

Abstract

This research study focused on the overall effectiveness of the Adult Supervision Policy in MacArthur Center, and whether the policy increased the feeling of safety within the mall. We hypothesized that the policy would be effective in that it does increase the feeling of safety among employees and patrons of MacArthur Center. Both Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson's routine activities theory and Martin Krohn's network theory supported our research study (Akers & Sellers, 2009). Cohen and Felson proposed that the crime rate increases when there are one or more people motivated to commit a crime, a potential victim, and the absence of guardians who could deter the possible offender (Akers & Sellers, 2009). Krohn hypothesized that a social network can be formed based on the involvement of deviant activities, resulting in the network to only be limited to conducting deviant behaviors (Akers & Sellers, 2009). To test this hypothesis, face-to-face interviews were conducted with mall employees and patrons. Employee interviews were conducted within the mall itself, but due to restrictions by mall management patrons could not be interviewed within the mall. Instead, classmates, coworkers, family members, and anyone else that knew about the policy and had visited MacArthur Center were interviewed.

This study found that the majority of the employees and patrons felt that the policy was effective and had a positive opinion about it. However, this study also found that most of the people interviewed never felt unsafe in the mall and said that safety was never an issue. This was supported in the results from our patron interviews as most of them described encountering more nuisances and inconveniencing situations rather than feeling unsafe or threatened.

Background

The idea of implementing curfews to control crime and minor delinquency in public areas is not new to our society. Legislators throughout history have attempted to use curfews to control delinquency. Young adults are often attracted to shopping malls because they are places to hang out, but the excitement has become a problem at MacArthur Center in Norfolk, Virginia. This issue was brought to the attention of the mall officials after patrons and employees reported an overabundance of juveniles gathering in and around the shopping mall. The patrons and employees were fed up with dealing with the juveniles' vulgar language, and overall disrespectful behavior. Ultimately, the unsupervised juveniles were creating an unsafe environment within the mall, for shoppers and employees alike. It is important for both shoppers and employees to feel safe when spending time at the mall.

The idea of implementing curfews for juveniles was first established in 1880's, and was directed towards the immigrant population (Fried, 2001). They were established to control the behavior of children who were thought to not have proper parental control. By the 1890's, juvenile curfews had gained popularity in the United States and were designed to control delinquency and protect children from the harsh conditions of the city streets (Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996). In 1890, Colonel Alexander Hogeland, President of the Boys' and Girls' National Home Employment Association, brought the issue of the rising juvenile crime rate to the attention of each state governor (Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996). However by the early 1900's, law enforcement agencies lost interest in enforcing curfews and the first wave of the curfew movement died out (Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996).

Legislators reconsidered curfew laws after an increase in juvenile crime rates from 1950 to 1970 (Fried, 2001). Unfortunately, no surveys were conducted during this time period to show

the increase of interest in curfew laws; however, the abundance of scholarly writings on the topic indicates that there was heightened interest on the topic during this time period (Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996). In the 1980's through the early 1990's, more curfew ordinances restricting juvenile activity were implemented in major cities, throughout the United States (Fried, 2001). The second wave of curfew laws was developed in direct response to street violence; such as gun violence, drug involvement, gang affiliation and disorderly conduct (Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996).

The second wave of interest in curfew laws helped develop the idea of implementing curfews in not only cities, but also public areas such as parks and malls. When the first shopping malls were built in the 1950s, they were designed as a place for social interaction and shopping (Leger, 2007). The idea of having stores and "hang-outs", such as food courts and movie theaters, in a small, enclosed area is what originally made shopping malls attractive to customers in the 1950s-1990s. Today, mall owners, employees, and patrons view the shopping mall as a place to conduct business, not socialize (Leger, 2007). This change in the ideal purpose of shopping malls "has been driven in part by population growth and changing social norms" (Leger, 2007). Juvenile delinquency has become a growing concern within our society, and legislators have developed curfew laws in response to the changing norms and ways of society.

The most notable case in which a mall implemented escort policy was The Mall of America, in Bloomington, Minnesota (Leger, 2007). In 1996, the Mall of America, the largest mall in the United States, enacted a parent escort policy in response to problems of unsupervised juveniles loitering around the mall and creating problems for patrons and employees (Leger, 2007). The policy requires that after 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday evenings, teens fifteen years old or younger be accompanied by an adult twenty-one years or older (Angnew, 2008). One adult is permitted to escort up to ten youths at a time. Since the policy has been enforced, there

has been a dramatic decline in the number of incidents involving juveniles at the mall (Angnew, 2008).

In 1995, Patrick Henry Mall in Newport News, VA was the first mall in the Hampton Roads area to consider implementing a curfew law (Shapiro, 2009). Patrick Henry Mall enforced a 6 p.m. curfew for juveniles on Fridays and Saturdays in response to a similar problem the MacArthur Center is experiencing (Shapiro, 2009). Patrick Henry Mall stopped enforcing this curfew after eight weeks because of the negative response from local schools and churches (Shapiro, 2009). Juveniles who were affected by the curfew offered different solutions to control the unruly behavior and crime rates. In October 2001, Colonial Mall in Brunswick, GA was experiencing problems involving teens, similar to malls across the country (Hazel, 2001). As a result, the owner of the mall established an escort policy that required visitors under the age of eighteen be accompanied by an adult on Friday and Saturday evenings (Hazel, 2001).

In response to the increasing concerns about the lack of safety, officials at MacArthur Center developed a new supervision program. On October 19, 2009, the Adult Supervision Program went into effect that restricts all customers and visitors under the age of eighteen from being in the mall after 5 p.m., unless accompanied by a supervising adult who is at least twenty-one years of age (Johnson, 2009). This program was a pre-emptive maneuver to control the growing crowds of unruly, unsupervised juveniles in the mall, before the crowds caused major problems. Even though the overall crime rate at MacArthur Center is low, the mall is being proactive by responding to the actions of unsupervised teens gathering at the mall (Adams, 2009). The reasoning behind the Adult Supervision Program is that juveniles are going to be less likely to engage in disrespectful or criminal behavior when supervised.

Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson developed the routine activities theory by composing the factors of time, place, objects, and offenders (Akers & Sellers, 2009). Cohen and Felson proposed that the crime rate increases when there are one or more people motivated to commit a crime, a potential victim, and the absence of guardians who could deter the possible offender (Akers & Sellers, 2009). A representation of this theory is demonstrated through the Adult Supervision Program at MacArthur Center Mall. Adolescents in large groups without adult supervision are looked at as potential offenders to patrons and employees, who serve as potential victims. The curfew implemented through the supervision program takes place after 5 p.m., which is when adolescents usually come to the mall to hang out with their friends. Cohen and Felson assumed that these aspects of crime relate to the typical, legal, and “routine” behaviors of possible victims and guardians (Akers & Sellers, 2009). They define routine activities as “recurrent and prevalent activities that provide for basic population and individual needs” (Akers & Sellers, 2009). The routine activities theory is a paradigm for the 5 p.m. curfew executed at MacArthur Center for the fact that it takes into account the time that adolescents gather at the mall; the mall being a gathering place for possible victimization, the objects available for potential crime to occur, and the capable guardians available to decrease the likelihood of crime. With this supervision program, it is assumed that juveniles are less likely to congregate and cause disturbances among patrons and employees, generating a safer environment for both.

Marvin D. Krohn’s network theory bonds the structural attributes of social networks and interactional methods. Social networks are sets of individuals or groups connected by friendship or some other association. Krohn hypothesized that a “social network constrains individual behavior...and the probability of behavior consistent with the continuance of their network relationships will increase” (Akers & Sellers, 2009). This theory basically states that a social

network can be formed based on the involvement of deviant activities, resulting in the network to only be limited to conducting deviant behaviors. Adolescents who gather with their friends in MacArthur Center have the opportunities to commit deviant acts among their peers, the likelihood of committing these acts increase, especially when fellow peers are also deviant. The Adult Supervision Program at MacArthur Mall is emphasized through Krohn's network theory taking into account that groups of friends who are involved with deviant people may also become deviant and be involved with deviant activities. Haynie stressed this theory by conducting research that measured friendship networks among adolescents (Akers & Sellers, 2009). This study found that the proportion of delinquent friends remained a strong predictor relating to later delinquency. Haynie's empirical findings propose that adolescents become delinquent if they are involved in networks that encourage delinquency (Akers & Sellers, 2009). This study implies that adolescents are easily influenced and are more likely to follow the behavioral patterns of others involved in their friendship networks. The implementation of the curfew at MacArthur Center is supposed to prevent juvenile delinquency and provide for a safer environment among patrons and employees.

Adult escort policies, juvenile curfew laws, and supervision programs are being implemented in shopping malls across the country in response to the unruly behavior associated with juveniles. The ever-changing composition of society and societal norms is the reason such policies must continue to be developed to accommodate the changes. The most important benefit of escort or curfew policies are that "they create the perception of a safe, clean, and friendly shopping environment for the general public" (Leger, 2007). A negative perception of safety at an establishment can have a detrimental effect on the overall shopping experience within a mall, for both businesses and customers.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to measure the effect that the implementation of the juvenile curfew has had on the feeling of safety at MacArthur Center among patrons and employees. Specifically, this study aimed to discover if the perception of safety has increased since the implementation of the Adult Supervision Program at MacArthur Center. Some of the main points guiding this research are if patrons/employees feel the current policy is effective, if they feel the curfew was necessary, and whether they have seen a difference in the composition of people at the mall. This study hypothesized that the perception of safety among patrons and employees has increased since the implementation of the curfew law at MacArthur Center. The new regulation at MacArthur Center has decreased the amount of unsupervised juveniles; therefore, this research predicted the policy would increase the perception of safety among patrons and employees.

Literature Review

The idea of implementing an Adult Supervision Program in a mall or shopping center makes sense. Most curfews are in place to protect youths from committing crime and reduce the likelihood of victimization (Ford & Sutphen, 2001; Fried, 2001; Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996 et. al). In May of 2007, Megan R. Leger published an article in the Practical Real Estate Lawyer that examines the benefits, challenges, and limitations of Parental Escort Policies in shopping malls as well as the perception of safety in shopping environments. Some malls claim that sales increase with the implementation of Parental Escort Policies because parents are now required to shop with their children and parents spend more money, while other malls report a decline in sales, possibly because the policy is deterring teens and their parents from shopping there all together (Leger, 2007). Leger (2007) also points out that Parental Escort Policies can also be

inconvenient for the general public and tenants. If malls decide to enforce policy through ID checking, then they run the risk of deterring customers who are of age, but feel inconvenienced.

This article is prevalent to our research because it discusses the perception of safety to the public and the advantages and disadvantages of having a Parental Escort Policy in a mall. Although there are problems that can be encountered while enforcing a Parental Escort Policy in a shopping mall, if constructed properly they can be effective in raising the perception of safety among customers and controlling the amount of loitering. While this policy may be effective in raising the perception of safety in our malls, is it simply the perception of safety that has risen, or have malls actually become safer?

The ability of a juvenile curfew to make society feel safe is one of the main points of this study. There are very few articles that touch on the perception of safety; however, there are numerous articles that discuss the effectiveness of a curfew law. This study assumes a high correlation between effectiveness of curfew law and the perception of safety; in that a reduction of crime is synonymous with an increase in the perception of safety. Most of the articles pertaining to the effectiveness of juvenile curfews have produced mixed results. Caeti, Fritsch, and Taylor (1999) ran a quasi-experimental study in five targeted areas located in Dallas, TX that was focused on anti-gang initiatives designed to reduce crime. They found that aggressive curfew and truancy enforcement was effective at controlling gang violence (Caeti, Fritsch, & Taylor, 1999). Some of the limitations of this study were the limited exposure period, and the limited generalizability of gang suppression tactics. This study supports the research hypothesis that the implementation of the curfew at MacArthur Center will increase the perception of safety.

Cole (2003) reviewed the curfew law in Washington, D.C. and found that the curfew law does not have an effect on juvenile crime arrests. Some of the limitations of this study were the

nation-wide decrease in crime at the time that may have thrown off the findings, and the data used was considered archived arrest data at the time of the study. Ford and Sutphen (2001) found that a curfew had no effect on juvenile arrests, felonies, misdemeanor, violent, or property crimes. Ford and Sutphen (2001) also pointed out that violent crimes committed by juveniles did not occur during curfew hours, and that African-American youths were over-represented in the study. It is important to note that several other studies have also found that race played a role in the enforcement of the curfew (Adams, 2003; Cochrane & Phillips, 1988; Reynolds & Ruefle, 1996 et. al).

In a study conducted by Loftin, McDowall, and Wiersema (2000), the preventive effects of a curfew were found to be small, with a statistically significant decrease in only larceny after the curfew law had been revised. Another study conducted by Adams (2003) shows mixed results. This study reviewed ten empirical studies of juvenile curfews that showed a combination of no change in crime, a decrease in crime, and an increase in crime after curfew implementation (Adams, 2003). The mixture of results for this topic illustrates the need for conclusive research.