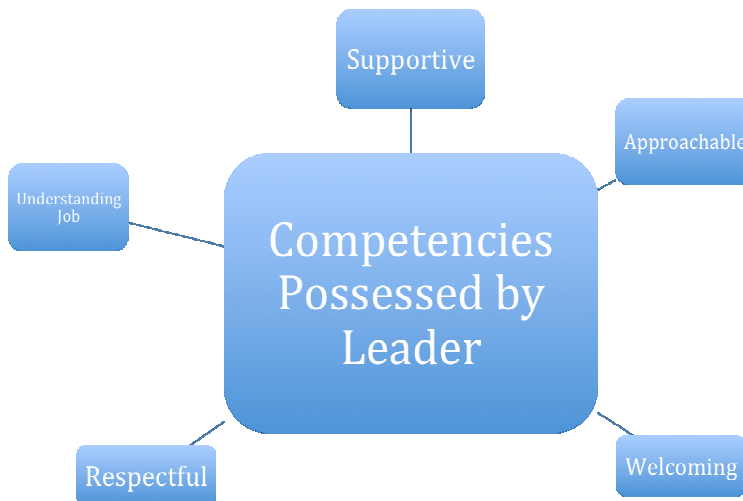
How are those challenges being negotiated?

Appendix 4

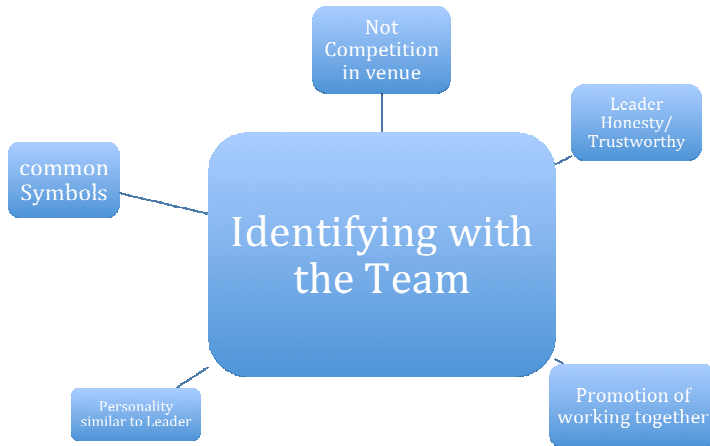
**Theming Flow Charts**



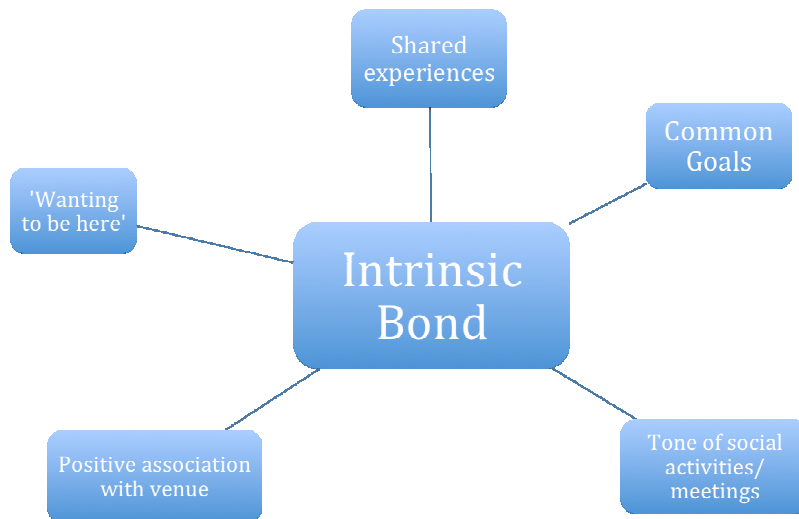
**Theme 1**



## Theme 2

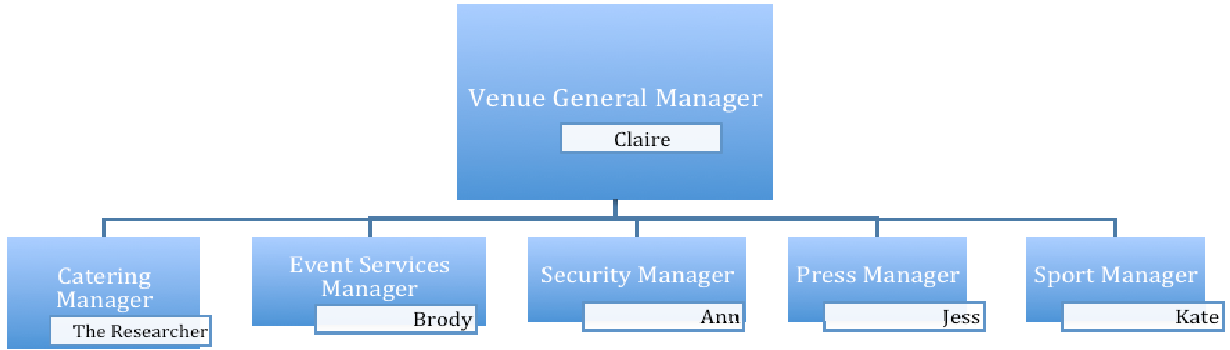


## Theme 3



Appendix 5

**Organizational Chart**





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