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Prison Boot Camps: Which Style Works Best?

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Prison Boot Camps: Which Style Works Best?

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Criminal Justice

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Joshua M. Towey

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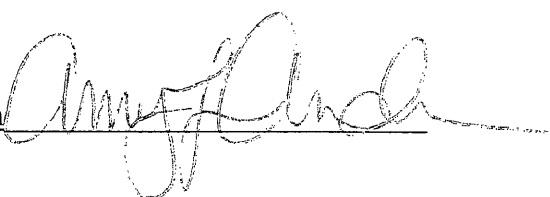



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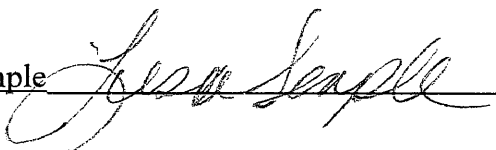
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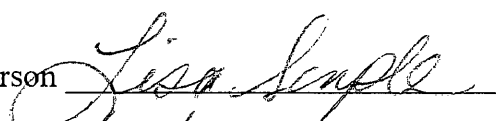
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Prison Boot Camps: Which Style Works Best?

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In 1983 Georgia and Oklahoma began implementing a new type of alternative sanction called prison boot camps. These alternative sanctions were an attempt to alleviate problems such as prison overcrowding, cost of long-term imprisonment, and high recidivism rates among offenders. As boot camps proliferated across the U.S., two distinct types of programs evolved, the military and the therapeutic styles. Given the extensive use of these types of boot camps across the country, it is important to determine which style is most effective at achieving their intended goals. For this research, I use data collected by MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) to determine which type of boot camp program is better able to reduce offender recidivism. The results indicate that there was not a significant difference in recidivism across programs, but both programs exhibit lower recidivism rates than those found nationally for prisons. This findings is used to explore implications for future boot camp design and its influence on public safety.

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INTRODUCTION

The year is 1983. The small courtroom in Georgia is relatively vacant as another judge is faced with a difficult decision. The offender standing before the judge is facing his first offense. On a routine traffic stop this offender was found to be in possession of illegal drugs. The amount of drugs present was enough to charge this young man with intent to sell, a felony in Georgia at this time. Many things go through the judge's mind as he makes this sentencing decision. The current state of the criminal justice system floods his thoughts, as does the overcrowding in the prisons. The correctional costs of housing a prisoner are rising every day. And most of all, the recidivism rates currently are so high that they make him wonder if prison is really the answer for a non-violent, first time offender such as the young man standing in front of him.

What is this judge to do? So many pressures from so many different groups affect his decision-making. The politicians in his district can not afford to be labeled as soft on crime. The prison warden's reports illustrate that they have filled the beds they currently have and are busting at the proverbial seams. Probation officers, the judge knows, already have immense caseloads. Regardless, probation would not be considered a "tough" enough punishment to fit the crime at hand. Prison might only subject this first time felon to the harsher elements in the criminal justice system, not to mention cost the state an enormous amount of the taxpayer's money. The judge weighs all this in his decision. He takes a chance on an innovative new idea.

The judge decided to sentence this offender to a new intermediate sanction being implemented in Georgia, as well as in Oklahoma. This new program is an attempt to provide an alternative between probation and jail or prison. Its existence now gives judges more options in sentencing to deter and incapacitate convicted offenders in the criminal justice system, as well as divert them from prison. The new intermediate sanction the Georgia judge decides to use is the prison boot camp.

In this thesis, I examine the effectiveness of prison boot camp programs. I focus my research on adult prison boot camps, although there are now juvenile boot camp programs in operation. My research question is, "What style of prison boot camp is most effective at achieving the goal of reducing offender recidivism?" The findings of my research can be used to determine which prison boot camp should be used in the future to make this program most effective within the criminal justice system.

In order for any researcher to answer a question with any amount of certainty, one must have dependable data from which to draw samples, run statistical tests, and analyze the results from such tests. I will draw data from a study conducted by MacKenzie and Souryal in 1992.

MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) surveyed all fifty state correctional systems in 1990 to determine the number and type of prison boot camps they were operating. Eight states agreed to participate in the study. Of the eight, Georgia and Oklahoma were two. These two states' programs are remarkable examples of prison boot camps for my research for multiple reasons. First, the two states'

prison boot camps are similar in participant demographics. The number of participants, length of stay in the boot camp, age of offenders, criminal offenses, and drop out rates are very similar. Second, Georgia and Oklahoma's boot camp programs are very dissimilar in their approach regarding programming within the boot camp itself. Georgia fits the military-style of prison boot camp mold while Oklahoma is quite like the treatment-style prison boot camp. Lastly, Georgia and Oklahoma were the first two states to implement the prison boot camp movement. This longer time frame gives me more available data with which to work, allowing for more reliable results.

All of these factors will permit me to compare and contrast offender's participation results from both types of camps. The factor on which I will focus my efforts is the impact of the programs on offender participant recidivism. I feel this is *the* key component in determining the effectiveness of prison boot camps. The available data from MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) lends itself well to this purpose through community supervision data extending far after the offender's participation in the prison boot camp program.

Ultimately, this thesis offers an enhanced understanding of which type of prison boot camp would best suit the criminal justice system today in terms of reducing prisoner offending. If states are going to implement new approaches to old problems, we must monitor and analyze these new approaches to determine their effectiveness. Studies must be objective and free of any third party interests. Prison boot camps could possibly be one avenue to solving real problems such as prison overcrowding, high correctional costs and lofty recidivism rates. If an

effective means by which to apply these programs can conclusively be found, governments will then be empowered to continue to offer judges more choices when sentencing non-violent offenders within their communities.

The two core types of prison boot camps, military and therapeutic, differ greatly in their approach to solving the shared goals of reducing recidivism of convicted offenders. With two exceptionally different approaches to the same problems, many questions arise. Why the two types? Who decides which type to adopt? The questions could go on and on. For the purpose of this thesis however, the most imperative, underling question is, "What type of prison boot camp is most effective at achieving the goal of reducing offender recidivism?" The answer to this very important question has implications for the criminal justice system concerning costs and prison overcrowding. However, the most important implication may be how the public's safety might be dramatically improved through effective utilization of the boot camp program.

Prison boot camps are a very important part of the criminal justice system today. Many judges are using this intermediate sanction to divert offenders away from traditional avenues such as jail and prison for several reasons. For example, Harrison & Beck (2005) found that in 2004, the United States prison population grew 1.9 percent. Federal prisons were operating at forty percent above their capacity level. The total incarcerated population also increased by 54, 321 convicted offenders in 2004. The prisoners in custody at both the state and federal levels were the highest of all time in 2004. Moreover, McKean (2004) found the current recidivism rate in the United States to be approximately 66%,

meaning two thirds of released inmates will be re-incarcerated within three years time of their release. Therefore, prison's effectiveness at reducing prisoner re-offending is in question.

Prison boot camp programs provide an alternative to prison. They can offer more structure and rehabilitative programming than probation, yet they can provide the punishment and rehabilitation of prison, but at a possibly cheaper cost to tax payers. These benefits may only be recognized through evaluation and thus it is important to determine if prison boot camps decrease recidivism. If so, which type of prison boot camp is more effective? I will now provide the history and typology of prison boot camps.

HISTORY

Prison Boot Camps in the Beginning

Prison boot camps began in Georgia and Oklahoma in 1983 (MacKenzie & Herbert, 1996). The prison boot camps had very specified goals at their onset. These camps were policy maker's attempt to respond to ever-growing problems within the criminal justice system; such as the high correctional costs, prison overcrowding and extremely high recidivism rates among convicted offenders.

Boot camps, labeled as an intermediate sanction, were seen as a middle ground for judges, designed to punish offenders for their crimes while at the same time therapeutically treating offenders by addressing needs on an individual basis, (MacKenzie & Herbert, 1996). This new program was seen as a more harsh punishment than probation, taking the offender off the streets. However, it was

not quite as extreme as sentencing a non-violent offender to the harsh realities of prison life.

Mackenzie and Souryal (1994) found participants of prison boot camps were either assigned to the program or volunteered for induction to the program, depending upon the state in which the program was conducted. The two inaugural states involved in the inception of the prison boot camp program had similar selection criteria. Participants in Georgia and Oklahoma were, on average, twenty year old males with ten years of education. Most of the participants in each state were white. Participants could not have any prior violent offenses on their record in order to be admitted to the prison boot camp program.

Prison boot camps were designed to last significantly shorter periods than that of the opposing alternatives, in this case being jail or prison sentences. In Georgia and Oklahoma prison boot camps, the average stay ranged from ninety to one hundred eighty days. Austin (2002) found that in confining offenders for a shorter period of time, it was hoped that prison boot camps would simultaneously reduce incarceration length, correctional costs, and recidivism through this new effective program. I will now discuss the theory of deterrence, on which prison boot camps are based.

Deterrence Theory in Boot Camps

In general, the hope was that prison boot camps would divert young, non-violent offenders away from jail and prison by offering judges an alternative sanction. Proponents of prison boot camps based their new alternative sanction

upon a justification for punishment called deterrence. Spohn (2002) states that deterrence theory was developed in the 18th Century by philosophers Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria. Deterrence theory states that the purpose of punishment is to prevent those who are punished from committing additional crimes in the future or to deter others from committing similar crimes. This theory suggests that crime results from a rational calculation of the costs versus the benefits of criminal activity. In this case, criminals commit crime because the benefit outweighs the cost of possibly getting caught. Prison Boot Camp proponents felt the shock value of the prison boot camps would deter offenders from recidivating in the future. They felt this new program could do so in a shorter, more cost effective manner than prisons.

Prison Boot Camps Growth

As prison boot camps became more popular, states other than Georgia and Oklahoma began to adopt them. Not all of the states adopting prison boot camp programs agreed on how they should be operated. However, MacKenzie and Herbert (1996) found that there were some consistencies in the type of programs being implemented across states. The consistencies were as follows:

1. Prison boot camps had a central component of military drill and ceremony.
2. Prison boot camp participants were separated from the general population, most often being at an entirely different location.
3. Prison boot camps were considered to be an alternative to confinement.

4. Prison boot camps required offenders to participate in a rigorous daily schedule of hard labor and physical training.

In attempts to reduce correctional costs, improve offender recidivism rates and reduce prison overcrowding, many prison boot camps emerged in the late eighties and early nineties. Stephan & Karberg (2003) found that boot camps continued to grow in the late nineties. The number of inmates participating in boot camp programs grew from 8,968 in 1995 to 12,751 in the year 2000. Boot camps were typically run at the state level. Eighty-seven of the ninety-five operating boot camps in 2000 were operated by the state. The remaining camps were run by private organizations.

Many states adopted the prison boot camp ideology, but not all maintained the same operational style. As a result, two extraordinarily different core types of prison boot camps emerged, military and treatment style. I will now describe these two types of prison boot camp, first discussing the military style and then the treatment style of prison boot camp.

Military-Style Prison Boot Camps

The military style of boot camp (Georgia) was intended to teach participants discipline, teamwork, and self-respect through an intense work regimen, physical activity, and strict accountability standards (MacKenzie and Grover, 2001). Military-style prison boot camps were modeled closely after the basic training program utilized by the United States military. Offender participants entered the program as a part of a platoon or squad. Participants were required to wear military-styled uniforms, march to and from activities and

respond rapidly to whatever commands are “barked” at them by their drill-sergeant instructors.

The rigorous daily regimen required all offender participants to wake up at early hours each day of the program. Drill instructors led participants in physical activities, drill and ceremony, marching throughout the day. They were also treated rather harshly on a consistent basis; being subjected to yelling, intimidation, physical punishments, etc. This was meant to add to the shock value, and the experience was purposely made to be unpleasant for prison boot camp participants in these camps

Compared to other prison boot camp programs in operation in the early eighties, the state of Georgia’s boot camps most closely resembled the military style boot camp (Mackenzie and Souryal, 1994). Offenders volunteered for participation, but once admitted, were not allowed to leave the program. This state’s prison boot camp stood out as the program with the least focus on rehabilitation. Besides a very short prerelease program component, there was absolutely no time in the daily prison boot camp schedule devoted to any therapeutic activities.

Treatment-Style Prison Boot Camps

Treatment-style prison boot camps (Oklahoma), like military-style camps, emphasized strict discipline and obedience (MacKenzie and Grover, 2001). However, the fundamental difference between these two styles lies in the programming implemented throughout the course of the program. The routine

activities in this style of prison boot camp include drilling, marching and physical training paired with individual counseling and therapy sessions.

In order to deepen the impact of the treatment-style prison boot camp, and attempting to influence future recidivism rates, these camps put more focus on building the offender participants' respect for authority figures, their own self-esteem, and self-confidence. The treatment-style prison boot camps (Oklahoma) taught life skills and fostered a sense of pride and accomplishment within the participants. Coping skills, substance abuse treatment, family counseling, and anger management were all featured areas of interest in treatment prison boot camps. The focus of treatment-style prison boot camps was supplementary rehabilitation for offenders, much different than that of the military-styled boot camp.

MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) found that the state of Oklahoma's prison boot camps adopted this type of treatment-style boot camp. There was a focus on physical training and a rigorous daily regimen in Oklahoma's boot camp. However, offenders who had problems in the camp due to physical or mental limitations were assigned to special squads to better accommodate their needs. The focus of the rehabilitative efforts within Oklahoma's prison boot camp was that of academic education. On average, offender participants spent three hours per day in a classroom setting; quite a contrast from the boot camp in Georgia, where offenders spent no time in educational or therapeutic settings.

For the purposes of this thesis, my focus will be on the research looking at three general aspects affecting prison boot camps. First, my literature review will

explore the military-style boot camp (Georgia). I will focus on the treatment of individuals in these camps and its effect on offenders' re-offending. Second, in contrast, I will also review the treatment style of prison boot camps (Oklahoma) and, in turn, the effects they have on offenders' re-offending. Third, I will review the means by which researchers measure recidivism following the prison boot camp program, and how that affects the perceived effectiveness of this intermediate sanction.

DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMS

Much research has been devoted to studying the effectiveness of the prison boot camp programs being utilized in the criminal justice system today (Austin, 2002; MacKenzie and Corbett, 1994; Parent, 2003). I will use the available information to paint a clear, concise picture of each type of prison boot camp. In addition to describing each prison boot camp style, I will also devote my research to the different outcome measures used to test the effectiveness of this intermediate sanction and their respective levels of reliability.

Boot camps, regardless of the type, frequently have many similarities. However, the differences they have in programming philosophy, participant requirements, and outcome measurement are numerous. The subtle differences between programs could greatly change the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of the program. In order to illustrate the similarities as well as the differences between the treatment and military style boot camps, I will explain the different phases of the boot camp program from selection, through programming, and the eventual graduation and follow-up of the boot camp programs, using the Georgia program

as an example of the military style and Oklahoma as a model for the therapeutic style.

Boot Camp Selection Criteria

In order to describe how a boot camp achieves its intended goals, one must begin with how the participants are selected to participate in the boot camp program. Convicted offenders that have committed non-violent offenses and do not have an extensive prior record are, at times, eligible for the intermediate sanction of a prison boot camp program. In some states, judges can offer the prison boot camp option to the convicted offender, and it is the offender's choice whether or not to participate. In other states, boot camp participation is mandated to the offender (Mackenzie and Souryal, 1994). I will now compare and contrast the two boot camp programs for which my research focuses in regards to selection criteria. There are many similarities in participant demographics, but early in the boot camp system, differences begin to emerge as well.

The Georgia military style boot camp has specific selection criteria, which followed the selection criteria typical of a military style boot camp (MacKenzie and Corbett, 1994). Participants have to be males between the ages 18-25. Convicted offenders have to volunteer to be in the program. Once accepted into the prison boot camp, they could not ask to leave, however. Participants cannot be convicted of a violent felony, and most are serving sentences for burglary, theft, or drug related offenses.

In contrast to the military style boot camp in Georgia, the Oklahoma treatment style boot camp program's selection criteria was reasonably different,

(MacKenzie and Corbett, 1994). Oklahoma's boot camp, typical of treatment style boot camps, was known as a shock incarceration program. The different designation quickly shows the difference in programming philosophy. The shock value of participants' loss of autonomy and freedom for a very structured and regimented daily schedule is why they were labeled as such. In response to the Non-Violent Intermediate Offender Act of 1983, the Oklahoma Department of Corrections developed the Regimented Inmate Discipline Program. Participants in this treatment style program had to be males between the ages of 17 and 25. Participants could not have been convicted of a violent offense in the past if they wanted to be inducted into Oklahoma's program. Participants were typically convicted of burglary, theft, or drug related offenses. Once selected for the boot camp program, participants are relocated to the site of the prison boot camp and the programming feature begins. This is the most influential point in the process of the prison boot camp system. The philosophy of the specific type of boot camp reveals itself during this phase.

Prison Boot Camp Programming

Prison boot camp is designed primarily to provide constructive intervention and early support to a population of convicted offenders who are at high risk of re-offending (Parent, 2003). The prison boot camp is meant to serve as an intermediate sanction that promotes the basic traditional and moral values inherent in the United States. They have an emphasis on discipline through vigorous physical activity, manual labor, drill and ceremony, and many other activities that ensure the participants have little free time. Correctional officers

act similar to drill instructors and use verbal tactics to “break down” participants’ resistance and lead to effective, positive changes in their behaviors. These intermediate sanction programs encourage participants to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

A classic prison boot camp program in the early eighties was designed to include a highly structured, three-month residential program (Parent, 2003). Programming stressed military-like discipline, hard work and vigorous daily activity. Over time the camps evolved, however. These “second generation” boot camps emphasized rehabilitation by adding pro-social skills training, educational tutoring, and drug and alcohol counseling. Some boot camps even added post-release supervision to their programming regimen. This post-release phase may include random urine tests, electronic monitoring, and home confinement. This aftercare phase of the process most generally associated with the treatment style of prison boot camp is very influential in the success of the convicted offender following the prison boot camp, as I will emphasize further in the next section.

From Parent’s (2003) study, one can perceive the manner in which an offender may be affected by participation in the programs of a prison boot camp described above. The initial shock of the prison boot camp experience is designed specifically to induce stress in a boot camp participant. Participants are most receptive to change within this initial time span of stress. The added stress makes participants particularly receptive to the programming offered.

I will now focus on the two particular styles of prison boot camps in my research. The Oklahoma treatment style prison boot camp differs significantly

from the Georgia military style prison boot camp. As stated earlier, this is the phase in which the two styles diverge and the similarities begin to end.

Although many prison boot camps are located at their own independent facility site, the Georgia military style boot camp is actually located in prison (MacKenzie and Souryal, 1994). The length of this military style boot camp is ninety days with a participant capacity of 250 offenders. During the ninety days of programming, a judge retains authority over the participants of the prison boot camp. If dismissed from the program, offenders are returned to the judge and re-sentenced to a different type of sanction. Of the eight prison boot camp programs included in the MacKenzie and Souryal study, Mackenzie and Souryal (1994) deemed the Georgia boot camp the program with the least focus on rehabilitation.

The focus of Georgia's boot camp was strict discipline, a hard regimen of physical activity, and a very rigorous daily schedule. Participants marched in squads, wore military-style uniforms, and were required to respond rapidly to the instructions of drill instructor-like staff. Absolutely no time in the daily schedule at this prison boot camp was devoted to any therapeutic activities. MacKenzie and Grover (2001) found that typical punishment for non-compliance usually involves some physical activity such as push-ups or running. It is clear that this prison boot camp relied heavily on the shock value, or the sudden lack of freedom autonomy and the completely structured life style, of such a harsh environment. It was purposely meant to be a rather unpleasant experience for convicted offenders, hoping to achieve the specific deterrence discussed earlier.

The Oklahoma treatment style prison boot camp has a very different approach to dealing with the young, non-violent convicted offenders entering its program (MacKenzie and Souryal, 1994). Convicted members spend a significantly longer amount of time at this prison boot camp, ninety to one hundred-eighty days. There are less convicted offenders present in the boot camp, due to the 150 participant capacity limit. The focus of this prison boot camp is that of academic education. Much more time is devoted to this area than that of the other eight prison boot camps in the MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) study. Convicted offender participants in the Oklahoma boot camp spent three hours every day of the program in a classroom setting. This fact alone shows how much less consideration was given to the physical military drills like those found in the military style prison boot camp programs. MacKenzie and Grover (2001) stated that the time dedicated to class settings also shows an interest in individualizing treatment to meet the needs of each participant. Classes in the Oklahoma boot camp taught participants life skills, coping techniques, and general education requirements.

I have now described the difference in the military style prison boot camp, as in Georgia, from the treatment style boot camp in Oklahoma. I will now move on to the final, important phase of the prison boot camp system. The graduation from boot camp, and the aftercare that some programs implement, is quite important. It is the culmination of ninety to one hundred eighty days of intense treatment. Much time, resources, and efforts are put forth to make all the pieces of the proverbial puzzle come together at this stage.

Graduation and Aftercare of Prison Boot Camps

Austin (2002) stated that before graduating, a convicted offender participant must successfully complete all phases of the prison boot camp program. These phases may fluctuate between each prison boot camp. They may include the entry phase, educational/treatment phase, core/residential phase, and sometimes an aftercare phase. Some camps offer aftercare programs to help the participants transfer back into the community. Others do not.

Aftercare programs aid the participants with reintegration into the community (Benda, 2001). The primary goal is to return the convicted offender to the community with close supervision, if possible. Some prison boot camp programs attempt to establish a support system based on staff and offender group contact. The boot camp participant is often under close scrutiny during this phase of the process. The participant may be subjected to as many as 45 days of electronic monitoring. During the aftercare phase of boot camp, inmates may report to a Day Reporting Center to accent building job skills and to practice newly acquired independent life skills for short-term goals.

The Oklahoma and Georgia prison boot camps have dissimilar aftercare programs, as one might expect due to the great difference in their programming and philosophy. In the 1994 study, MacKenzie and Souryal did not report on any aspect of, or presence of, aftercare programs with either of the two prison boot camps I am using for my research, other than their presence. However, there has been extensive research concerning the aftercare phase of programs in various states.

Bourque, Han, and Hill (1996) found that when boot camp participants of the military style programs graduate, the quasi-military activities, physical regimen, and intense structure that distinguish this style from its counterpart, do not typically extend to the aftercare phase, if one exists. The Georgia style boot camp is typical of other boot camp programs, in regards to aftercare. Most do not offer aftercare programs at all. In Bourque, Han, and Hill's study (1996), only eighteen of fifty-two boot camps studied had aftercare programs. Once a participant is released from boot camp, the decision as to whether to place them in aftercare often depends on if aftercare actually exists. As noted earlier, the odds of aftercare programs existing at all are not great. Participants are usually released and integrated with releasees from other programs and institutions without any aftercare program associated with the boot camp from which they graduated.

In the state of Oklahoma, with the Regimented Inmate Discipline (RID) Program, the aftercare program seems to paint a more positive picture. During the first phase of the aftercare programs, boot camp participants are only allowed to leave the site for employment purposes. Offenders may take part in special services and programs, including job placement, training programs, and self-help groups such as Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous. Offenders in aftercare may have visitors, and once they get to the pre-release portion of the process, they can actually leave the site on pass and return at nightfall. During the last phase, they are eventually released to their homes with intensive supervision, including electronic monitoring.

Now that I have discussed the history of prison boot camps, explored the two emerging types of prison boot camp, and compared/contrasted the two styles, I will discuss the attempts to measure the effectiveness of these important programs within the Criminal Justice System. The strategies used to measure the effectiveness of prison boot camps relate directly to the problems this intermediate sanction was originally implemented to alleviate. The effectiveness of prison boot camps are measured based on their impact on reducing offender recidivism, lowering correctional costs, and reducing prison overcrowding. I will discuss each measurement and explain why my research will focus on the recidivism factor, rather than the other two major measurements, lowering correctional costs or reducing prison overcrowding. I will use the Oklahoma and Georgia boot camp programs as examples in my research on the recidivism factor.

Boot Camp Effectiveness

The reduction of correctional costs is a measure used to determine if boot camps are an intermediate sanction that the criminal justice system should or should not pursue as a viable option (Peters, 1997). Peters (1997) found that the estimated daily cost per offender in boot camp was about half the cost per offender confined in State institutions. Peters (1997) also stated that the daily cost was more than 10 times the cost per offender released on probation. This suggests that the results are somewhat mixed. Prison boot camps are generally less expensive than the cost of incarceration at a state or county facility, but much more expensive than that of the commonly used probation. In addition to lower

daily housing expenses, prison boot camp lengths of stay are designed to be substantially lower than prison sentences and, thus, less costly.

In contrast, Austin (2002) found that the lower daily housing costs and shorter lengths of stay do not totally explain this measure of effectiveness. A major criticism of measuring the effectiveness of prison boot camps by lowering correctional costs is that prison boot camps are simply too small in scale, and the number of offenders served in relation to the overall prisoner population within the system is too small to capture any significant, sizeable impact. They do not exist on a large enough scale to sufficiently decrease the cost to the criminal justice system that is needed. Austin (2002) found that in regard to averted cost savings, these programs are simply too small in terms of capturing a sufficient 'market share' of the prison or jail population to have an effect on population growth as well as associated operating and construction costs.

The reduction of prison overcrowding is another measurement that does not assess boot camps' effectiveness well. It is clear that many convicted offenders in prison boot camps would otherwise have been confined in a state facility. To this end, reductions in prison overcrowding may be adequate measures of boot camps' effectiveness. It is also probable, however, that some offenders may have received a sentence of probation. The use of probation is not favorable in regards to the prison overcrowding argument. Many of the prison boot camp participants would not have been confined, if not for the existence of this new intermediate sanction. Therefore, unless evaluators know the way in which boot camps are used by specific jurisdictions, as a diversion from prison or

as a net-widening mechanism, a simple examination of prison overcrowding will not accurately assess boot camp effectiveness.

Tonry (1997) stated that in order for prison boot camps to be deemed effective, they must alleviate the problem of overcrowding. Therefore, the recruitment of offenders for participation in prison boot camps would need to come from a pool of those with the highest probability of receiving imprisonment. Currently, the selection criteria associated with prison boot camps are not in line with this rationale; boot camps take non-violent, first time offenders who would most likely not be sentenced to prison. Thus, offenders selected to take part in prison boot camps are not likely to have been in prison in the first place. The prisons remain overcrowded and this new intermediate sanction fails to meet yet another one of its goals. One idea to solve this set-back, is to use prison boot camps as a method of early release for offenders already imprisoned. A “back-end” approach to the problem is predicted to be much more effective. Currently, however, the majority of boot camp programs are not used in this manner.

Recidivism is the most widely used measure when determining the effectiveness of boot camps, (Peters, 1997). The research on recidivism rates concerning boot camps could be considered very diverse. Researchers have made many different conclusions concerning this measurement of effectiveness (MacKenzie and Grover, 2001; Benda, 2001).

MacKenzie and Grover (2001), as well as Benda (2001), found that the research findings regarding boot camp participant recidivism shows mixed and/or no results. MacKenzie and Grover (2001) found that, overall, prison boot camps

recidivism rates did not differ significantly compared to non-participants. However, they did find some evidence of lower recidivism rates on certain measures. They reported that prison boot camps have some effect on reducing offender recidivism in program styles that were more rehabilitative in nature. They also stated that aftercare programs were a key element in the success of convicted offenders. In contrast, some scholars suggest that selection criteria, rather than program style may affect recidivism rates (Benda, 2001; Parent, 2003).

For instance, Benda (2001) found that non-recidivists were likely to have different personality characteristics than that of other boot camp recidivists. In his research, he found that boot camp participants with higher self esteem, stronger inner strength, and those perceiving the boot camp program as a beneficial experience were less likely to recidivate. This implies that selection criteria of participants may significantly affect a program's success.

Some research has shown that boot camp recidivism rates are actually higher than that of non-boot camp offender rates, (Kempinen and Kurlycheck, 2003; Stinchcomb and Terry, 2001). Kempinen and Kurlycheck (2003) found that the boot camp participants are five percent more likely to recidivate than that of other prisoners released. They found that the boot camp participant was more likely to fail on parole as a result of a technical violation. Stinchcomb and Terry (2001) reaffirm this finding. They found that boot camp graduates reoffended by committing felonies at an eight percent higher rate than that of other, non-boot camp offenders.

It is clear that the methods by which researchers study the effectiveness of prison boot camps play a central role in the conclusions that are drawn. Measures of recidivism based on new crimes committed may find a different rate of re-offending than measures that include technical violations while on parole. More importantly, it seems that re-offending may be correlated to the type of boot camp program, programming components within each type of program, and individual characteristics of participants. The diverse findings concerning recidivism may then be a function of scholars' research design. Studies that examine all boot camps, regardless of type, may report very different recidivism rates than those that examine programs separately and take into account program components and selection criteria for offenders. It is the variability in research designs and diversity in findings of recidivism rates that has led me to feel this is the most important measurement worthy of further attention. Ultimately, however, it is an interest in the impact of boot camps on public safety that drives my analysis.

In my research, I will further the study of Mackenzie and Souryal (1994) in the evaluation of recidivism rates among boot camps with rehabilitative programming and boot camps with no aftercare programming. I will focus on the measurement of reducing offender recidivism and the effects the style of prison boot camp program has on this measurement. My research will contribute much to the current research as there is currently no research that takes steps to determine which style of prison boot camp is more effective in reducing offender recidivism. I will now progress to the method that I will use to answer the

research question, “What style of prison boot camp is most effective at achieving the goal of reducing offender recidivism?”

METHODS

A useful rule of thumb when designing research is to keep a design as simple as possible to control for plausible threats to validity (Maxfield, 2001). MacKenzie and Grover (2001) found that any conclusion regarding the effectiveness of prison boot camps is only valid if the methodological quality of data collection is sufficiently high. The studies found to be methodologically sound were generally those with quasi-experimental designs that carefully selected the comparison group to maximize similarities with the experimental group. In my research, I compare and contrast two boot camp programs in a quasi-experimental design using data gathered by Mackenzie and Souryal in 1992 (for a review of data collection methods, see Mackenzie and Souryal (1994). The quasi-experimental design is used to ensure the similarities of the two styles of boot camp. The data I use come from boot camps in Georgia and Oklahoma. Georgia and Oklahoma were states that were both chosen to be a part of MacKenzie and Souryal (1994) research due to their similar utilization of core elements of the boot camp and the dissimilarity on other dimensions, such as program design, which are hypothesized to influence the realization of program goals. Georgia’s boot camp serves as my proxy of a military style program, whereas Oklahoma’s boot camp is my model for the treatment style program. A comparison of the two programs can be seen in Table 1. The two boot camp programs are very similar in many aspects, as previously discussed, with the

primary exception being program ideology. The data I specifically use come from community supervision data gathered from surveys completed by supervision personnel upon graduation of the boot camp programs in each state.

In any research, independent and dependent variables need to be identified. The dependent variable in my research is recidivism of offenders in the boot camp programs. Recidivism is measured by labeling 0 for no recidivism and 1 to indicate recidivism. In my research, recidivism is defined as a court-adjudicated new offense occurring between the time a convicted offender is released from confinement (prison boot camp) and one year following participation in the prison boot camp. By this definition, a re-arrest for an offense for which the participant was not previously formally adjudicated does not technically count as a new offense. The records of these new offenses and violations were obtained through parole/probation officers' intensive supervision records and contacts with law enforcement officials.

Table 1
Prison Boot Camp Comparison

Table 1.	Georgia	Prison Boot Camps	Oklahoma
Length of Stay	90 days		90-180 days
Capacity	250		150
Dismissals	9%		10%
Average Age	20		20
Crime	Burglary, Theft, Drugs, Robbery, Other		Burglary, Theft, Drugs, Robbery, Other
Ideology	Military Style		Treatment Style
N	146		146

The independent variable of my research is the type of prison boot camp from which an offender graduates. The physically harsh, military style boot camp (Georgia) is labeled 0, and the therapeutic-focused boot camp (Oklahoma) received a label of 1.

In order to ensure the similarity of the age of participants of the two boot camps' populations, I conducted an Independent Samples T-test to test the significant differences of means between the two samples. This test produces the mean age of each boot camps' participants and also the probability that the differences between the two are by chance alone. A probability equal to or less than that of .05 would allow my research to conclude the ages are different between the two boot camps.

In order to ensure the similarity of the types of crimes the boot camp participants have committed, I conducted a chi-squared test on a cross tabulation of crime type by type of program. Chi-squared tests score the probability of the differences between the crime types of each boot camps' participants being by chance alone. In this test, a score of .05 or greater indicates that the two boot camps have participants sent there for similar crime types but the differences seen are random in nature.

In order to test the hypothesis of my research, I again conducted a chi-square test on a cross tabulation of recidivism (yes/no) by boot camp type. . A score of .05 or greater will indicate that the differences in recidivism rates are random in nature. On the other hand, a probability of .05 or less will indicate the

difference is not random in nature and the two factors (recidivism and boot camp type) have a significant associated relationship.

The demographic and offense variables to be included are mean age (measured in days) and crime types including: robbery, other violent crime, burglary, theft/larceny, drugs, other crimes. These crime type variables were included due to their prevalence and in order to retain sample size. Both age and crime type are often included in recidivism research ((Kempinen and Kurlycheck, 2003; Stinchcomb and Terry, 2001).

Given the findings of past research and the inclusion of aftercare programming, I hypothesize that the treatment-style boot camp will have lower recidivism rates than those for the military style program. The information gained from this analysis is necessary to make recommendations for the future of the prison boot camp programs' utilization in the criminal justice system.

FINDINGS

The original data used in my research, coming from Mackenzie and Souryal (1994), was formatted to generate comparable samples for more accurate results. The original data from the therapeutic boot camp (Oklahoma) included 345 useable cases. The original data from the military boot camp (Georgia) consisted of many missing cases and only 146 useable cases. In order to ensure the most reliable results during testing, random sampling functions of the SPSS program were used to select 146 useable cases from Oklahoma to coincide with the 146 useable cases from the Georgia data set based on the numeric sampling function.

Variables used in my research were gathered and analyzed using SPSS programs. An examination of offenders' age is shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Mean Age

	Georgia	Oklahoma
Mean Age in Days	7918.11	8140.44
N	146	146

Results from the independent samples t-tests ran for age suggest that there is not a significant difference in age between the Georgia and Oklahoma boot camps. When dealing with T-tests, a t-value at 1.96 is significant at the .05 level. The results for age are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Age Test

		t	significance	mean difference
Age at Parole in Days	equal variance	1.584	0.115	222.33
	not equal variance	1.608	0.109	222.33

Age was recorded in days for the two data sets and when disaggregated, the average age difference was only that of approximately a year.

In regard to crime type, the analysis shows a significant association between crime types and type of boot camp program, meaning that there is a significant difference in crime types between the Georgia and Oklahoma boot camp program participants. A general breakdown of the crimes committed in Oklahoma (0) and Georgia (1) are shown in Table 4 and the chi-squared results are shown in Table 5. As can be seen in Table 4, approximately 15% of the

offenders in the Georgia boot camp were admitted for robbery or other violent crimes, whereas only about 4% of the Oklahoma participants had committed violent crimes. The Oklahoma program is largely comprised of property offenders (60% for larceny), whereas the Georgia program had a greater diversity in crime types. Georgia had significant missing crime type data. This was unavoidable due to the small size of useable data from the Georgia boot camp.

Table 4
Crime Type

		Georgia	Oklahoma	Total N
Prior Offense	Robbery	0%	8.33%	12
	Other Violent	4.08%	6.95%	14
	Burglary	19.39%	27.08%	58
	Theft/Larceny	60.20%	14.58%	80
	Drugs	13.27%	28.48%	54
	Other	3.06%	14.58%	24
	N	98	144	242

Table 5
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	60.997	5	.000
Likelihood Ratio	66.771	5	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.992
N of Valid Cases	242		

Age and crime type play an important role in showing the similarity of the populations in the Georgia and Oklahoma boot camp programs. There are no significant differences in age, but the participants of each camp are of in the boot camps for different types of crimes. There are significantly more offenders in the

Georgia program for violent and drug offenses than in the Oklahoma boot camp. In contrast, there are considerably more offenders in the Oklahoma boot camp for theft than what is found in the Georgia program. This difference in type of offending may account for some of the variability in offender recidivism, which is the focus of my research. A cross tabulation and chi-square test for association were conducted to assess the association between re-offending and program type. Table 6 shows the difference in recidivism rates of the two prison boot camp programs and Table 7 shows the chi-squared test for recidivism for the study.

Table 6
Recidivism Rates

		Oklahoma	Georgia	Total N
Recidivism	No Recidivism	89.73%	84.93%	255
	Recidivism	10.27%	15.07%	37
	N	146	146	292

Table 7
Chi-Squared Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig (2side)	Exact Sig (2 sided)	Exact Sig (1 sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.516	1	0.218		
Continuity Correction	1.114	1	0.291		
Likelihood Ratio	1.525	1	0.217		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.291	0.146
Linear-by-Linear					
Association	1.511	1	0.219		
N of Valid Cases	292				

The analysis reveals no significant difference between the Oklahoma and Georgia boot camp's recidivism rates. The military style boot camp in Georgia did not have a significantly higher recidivism rate than that of the therapeutic boot

camp program in Oklahoma as hypothesized. Only 15 of the 146 participants (10.3%) in the Oklahoma boot camp recidivated, while 22 of the 146 participants (15.1%) in the Georgia boot camp recidivated. Although the participants had different crime histories, the recidivism were not found to be significantly different.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effectiveness of prison boot camps. It specifically focused on whether there was a significant difference in recidivism rates between participants of military-style and therapeutic style prison boot camp programs. Previous research of prison boot camps had mixed results. Based on previous research, I expected the recidivism rates of therapeutic boot camp graduates to be slightly less than that of their military-style graduate counterparts. The findings of my research did not completely support this original hypothesis. There was a small difference in recidivism rates between the two boot camp programs, but not one that was found to be significant. However, the results were most likely affected by the fact that only approximately 10% of the total participants recidivated in the Oklahoma boot camp, and only 15% re-offended in Georgia's program. These findings may result from the types of offenders each program accepts, but the primary difference amongst both data sets was the programming differences between the two boot camp programs of Oklahoma and Georgia. This researcher feels that given a larger sample, the small differences shown in this research would become statistically significant.

It is important to note that although there was no significant difference in the percentages of participants who re-offended between programs, the fact remains that both programs combined only had approximately 12% of their populations who re-offended. This is considerably lower than the national average of approximately 25% of offenders who recidivate upon their return prison. To this end, this research suggests that boot camps, regardless of type, may exhibit lower recidivism rates than those found for prisons.

My findings have failed to show a statistical difference regarding recidivism rates when comparing the military-style and therapeutic style of prison boot camps. However, based on past research, I feel that the two vastly different programs will yield significantly different results given a better quality of data collection.

I believe that a fundamental difference lies primarily in the programming differences of the two styles. First, the physically rigorous, highly structured environment of the military style boot camp does not last long after the program has ended, thus allowing offenders to revert back to their prior tendencies without having learned new coping skills. Second, the amount of time spent in educational programming in the therapeutic style boot camps gives the graduates skills they can utilize after the program, improving the likelihood of success post-graduation.

Furthermore, the emerging difference in recidivism rates among very similar populations suggests the need for further research to explore these important programs intensely. It is still possible that boot camps with treatment

components may exhibit lower recidivism rates for their participants than those without, but little is known about what types of treatment components and modalities are best suited to reduce the propensity toward crime. In the future, scholars should assess individual treatment components within therapeutic boot camps to determine which types of treatment or education programs are most effective at reducing re-offending. The criminal justice system will benefit greatly from a definitive answer on which style is more effective at not only reducing recidivism as spot-lighted in my research, but also at addressing other factors such as prison overcrowding and correctional costs.

Prison populations are growing every day in the United States. Managing this growing population is becoming ever harder to accomplish. By effectively implementing prison boot camps as a diversion to prison, the criminal justice system can reduce the number of offenders in prison on a much larger scale than is currently being done. Alleviating prison overcrowding may also reduce the number of offenses being committed while in prison, which would help to reduce prison stays as well.

Lowering correctional costs is also a very important factor in the criminal justice system today. Prison boot camps may be much less expensive than the cost to house an inmate in prison. These funds serve the criminal justice system much better when reallocated to other programs such as treatment and aftercare programs.

I should note that there were some limitations to my research design and findings. The missing data from the Georgia boot camp program limited my

research due to many missing cases. A larger, more complete data set would have been preferred for my research purposes. Because nearly half of the sample was non-useable, a random sample was needed to draw comparable numbers from the larger Oklahoma program. This possibly limits the external validity, or generalizability, of my findings. Also, although the two boot camps may have been relatively similar in population demographics, there may have been a difference in post-graduation programming that may have resulted in drastic differences in collection of supervision data. This difference was not controlled in this analysis. Last, my analysis includes only two boot camps of the many currently in existence. It is possible that these two boot camps are not representative of all the military and therapeutic programs operating today. This should be kept in mind when drawing conclusions about the type of boot camp, and the components thereof, to create in the future. Despite these limitations, however, these results do provide insight into the effectiveness of various types of boot camps at reducing re-offending.

The future of prison boot camps has vast implications for the criminal justice system. I feel that this research shows a need for program reform within the military-style boot camps. Programs with therapeutic-based programming need to be implemented accordingly at all boot camps without such programming. There is a need for substance abuse counseling, coping skills, educational classes, and other individual therapy based upon the needs of the boot camp population to ensure greater reductions in re-offending.

I believe prison boot camps need to remain a front-end measure in the criminal justice system in order to be used as an intermediate sanction as initially intended. The criminal justice system will be able to re-divert the funds saved by this much less expensive program towards aftercare programs which are equally important and in need of improvement.

In conclusion, it is this researcher's belief that there is much need for further study of prison boot camp programs. A devotion to comparing and contrasting the two different approaches would also be an avenue that needs much more attention in future endeavors. A greater attention to post-graduate follow-up is also an area of concern. Lack of aftercare is an ongoing debate that needs attention in the prison boot camp system and will affect the evaluation and measurement of the programs in the future. This study showed the emerging difference between the two styles of prison boot camp and there is clearly a need for further studies to help establish a significant difference between the two.

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