

2016

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Recommended Citation

Menaker, Brian E.; Chaney, Beth H.; and Sheptak, Richard Dale Jr. (2016) "Administrative Perspectives of Stadium Alcohol Policy: Alcohol-related Public Safety Measures in College Football Stadia," *Journal of Sport Safety and Security*: Vol. 1: No. 1, Article 1. Available at: <http://aquila.usm.edu/jsss/vol1/iss1/1>

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Administrative perspectives of stadium alcohol policy: Alcohol-related public safety measures in college football stadia

Alcohol policy remains an important component of the public policies aimed at decreasing crime, injury, and health issues worldwide. The most effective strategies to diminish the crime, injury, and health burdens associated with alcohol use are policy interventions (Casswell et al., 2012). Creating safer drinking environments remain a critical component of excessive alcohol containment since formal enforcement of alcohol consumption environments is simply not enough to curb the by-products of alcohol consumption (Homel, McIlwain, & Carvolth, 2004). Studies have shown that alcohol consumption is directly related to injury, crime, car accidents, vandalism, and deaths in American cities (Greenfield, 1998), a heavy concentration of alcohol availability related to increased levels of crime and alcohol consumption (Zhu, Gorman & Horel, 2004; Gyimah-Brempong & Racine, 2006); and increased alcohol consumption often arises because of the link between the recreational and leisure setting to drinking (McAllister, 1995) especially a relationship between sport and alcohol consumption (Finlay, Ram, Maggs, & Caldwell, 2012). A relationship between viewing sport and increased alcohol consumption has been identified (Munro, 2000, Andersson et al., 2012) and is especially true for fans of American college football (Nelson and Wechsler, 2003). In addition to the general relationship between alcohol and crime, this connection exists in cities that host college football games (Merlo, Hong, & Cottler, 2010; Rees & Schnepel, 2009). Theories of aggression and alcohol consumption may be applied to explain the rationale for policy content as well as the relationship between alcohol policy and fan behavior. Social Learning/Social Cognitive Theory (SLT/SCT), which suggests that behavior is learned through interacting with their environment, has been used to explain alcohol consumption behavior and aggressive behavior (Akers, 2009; Bandura, 1973). In earlier works on aggression, Bandura (1973) suggested that regardless of outcome, witnessing a sporting event can evoke acts of aggression which can lead to injury-causing behavior and crime. Alcohol consumption at sporting events has a clear societal health impact which includes spectator misconduct, public safety issues, and greater public health concerns (Ponturo, 2014). Yet, policy makers continue to struggle with which interventions soften the impact of alcohol-related issues that occur in society.

Just like any other spectator sporting event, college football games face risk management issues which include alcohol-related violence and crime (Glassman et al., 2007). College football games are some of the most popular sporting events in the United States. The teams participating at the highest level of college football, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) drew just under 44,000 fans per game in 2015, which makes it the second most attended sporting events in the U.S. on average (NCAA, 2015).

Policies and environmental strategies are put into place to limit the amount of personal injury, crime, vandalism, and potential death that occur from extreme drinking behavior that accompanies sporting events. Banning alcohol within a stadium was shown to decrease crime, arrests, and injuries at college football games the case of University of Colorado's Folsom Field (Bormann & Stone, 2001), but had the opposite effect at games at Arizona State University blood alcohol levels were higher for drivers stopped and tested after the ban, as opposed to before the ban was implemented (Boyes & Faith, 1993). Environmental strategies have shown some efficacy in limiting alcohol-related law enforcement activity surrounding college football games (Johannessen et al., 2001). Menaker and Chaney (2014) reported that a variation in reporting ejections bylaw enforcement, ranking of host team, higher attendance, and later kick-off times were the predictors of increased crime and ejections at sampled college football stadia. However, there was no significant relationship of stadium alcohol bans on crime and ejections.

While there are many legitimate reasons for differing alcohol policies, alcohol policy is considered a part of effective stadium risk management and public safety policies (Fried & Ammon, 2009). Stadium operators have an inherent duty to keep their patrons safe (Miller & Gillentine, 2006). The NCAA recommends that stadia do not serve alcohol and most on-campus stadia have banned alcohol consumption (Rees & Schnepel, 2009). However, the policy rationales articulated by policy makers have yet to be analyzed in any prior literature. Therefore, the focus of this study is to analyze managerial rationale for stadium alcohol policy.

Research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the stadium administrator's attitudes and perceptions about stadium alcohol policy. Within this context the primary aims of the study are to (1) gain insight into the development and enforcement of stadium alcohol policy, and (2) to explore different factors, that could affect the development and perceptions of stadium alcohol policy. The following research questions guided analysis. How do administrator attitudes and perceptions about stadium alcohol policy vary? Do administrator responses correspond with any theoretical foundations? Is there a relationship between college football stadium location and administrative explanation of alcohol policy? What factors affect alcohol policy enforcement?

Methods

Through purposive sampling, eight individuals from seven athletic departments were interviewed using semi-structured face-to-face interviews (Berg, 2004). All participants were senior athletic administrators who directly develop, implement, and enforce college football stadium alcohol policy. These stadium administrators oversee game day operations of college football stadia that sponsor NCAA Division

I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) teams within a Southeastern state of the United States. Five of the interviews included members who worked in on-campus stadia that did not sell, serve, or permit consumption of alcohol in their general seating areas at the time of inquiry.

Brief Description of Sampled Stadia and Participants

Eight athletic department administrators from seven universities took part in interviews over the course of one year. Table 1 shows information about the administrators and the stadia they oversaw on game day. These individuals were recruited through athletic department directories and contacted by e-mail and/or telephone to verify their stadium administration role. Once an individual was selected, an appointment for a face-to-face interview was arranged. The researcher traveled to the campuses of each administrator and met them for an interview held in their offices. Overall, interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes.

Table 1. Description of participants in interviews.

Venue	Participant Position	Stadium Location	Public/Private	Interview Location	Approx. Capacity
Stadium A	Assistant AD/ Events Director	On-campus	Public	In office	20,000
Stadium A	Facility Manager	On-campus	Public	In office	20,000
Stadium B	Associate AD/ Operations Director	On-campus	Public	In office	90,000
Stadium C	Associate AD/ Operations Director	On-campus	Public	In office	48,000
Stadium D	Facility Manager	On-campus	Public	In office	83,000
Stadium E	Assistant AD/ Operations Director	Off-campus	Public	In office	20,000
Stadium F	Events Director	Off-campus	Public	In office	70,000
Stadium G	Events Director	Off-campus	Private	In office	75,000

Following Institutional Review Board approval, participants were given an informed consent form to review the risks, benefits, study purpose, and outline of the overall interview process. All interviewees provided informed consent to participate in the project. Although the interviews followed a semi-structured schedule, which involved implementing predetermined questions, the interviewer probed for deeper inquiry and rich explanations (Berg, 2004). The interview questions focused on the participants’ knowledge, rationales, and other aspects of alcohol policy at their stadium. The interviews also included discussion of event alcohol policy issues in general. Examples of questions include the following: What are the different aspects of the alcohol policy that are enforced? What are some reasons for allowing/not allowing alcohol sales within your stadium? Who are the responsible parties for carrying out the alcohol policies on game day? What is your personal attitude toward alcohol consumption at college football games? Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. To ensure reliability and transferability, final transcripts of each interview were sent to participants and all members confirmed their comments were accurate and representative of their session. Finally, data were analyzed following Moustakas’ (1994) methods of phenomenological data analysis. Specifically, the following steps were followed: (1) listing and preliminary grouping of verbatim quotes; (2) reduction and elimination of verbatim quotes; (3) clustering and thematizing of invariant constituents within the data; (4) final identification of invariant constituents and themes by application (validation); (5) using verbatim examples from the data, construction of an individual textural description of participants’ experiences (6) from the textual description, construction of individual structural descriptions takes place; (7) composition of a textual-structural description of the data, which is the essence of the phenomenon; finally, (8) a descriptive depiction of the meanings and essence of the phenomenon are placed in thematic categories. Coding was conducted manually.

Results

Interviews with the college football stadium administrators uncovered eight major distinguishable themes: Policy Origins and Development; Enforcement; Location; Control; Financial Benefits; Education and Alcohol Policy; Tradition and Culture; and Alcohol-related Issues on Game Day. The themes, sub themes, and meaning units are presented in Table 2. The following narrative presents how the themes emerged through the interviews and presence of the phenomenon of how stadium administrators perceive their own venue alcohol policies and the concept of college football alcohol policy in general.

Table 2. Summary of Analysis of Administrator’s Perspectives on Alcohol Policy at Stadia

Themes	Sub-themes	Meaning Units (Examples)
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Policy Origins and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for policy development • Distinctions between alcohol access in stadium areas for policy development • Creation of policy stipulations on back of tickets 	<p>[Regarding policy development] “They were only allowed to buy two per visit... [need for] cut off alcohol sales at the beginning of fourth quarter.”</p> <p>“Our policy was just adapted from what they already do [at the stadium].”</p>
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrator perceptions of enforcement at stadium • Containing problems through policy implementation/stadium security • Implementing policies by stadium staff, public law enforcement, and private security officers 	<p>[Regarding stadium security] “We have a decent number of ejections and even sometimes arrests depending on the severity...not allowing fans into stadium because they appear overly intoxicated”</p> <p>[Regarding enhanced enforcement] “We have bike police...We have ABT in the parking lots...we’ve got closed circuit cameras all over.”</p>
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-campus and off-campus alcohol policies • Distinctions between alcohol access policies in various levels of stadium seating 	<p>[Regarding stadium location] “Having a stadium on-campus is a little bit different. You bring it right into your academic environment.”</p> <p>[Regarding stadium seating] “There [are] two places you can have alcohol, which is the stadium club, which is for club seat holders...they can’t leave the suite hallway...so the alcohol stays in the hallway.”</p>
Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to control alcohol consumption • Handling/controlling alcohol-induced misbehavior and issues • NCAA status impacts type of control 	<p>[Regarding level of control] “If it’s controlled, like how we control ours, I think it’s great. We have it in a controlled environment, and people don’t get out of control.”</p> <p>[Regarding NCAA status] “[W]e’re an NCAA institution...you might not have control at an off-campus site, but if it’s our site, we have control and we’re going to follow NCAA’s lead in this.”</p>
Financial Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial benefits to alcohol sales versus potential risks • Selling alcohol as a way to partner with off-campus host venue(s) for financial advantages 	<p>[Regarding alcohol sale profits outweighing behavior issues] “Obviously, there’s a financial side to it that drives our concessions. There’s a decent amount of revenue that’s gained from it...you have some increased fan behavior, and you just [have] to weigh the pros and cons versus the revenue created from alcohol sales.”</p>
Education and Alcohol Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to educate fans about policy • The role of stadium policy makers and law enforcement in educating fans about alcohol consumption 	<p>[Regarding policy education] “You know, we’re forced to hopefully educate our fans with policies and procedures...”</p> <p>[Regarding education on enforcement] “We work with university police on...getting the word out and helping to get our boosters or our fans that are coming to the game, ‘hey, these are the policies, procedures you follow on campus on game days as it relates to alcohol.”</p>
Tradition and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepted behaviors, practices and traditions on game day • Culture surrounding the team and certain opponents • Team tradition and Influence on game day behavior 	<p>[Regarding traditions of tailgating on game day] “[Administrator is] not surprised when walk[ing] by tailgates at 7am for a noon kickoff and there’s a full bar set up there ready for folks to mix and enjoy or pour and enjoy.”</p> <p>[Regarding culture/atmosphere for game day] “The culture of [our] football fans for a lack of a better word, has been tame. You know we have our rowdy fans, but I think they’re also on the whole college football landscape, on the tame side.”</p> <p>“[There’s a] history...we’ve got a small group of just diehard fans...they want to become drunk and be belligerent.”</p>
Alcohol-related Issues on Game Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol-related game day issues in and out of stadia • ABT enforcement on noteworthy alcohol-related problems on game day • Disruptions of event by intoxicated fans 	<p>[Regarding fans’ alcohol consumption and game day issues] “I would probably say, if we are looking at ejections and arrests, probably 70% of those people that are getting ejected...alcohol plays a part...”</p> <p>“The majority, 50-60%, of those folks that are going and seeking aid at the aid stations, it’s alcohol related.”</p> <p>“[Administrator indicates] that over 50% of the issues with both security and medically, have to deal with alcohol use.”</p>

Policy Origins and Development

The historical circumstances behind why the stadium alcohol policies were developed were considered relevant to policy implementation and enforcement. Three stadia sold alcohol and were located away from university campuses (Stadia E, F, and G). Stadium E and F’s administrators stated that their stadium vendor had a full liquor licenses enabling beer and liquor sales in the venue. In stadia that sell alcohol, the administrators had differing levels of awareness to the purchasing limits. Two venues allowed two beverages per person, while one individual was

unaware of the limits that existed in his off-campus stadium. This attitude shows a tendency of policy disconnect between the university administrators and the professionally owned stadium in which their football teams played. One stadium administrator remarked: “They’re only allowed to buy two per visit ... [and] they cut off alcohol sales at the beginning of the fourth quarter, so they would sell through the break between the third and fourth quarter.” Another administrator remarked:

[We] have a soft shutoff at the end of half time... [where] either security and/or police go to the back of the line and walk down the line... That soft shutoff lasts for fifteen minutes. At the end of fifteen minutes, it’s a hard shutoff. (Stadium G)

According to this participant, the shut-off time is implemented in order to give individuals time for alcohol to metabolize through their systems.

The participants made distinctions between alcohol access policies in different parts of their stadia. Four stadia, located on university campuses, do not sell alcohol within their general areas but allow for sales or consumption within their luxury suites. When characterizing their alcohol policies, administrators state that there is no alcohol in the stadium, but this only refers to the general seating area. Ticket holders in luxury seating may have or purchase alcohol. Stadium B established a policy that “alcohol is strictly prohibited to come through the gates, in any of the seating bowl areas. The only place that alcohol is served is in private suites. And that alcohol cannot leave that area.” In this situation, alcohol is acquired through a private account, and beverages are delivered at the beginning of the year or during the week. Venue policy states alcohol cannot enter the stadium on game day, so no deliveries occur those days. Similarly, Stadium D allows alcohol sales within its luxury skyboxes. The box holders decide whether they want to purchase alcohol and do so through a private entity that operates a club that is open year-round for events and meals. Additionally, individuals may purchase alcohol in the club during games, provided they purchase a membership.

All tickets have stipulations on the back that the privilege of viewing a game may be revoked if policies are violated. However, some locations have taken this one step further. Three of the stadia implemented a program for season ticket holders that includes written reprimands for the first offense, face-to-face meetings with stadium officials subsequent to the second offense, or at worst revocation of season ticket privileges of the holder if any individual sitting in that seat is arrested or ejected, regardless of if the season ticket subscriber was present or not. This puts an onus on the season ticket holder to not only ensure that he/she and the people in the immediate party behave and do not encounter law enforcement repercussions.

Enforcement

The ability to contain problems through careful implementation of stadium policies was carried out through stadium staff, public law enforcement, and private security officers. The process is outlined by Stadium B's administrator as follows:

[S]omebody goes into Gate 13 and has got a bottle of whiskey on him and they're clearly inebriated and they are inside the gate, and the officer stops that person inside the gate and has a bottle of whiskey, so they...obviously [have] a prohibited item, they are cited for possession of alcohol then go to the booking room.

In addition, the revocation of season tickets for the behavior of any individual sitting in the seat of the ticket holder was noted, specifically in Stadium B, C and G.

Stadium G policy enforcement is comprehensive outside the stadium in parking lots, as well as within the stadium. Ejecting and arresting individuals who violate policy or laws is supposed to be part of the containment process.

We actually have a fair amount of ejections that happen prior to the game being started. Not allowing fans into the stadium because they appear overly intoxicated. So, since we are on private property, we are able to eject people right away and not even allow them into the stadium where you know they could cause even more issues once they started drinking. (Stadium G)

Mobilizing personnel in multiple areas is another strategy to enhance enforcement (i.e. using bicycle police to circulate through fan areas). Police distribute policy pamphlets to those patrons. "So we [have law enforcement officers] observing what's going on in our parking lots to make sure it's as safe as possible." (Stadium G)

Several of the stadia enhance enforcement through a text messaging system. Stadium security cannot be everywhere at once, and the cameras will not pick up misconduct unless they know where to focus.

Fans are able text in any issues and then right away as soon as those texts come in we put a camera on it and we got it until someone, either law enforcement or security can get to that position to see exactly what's going on.... [I]n the concourses we have cameras [that] are able to get in onto the concession lines to make sure the shut off is

going correctly or that it's being vended correctly, that they're not giving out too many drinks or anything like that. (Stadium G)

Many administrators agreed on the efficacy of this system. The game day operations command centre receives the information, zooms the cameras into the problem area, and dispatches security and/or law enforcement. It is unclear if this has led to a decrease in incidents, but it provides another tool in containing alcohol-related spectator misconduct. The system is intended to protect fans from possible repercussions or apprehension associated with reporting unruly fan behavior. Administrators have found that if somebody does report a possible infraction to law enforcement and the perpetrator finds out, it might lead to a confrontation between those parties, potential altercations, and possible arrests. Law enforcement can intervene without the culprit's awareness of who reported him/her.

Location

The administrators observed differences between on-campus and off-campus alcohol policies, whether they were the actual variations in policies or perceptions of alcohol consumption behavior and alcohol policy efficacy. Stadium A administrators determined that their lack of alcohol sales in the general seating stemmed from campus policy that prohibited alcohol on campus. Other venue administrators had similar sentiments. "Having a stadium on-campus is a little bit different. You bring it right into your academic environment" (Stadium C). Additionally, the Stadium C administrator saw more responsibility being on-campus. "I think you have to take more responsibility when you're on-campus, that's the biggest thing [because] it's an academic institution." Thus, the location of stadium had much to do with the sales policy. Stadium B's administrator also perceived a "steady level of security issues, violence in the stadium, [and] behavioral issues" if alcohol is sold in a venue. He was content with not allowing alcohol sales (as opposed to allowing limited consumption in luxury areas) at football games.

The administrator in Stadium D shared the sentiment that off-campus venues may sell alcohol and on-campus stadia refrain from selling. He stated that the basketball arena allows alcohol sales and is off-campus. "So you're dealing with your two largest population venues where one doesn't and one does." The participant from Stadium F suggested that moving the crowd they currently had at an off-campus venue to campus would not change much with regard to game day problems. He suggested they would have "a larger group of younger people attending there. I don't know if it would result in more arrests or ejections but you would have a slightly different demographic of who's attending."

Favoring the prohibition of alcohol sales in their general seating makes their stadia prone to fewer issues, according to on-campus venue administrators even

though there is an acknowledgement that they are likely turning down increased revenue for their athletic departments. The rationale is alcohol sales might change how one approaches law enforcement and policy development and implementation. On-campus stadia concoct the compromise of allowing alcohol sales in luxury seating, which occurs in all of the on-campus stadia. The stadium administrators understand that they are forgoing a large portion of revenue by not allowing general seating alcohol sales. The location of stadium seemed to have an impact on the alcohol sales policy decision.

Control

The distinctions between atmosphere and enforcement potential lead to the concept of control, specifically access to alcohol. Locations with fewer alcohol-related incidents attributed this outcome to management having achieved a high level of control of access to alcohol. Stadium A administrator felt the level of control was a reason for their low number of incidents. “We have it in a controlled environment, and people don’t get out of control, they enjoy it. We’ve rarely had few problems with it, and it’s great. I don’t see a problem with it.” (Stadium A) Having a sense control over alcohol consumption provided a justification for allowing sales in any area of a stadium.

Limiting alcohol to luxury seating, clearly present in on-campus venues, was a part of this control. “You have more control in a private area than you would in a general overall stadium.” The reasoning for selling alcohol in limited means was a part of this, but so was higher level administrative policy making. “I’m sure our president wanted to have control of that situation [and] limit the alcohol to just the premium areas, the private areas and not to a public area... [We] know that our culture demands it in sports” (Stadium C). Not allowing alcohol in the general seating area was a product of control for other stadia as well. “Primarily it’s to keep a level of containment of where the alcohol is going.” (Stadium D) Therefore, the ability to control dictated the limitations on where alcohol was sold.

The status of being an NCAA institution and an on-campus stadium affected alcohol policy; specifically, this impacted the type of control over policy making and enforcement. “[W]e’re an NCAA institution...you might not have control at an off-campus site, but if it’s our site, we have control and we’re going to follow the NCAA’s lead in this” (Stadium C). The NCAA does not allow alcohol sales at its championship events and also encourages institutions to not sell alcohol at their home events.

Financial Benefits

There was considerable disparity between the participants’ perceptions of the financial benefits of alcohol sales as opposed to the risks of increased misconduct. The rationale for not selling alcohol was generally associated with the potential for

problems to occur within the stadium. The interviewees recognized that access to alcohol in or around a stadium would instigate misconduct and other related problems.

If you don't sell alcohol in the stadium, I think you're actually setting yourself up for more problems in the parking lot, because the student mentality is going to be... a binge mentality.... [Venue operators] want to reduce problems in the tailgating areas, by not selling alcohol in the stadium, and I don't necessarily think there's a correlation there. (Stadium E)

Yet, this administrator also thought that the idea that on-campus stadia do not sell alcohol hurt the smaller schools financially. "We saw the value of the revenue we get from it and in our situation revenue drives the train in most cases." (Stadium E) They took in a percentage of alcohol sales at their off-campus venue which totaled around 8,000 to 9,000 dollars per game.

Another administrator believed that allowing alcohol sales makes his school a good partner with the off-campus host venue "because it allows them to gain some revenues from that source" and alcohol consumption is something the fans believe is part of the football environment. He also believed total alcohol-related issues on game day would not vary between venues that sold alcohol and those that did not.

I think they'd have the same issues if they didn't sell alcohol because I think the people who are prone to use alcohol or consume it to the level that it becomes a situation ... are going to do it whether a stadium sells it or not.... If they felt like they couldn't get a beer inside once they get in then they might have the extra beer outside. (Stadium F)

So, he did not perceive there to be much of a difference in alcohol abuse on game day between venues that sold alcohol and those that did not.

Stadium G's administrator focused on financial advantages to alcohol sales, which outweighed any behavioral issues. "Obviously there's a financial side to it that drives our concessions. There's a decent amount of revenue that's gained from it." Alcohol sales create revenue, and that is the trade-off that the off-campus stadium makes between raising money for the department or more behavioral control in the stadium. "You have some increased fan behavior issues, and you just [have] to weigh the pros and the cons verses the revenue created from alcohol sales." This stadium profited from alcohol sales but struggles to reconcile making money with containing problems.

From just event operations it'd be easy to say let's not sell it, it'd make my life easier, it'd make police's and security's job a whole lot easier I think. But ultimately operating budget is affected somewhat in part by our concession numbers as well.... I think it'd be easy to say "hey let's not do it it's not worth the headache." (Stadium G)

Therefore, all of the administrators in stadia that sell alcohol saw some benefits to allowing sales within their venues. Profiting from alcohol sales seemed to outweigh any potential fan misconduct issues experienced at games.

Education and Alcohol Policy

All interviewees mentioned the role of education as an important theme in relation to stadium alcohol policy, and it emerged in two ways; first, in terms of the need to educate fans about behavior which stems from the responsibility of universities as educational entities, and second, in terms of the educational environment in which college football operates. Stadium policy makers claim they have a role to play in educating fans about alcohol consumption and its problematic by-products. All of the venues have fan guides that have their policy information available for fans, and have game day announcements over public address systems. "[W]e do a video with our head football coach and our chief of police to say don't drink and drive and we want you to enjoy the game" (Stadium A). Other venues feature game day messages on their video boards about excessive alcohol use and game day safety. Educational initiatives were considered virtually compulsory. "You need to have it, to educate people on how to act, and sometimes keep people aware of their surroundings, to know who to look out for and how to act." (Stadium A). The administrator in Stadium G also found education of patrons to be an extension of control.

[W]e're forced to ... educate our fans with our policies and procedures and hope that they are able to act in an adult manner... to create an enjoyable environment for all... if they want to consume alcohol, they can do it in a manner that they are still able to enjoy the game, and not be a detriment to the fans around them. (Stadium G)

While seemingly a forced exercise, this administrator thought education was essential to alcohol policy control within and around their home stadium even though potential difficulties in educating patrons were acknowledged.

You can try to educate, I think it's [the] best you can do, but it's tough when you have 20,000 cars, ... it's tough to police that much when you've got a parking lot that's acres big, or even you got to walk a

mile to walk to the stadium. It's tough to police that. So you've got to really rely on getting fans to buy into creating an enjoyable atmosphere and doing so responsibly. (Stadium G)

The importance of educating was echoed by other administrators. Law enforcement had a role in educating fans before having to resort to arrest or ejection. Stadium B put an emphasis on working with local law enforcement with educational communication initiatives.

We work with university police on ... getting the word out and helping to get our boosters or our fans that are coming to the game, "hey, these are the policies, procedures you follow on campus on games days as it relates to alcohol but it's up to the [law enforcement agencies] to enforce whatever those rules are. (Stadium B)

The police are also present outside the stadium, assessing the alcohol consumption in tailgating areas and almost serving as an "an alcohol awareness group" (Stadium B).

Additionally, the educational environment that surrounds college football also became apparent. The idea of education resonated more with the administrators affiliated with on-campus facilities. Allowing alcohol sales does not coincide with the goals of an academic environment. The reasons for policing alcohol consumption in a different way on-campus, specifically not allowing sales within their stadia, stems from this educational atmosphere.

I guess the ideology on campus is because binge drinking is really a prevalent problem on many college campuses and [our institution] is included in that, is the idea of do we want to sponsor the sale of alcohol among a population that we're also trying to educate. (Stadium D)

Thus, the educational environment creates pressure toward keeping alcohol sales out of university-owned football stadia (Stadia A, B, C, and D) or sharply limiting such sales.

Tradition and Culture

Tradition and culture surrounding college football game day were cited as a reason for (in some instances) the prevalence or (in other instances) lack of alcohol-related incidents on game day. There are certain accepted behaviors, practices, or ongoing traditions that might increase alcohol consumption. Additionally, the culture

surrounding a team or certain opponents can have an influence on game day behavior by fans.

You certainly have a factor that plays in that you add in for the early season opponents. Maybe it's the first game ... for your freshman it's the first chance to go to a football game, it's the first tailgate, it's the first chance.... When those factors were combined with the game being against the [major in-state conference rival] the year that we've done that a couple of times, we certainly see quite a different bit of behavior from our fans than if those two things weren't combined. (Stadium D)

The traditions surrounding tailgating and rivalries contributed to the type of behavior that fans engaged in at games.

Conversely, numerous administrators acknowledged that the lack of a tradition can affect the alcohol-related issues. "We're creating an identity. We don't have one. We don't have a tradition" (Stadium C). Three of the programs have only been in existence for a little over ten years, and a fourth had only had football in an on-campus venue for four years, with not much of a tradition of school support. For two of the programs, the administrators cited not having a tradition as a reason for having more problems in the early stages of their home games. The other cited not having a tradition of tailgating or football success as a reason for relatively few game day incidents at their venue.

The presence of a tradition can impact game day atmosphere and related incidents. Stadium G's administrator noted that fans have a reputation for poor behavior which can be attributed to their fans' following.

They're a little bit more harsh. They're not fan friendly, but they are just a little more meaner, almost....It's hard to say [there's a] history, but we've got a small group of just diehard fans, and we've got some fans that, [where] it's not about the football game. They want to come to get drunk and be belligerent.

Many of the incidents are perceived by the administrators to be caused by a few fans who take their roles as supporters of their teams too far.

Alcohol-related Issues on Game Day

According to the participants, alcohol consumption led to most of the game day issues in all of the stadia. However, administrators differed on the level of seriousness they assigned to these issues and where they originated. The smaller stadia (A and E) generally had problems surrounding exterior pre-game alcohol consumption, but rarely within the stadia, and did not see alcohol consumption as

a major venue problem. Stadium E had noteworthy problems when they moved to their new stadium following an enforcement crackdown by the Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco (ABT). The administrator accounted 100 arrests for underage alcohol consumption at their games, troublesome considering a capacity of 20,000 spectators. Stadium F's administrator perceived his stadium had few alcohol-related incidents.

The other venue administrators acknowledged an array of alcohol-related problems that stressed stadium operations or public safety staff, and/or led to law enforcement activity by game day security officials. Alcohol consumption by fans led to many of the disruptions experienced on game day. "I would say over 50% of the issues we deal with both security and medically, have to deal with alcohol use" (Stadium B). While issues arose due to alcohol consumption, he considered the 100 arrests or ejections occurring on game day to be minor in a stadium with 90,000 spectators present. Stadium C's administrator considered alcohol-related problems to be manageable in his stadium's case. They found that more issues occurred when the heat was a factor. A 1:00 pm game in November would seemingly yield "no alcohol issues" compared to a 7:00 pm game in September. Other stadia have found issues with rivals, no matter what time of year. The presence of empty bottles of alcohol in the stadium following games, smuggled in by spectators, was an issue that still occurred even though police performed checks of all individuals entering the venue. Additionally, Stadium E permitted re-entry effectively allowing individuals to consume alcohol outside the stadium as opposed to purchasing it inside. So, alcohol consumption by individuals in general seating areas by underage individuals at stadia with sales, and by those who could not buy alcohol in the other venues, was still widespread.

Discussion

The interviews provided insight into the thought processes of policy development and the social behavioral issues that encompass administrator game day crowd management, generally geared toward providing a safe environment for patrons revealing eight themes: Policy origins and development, enforcement perceptions, location of stadia, control, financial benefits, education, tradition and culture, and alcohol-related issues on game day. Many of the themes are best interpreted and explained as environmental strategies that are comprehensible through different components of theoretical perspectives, research-based crowd management strategies, and best practices. Results can be explained with some of the concepts of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (Bandura, 1969; 1986) and intertemporal substitution (Boyes & Faith, 1993), but also highlight concordance and conflict with best practices and published guides focused on alcohol sales and crowd violence in stadia (Whaley, n.d; Department for Culture, Media, & Sport, 2008)

Policy makers consider the physical space and rules for behavior that influence a person's reaction to a policy. In response, they alter the environment to encourage preferred behavior and discourage disapproved behavior. The policy rationales and enforcement protocol are influenced by environmental determinants of behavior: reciprocal determinism (Bandura 2002), which leads to the behavioral modification concepts of incentive motivation (Bandura 1969, 1986) and facilitation. Control of the environment is a major facet of alcohol policy. Limitations on alcohol intake and the choices that individuals make in their drinking exemplify reciprocal determinism. Incentive motivation is an ecological component applicable to these policy implementations. A number of policy initiatives were detailed by the administrators highlighting the use of incentives, whether done consciously or not. The use of punishment in dealing with alcohol-related issues is widely known and dealt with through arrest but can also be related to the levels of reported crime (DiIulio 1995). Ejecting or arresting patrons who do not abide by policy or laws, were used by all seven stadia, and is the most time-tested incentive. The debate remains whether arresting or ejecting unruly fans works as an incentive or abated excessive alcohol consumption. For the most part, the majority of individuals at games have no confrontations with security or law enforcement, even if they do drink heavily. Some locations found arresting or ejecting people before the game began due to over-intoxication prevents more issues from occurring during the game.

Alcohol policies that change behaviors or at least enable individuals to make choices that influence drinking decisions are a form of reciprocal determinism. Uniformly, among the stadia of interest, patrons were prohibited from bringing alcohol into the stadium. With the exception of one stadium, active searches or pat-downs were conducted by security staff. The alcohol sales policies differ between two groups of venues; on-campus venues prohibit alcohol consumption or sales in general seating, while off-campus venues permit alcohol sales. As of the 2014 season, 25% of college football stadia sell alcohol with 21 out of the 128 total stadia located on-campus and 11 in off-campus venues (Mitchell & Montgomery, 2015). However, all the stadia subject to examination in the interviews allowed alcohol consumption in at least one section of the stadium. Three stadia allowed sales in club seating, while another allowed consumption in the club and suite areas without sales during the game. The allowance of alcohol in higher-end seating is consistent with reports of other college football stadia' alcohol consumption policies for luxury seating (Opdyke & Kesmodel, 2009). There was agreement among participants that schools did not sell alcohol in the general seating on-campus because of the responsibility that the university has as an academic institution and prevalence of underage students. This is also in accordance with industry standards in England as stipulated by the Football Association (Whaley, n.d.). While these events are different codes of football (association vs. gridiron), cultural issues with

alcohol consumption and fan misconduct are similar. The FA only allows alcohol consumption within club areas and not general seating, just like the on-campus stadia subject to this study. However, this prohibition is due to English law, not choice (Department for Culture, Media, & Sport, 2008).

Similar to other professional venues in the United States, stadia of interest to this study had limitations on number of alcoholic beverages per transaction, along with prescribed times for cutting off sales. This is consistent with every major professional sport stadium in the U.S. which serves alcohol and 98% limit sales to 2 beverages per transaction. (Lenk, et al., 2010). Based on the sales policies, patrons who are of age may make choices as to their alcohol consumption. In areas where alcohol consumption is prohibited, some spectators choose to drink either before the game in tailgating parties, or smuggle alcohol into the stadium. This is especially the case for underage students as shown in previous literature (Glassman, et al., 2007, Glassman, et al., 2010). Many stadium administrators noted that individuals also consume heavily before the game, even when alcohol sales were permitted inside the gates. So, whether alcohol is completely limited, or available with control, individuals still have an influence on the game day drinking environment.

Regardless of sales policy, the administrators collectively perceived that if individuals are to cease abusing alcohol, the environment must facilitate behavior modification. Bandura (2002) suggests that the environment must support new behaviors or behavioral change. Policy enforcement, education, and control themes align with the SCT concepts of facilitation and self-regulation. Limiting intake of alcohol is a form of self-regulation while facilitation includes limiting student access to alcohol in the on-campus environment or sales limits such as the two beverages per visit and cut-off time like the end of halftime in off-campus venues. The text messaging programs provide a means for spectators to ensure a safe area in their seating along with contributing to the enforcement process to point out potential problems. This can also be considered a form of self-regulation. In addition, administrators in Stadium C and Stadium G believed that people looked out for each other as a result of a culture instilled at their institutions, either encouraging individuals to act responsibly, as a form of self-regulation.

Administrators disagreed on the impact of alcohol provision on crowd behavior. The locations of stadia bred differing outcome expectations for the administrators. Off-campus stadium administrators thought it was likely for more problems to occur in stadia that prohibited alcohol sales. This was due to a “binge mentality” in tailgating alcohol consumption or attending football games, an example of high-risk celebratory drinking which is shown in numerous studies (Neighbors, et al., 2006, Oster-Aaland & Neighbors, 2007, Glassman, et al., 2007). The Stadium E administrator cited the perception that not selling alcohol would decrease issues in the tailgating areas. Yet, there was a sense that more control of

alcohol consumption led to less problems. Prior study has confirmed higher intoxication levels of individuals due to an increase in alcohol consumption before college football games as explained through the theory of intertemporal substitution (Boyes & Faith, 1993). Other administrators indicated that not allowing alcohol sales within stadia would yield similar or increased amounts of incidents with little chances of decrease. In recent years stadia have introduced alcohol sales to increase revenue associated with games, but also to control alcohol-related misconduct. For example the University of West Virginia experienced 500,000 dollars of revenue associated with new alcohol sales and a decrease in reported arrests (Mitchell & Montgomery, 2015). This may corroborate the belief of the administrator in Stadium F that there is not enough evidence to show that banning alcohol sales yields better fan behavior and has not been enough empirical evidence to show a sustained trend related to changes in alcohol policy or differences in policing. However, other venues and sport officials continue to support bans on alcohol sales within stadia, such as the California State University System (Olson, 2014) and the Southeastern Conference's ban of alcohol sales within on alcohol sales in general seating areas. It has been noted that complete bans of alcohol consumption or sales are "usually unnecessary, unless a particular event carries a long history of serious violence" or misconduct (Madensen & Eck, 2008, p. 28). In this study stadia with histories of game day misconduct fuelled by alcohol were split between selling alcohol and banning sales. Overall, the results of this study are consistent with the current state of alcohol sales attitudes among U.S. college football administrators; a disagreement of whether alcohol sales prevent or escalate arrests and other misconduct on game day.

Limitations

This study has a number of limitations due to the nature of the data collected. It relies on interviews and potential guardedness of interview participants due to the perceived sensitive nature of the content is a possible concern. As a result, there may be some social desirability bias in the responses. One of the interviews recorded occurred with two administrators participating at the same time which could have possibly biased the responses. The small sample size and delimitation to stadium administrators in one region (state) may limit the number of perspectives available on the topic. This study looks at perceptions of their stadium policies and other stadium policies within their state and football stadia in general. As a phenomenological study, we endeavor to illuminate the phenomenon of differing perceptions of alcohol policy among administrators in one delimited region (state). But, it does not seek to generalize alcohol-related security issues across the state, let alone nationally or globally. It also falls short of being a critique of policies.

Conclusions and Implications

Overall, policy makers agree that alcohol policy is an important part of stadium safety, but vary in their opinion of whether alcohol should be served or not. This study may leave the sports security industry with more questions than answers. If stadium policy makers do not agree on the efficacious policy is that a sign of more potential problems in stadia or a sign of holistic stadium administrators? In the college football approach better than a blanket approach like the FA in England or even the SEC and NCAA championship policies of no alcohol sales allowed at any events? Should there be a more a uniform approach to alcohol policy in stadia? A survey of stadium administrators may help us answer those questions, but it remains to be seen whether any level of agreement would emerge. So, based on the perceptions of the eight administrators in this policy, we can consider the following conclusions.

There are several significant findings law enforcement, stadium managers, and other public safety officials may consider as result of the study. The use of educational policies such as pamphlet distribution, public service announcements, and using law enforcement in an educational and informative role and less adversarial role could be useful as a part of stadium alcohol policy. The use of text messaging systems which enable patrons to report issues and disruptions around them before becoming greater problems that affect more spectators may be a tactic that stadia might want to employ, if not already implemented.

Interviews revealed that some stadia did not report ejections. In one case, those who did not leave the premises when asked by law enforcement were arrested and charged with trespass. In other cases, ejections were the bulk of law enforcement activity in lieu of charging individuals with crime. Thus, making an attempt to standardize law enforcement practices among stadia might benefit law enforcement officers and fans. Fans who travel between stadia would know what to expect and what behavior is considered appropriate. Spectators from a venue with more lenient ejection policies may experience more trouble and possible arrest or ejections when traveling to other venues due to the expectations they established at their home stadium. Reporting ejections rather than allowing individuals to leave without documenting the incident would help law enforcement and stadium officials to obtain a better idea of the amount of misconduct occurring at games. In addition, implementing an accountability program that punishes season ticket holders who violate stadium policy would also serve as a deterrent to individuals who might be prone to excess drinking and related misconduct but wish to attend games in the future and will in turn modify their behavior to continue to attend events.

Security issues related to alcohol consumption will continue to be a challenge for stadium administrators and security professional, especially in college stadia. Future research should continue to address the efficacy of alcohol sales versus bans, crowd behavior within venues, law enforcement strategies, and the

impact of events of area crime. While this study helped to shed light on what our lead stadium administrators are thinking and reacting, the most important message may be the need for more communication among security professionals. Future study on alcohol policy and stadium security can only help sport venue security professionals understanding on the best ways to keep their venues and patrons safe.

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