

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222696355>

Juvenile boot camps: A descriptive analysis of program diversity and effectiveness

Article in *The Social Science Journal* · September 2001

DOI: 10.1016/S0362-3319(01)00130-6

CITATIONS

34

READS

1,411

3 authors, including:



Jerry Tyler

Stephen F. Austin State University

2 PUBLICATIONS 45 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)



Ray Darville

Stephen F. Austin State University

15 PUBLICATIONS 105 CITATIONS

[SEE PROFILE](#)

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:



Project

Visitor Behavior Research in National and State Parks [View project](#)



Pergamon

The Social Science Journal 38 (2001) 445–460

The
**SOCIAL
SCIENCE
JOURNAL**

Juvenile boot camps: a descriptive analysis of program diversity and effectiveness

Jerry Tyler*, Ray Darville, Kathi Stalnaker

Department of Sociology, Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX, 75962, USA

Abstract

Juvenile boot camps have proliferated since the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's three pilot programs in 1992. Programs differ in numerous aspects, including: how strictly they adhere to the original military model; the background and age of juveniles accepted; the length of the camps; capacity; cost per juvenile; amount and type of aftercare; and, recidivism rates. Insufficient data exist to make definitive judgments as to effectiveness, but a survey of the literature shows that they are considerably less effective than the public believes. The original idea for adult boot camps incorporated goals of a cost-efficient alternative to incarceration and reduction in recidivism. Juvenile boot camps usually are more costly than most other traditional options, and with rare exceptions recidivism rates are extremely disappointing. Boot camps could prove to be a valuable tool in juvenile justice, but stricter assessment and evaluation methods as well as better aftercare are needed before these politically appealing programs constitute an effective method of diminishing juvenile delinquency. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

When one surveys the literature on juvenile boot camps it is hard to escape the general conclusions that: 1) more states are trying this method of stemming the tide of juvenile delinquency; 2) the results, nevertheless are discouraging in terms of recidivism; and 3) boot camps are simply too expensive to serve as a means of controlling delinquency if they are not effective.

As an example of the growth of boot camps in the United States, the National Institute of Justice reports that in 1987 only four state correctional system boot camp programs existed.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1-936-468-2162.

E-mail address: jtyler@sfasu.edu (J. Tyler).

Six years later, that figure grew to forty-six in thirty states. At the current rate of growth, all fifty states will have boot camp programs by the year 2000 (Hayeslip, 1996). Research on juvenile boot camps is very limited because of the relatively short period of time they have been in existence, but the 1998 Koch Crime Institute White Paper on the subject shows that the growth of such camps continues to increase in this country (Zaehringer, 1998). Also in 1998, in Texas alone, the Board of Texas Juvenile Probation approved eighteen proposals to construct such facilities across the state (Brewer, 1998).

Unfortunately, the limited data available do not show the effectiveness one might expect from the money and resources channeled into these programs. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) admits that juvenile boot camps have not effected a decline in the recidivism rate (Brewer, 1998). Early studies from the National Institute of Justice (1994) showed that programs in Oklahoma, Texas, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina failed to reduce recidivism. This report suggests that the boot camp experience by itself will not reduce repeat offending. The 1998 Koch Crime Institute White Paper, while pointing toward some potential advantages of juvenile boot camps, nevertheless candidly states that "research has not shown boot camps to reduce recidivism" (Zaehringer, 1998).

The U.S. Department of Justice in February 1998 voiced even greater pessimism after a year-long investigation of three juvenile boot camp programs in Georgia by stating that they are ineffective. The Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights said that not only are they ineffective, but can be harmful to some youths. Nevertheless, Georgia youths still are being sentenced to boot camp in record numbers (AP, June 1, 1998).

As for costs, the OJJDP says that most boot camps run an average of 10 times the cost of a juvenile on probation. The Koch Crime Institute's figures show that juvenile boot camps cost an average of \$93 per day per youth, ranging from as low as \$65 per day per youth at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Mobile, Alabama, to a high of \$120 per day at Second Chance in Connell, Washington. In New Jersey, a boot camp known as the Stabilization and Reintegration program costs taxpayers of that state about \$188 per day per youth, and there is a waiting list to get into the program (Landers, 1998). Figures vary from state to state and from one camp to another, but figures from the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission illuminate the higher costs of any type placement or detention facility over those of probation. In 1998, the cost per youth in that state for probation supervision was \$8.44 a day as compared to \$88.62 for residential placement and \$85.90 for a youth assigned to a detention facility (Criminal Justice Policy Council, 1999).

As we see above, the New Jersey Stabilization and Reintegration program tops out at \$188 per day per youth. The superintendent of the camp admits that some of the "graduates" say that when they return home peers begin to make fun of them and they change the appearance and demeanor they took on in the camp (Landers, 1998). To justify spending \$188 per day or even half that amount, one would expect that results should be more positive than they appear.

The obvious question is whether states should continue to utilize the juvenile boot camp programs if they don't accomplish the purpose for which millions of dollars are allocated by our state legislatures. The boot camp experience does seem to be effective in some cases as the Koch Crime Institute emphasizes, and juvenile boot camps should not be discarded without considerable more research into the weaknesses and strong points. Even if the

recidivism rate is over 60%, as we will see in the OJJDP (1996) pilot programs and in some Florida boot camps (Kaczor, 1997), and in some of the Texas camps (Tyler, Stalnaker and Darville, 1999), perhaps what we need to ascertain in future studies is not so much why that rate is so high but how the boot camp program itself deters those who do not recidivate. According to the OJJDP (1997), recidivism is defined as an adjudication by the court for a new offense, but program surveys show that recidivism can be defined slightly differently in some jurisdictions. For example, one locality may consider recidivism to occur only when the offender commits an act at least as serious as the one for which he or she was sent to the boot camp program (see Kaczor, 1997). Others may not count lesser offenses. Obviously, statistics based on such widely diverse accounting methods can be less than useful to those who try to determine both cost and program effectiveness.

2. Scope of paper and method

This paper will attempt 1) to describe the current juvenile boot camp styles in a general way since there is so much diversity; 2) to determine not so much why boot camps seem to be failing, but how boot camp programs might concentrate on those factors such as aftercare and greater attention to demographic variables that apparently do give youth a better chance not to recidivate; and, 3) to point out areas of research that would assist in determining the future of such programs.

With the proliferation of juvenile boot camp programs, and the tremendous influx of tax dollars toward this purpose, juvenile correctional officers need to examine what's working and what's not working in boot camps, and determine not only if juvenile boot camps are worth the outlay of money and the commitment of human resources, but how to make the programs more uniformly effective. To do that, one needs to look at various demographic variables of young people who attend these programs as well as characteristics of boot camps themselves, and analyze which variables predict the greatest chance of success. Unfortunately, data available are both limited in quantity and in comparative qualities. While examining the juveniles themselves would be helpful, looking at attributes of the boot camps themselves is critical in appraising such characteristics as funding, programs, operations, and goals.

Analysis of current literature on the subject is the primary focus of this preliminary study. Sources for the data are diverse, including media, government reports, and primary research. In addition, we also interviewed selected persons in the Texas juvenile justice system for their assessment of what seems to work and what does not work in that state, as well as analyzing raw data from boot camp programs in other states.

Data on these programs are scarce and poorly defined as boot camps of all types, both adult and juvenile, are such recent additions to our correctional systems that relatively little comparative data exist. Where statistics do exist, the quality often is questionable because of the lack of standardized terminology and reporting requirements. The limited data available are often confounded by differences in definitions of recidivism and the diversity of admission requirements. While we believe considerable more systematic, long-term studies are needed to arrive at scientific conclusions, we also believe that a descriptive analysis of

the programs is a necessary starting point. This paper, therefore, will give a general background of juvenile boot camp programs, provide limited assessment of their effectiveness or lack thereof, describe some of the demographic variables likely to affect outcome and arrive at a set of conclusions based on what research is now available.

3. Background

3.1. *The beginning and proliferation of juvenile boot camps*

As early as 1983, Georgia and Oklahoma tried boot camp-style short-term alternatives to regular institutional commitment for adults; the first juvenile boot camp was established in 1985 in Orleans Parish, Louisiana. Since 1990, Alabama has had its High Intensive Program at a cost of approximately \$85 a day per youth (OJJDP, 1996 and 1997; Zaehring, 1998). Then, in 1992, the OJJDP started three pilot juvenile boot camp programs in Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colorado; and Mobile, Alabama. Those juveniles assigned to these programs were non-violent offenders under the age of 18 who were supposed to complete a three-month residential program to be followed by an aftercare program lasting from six to nine months. In comparing the “graduates” of these programs with those involved in more traditional methods, the OJJDP found little difference in the recidivism rates except in Cleveland, where the rate actually was higher for those going through the juvenile boot camp. In its Fact Sheet—9636, the OJJDP (1996) indicated that some of those finishing the boot camps experienced educational gains, and that, where measured, a “significant” number of those involved were able to be placed in jobs. In studying the OJJDP report on these three pilot programs, what stands out as a crucial factor contributing to these disappointing results was the lack of consistency and coordination in the aftercare program.

When the OJJDP published “Issues and Trends in State Juvenile Justice Reform” in *Juvenile Justice Reform Initiatives in the States, 1994–1996* (1997), ten states operated juvenile boot camps: Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York and Ohio. Although the results of programs in these states were questionable, other states joined the parade to establish boot camps. Arizona began a program in 1995, then allocated over \$3 million for one year to work with fewer than 100 youths, representing approximately \$33,000 per year per youth. Many other states, including Michigan, Texas, Oregon and New Mexico have resorted to the use of juvenile boot camps in spite of the apparently poor results and high costs. California’s LEAD (leadership, esteem, ability and discipline) serves 120 young offenders, also at a cost of over \$3 million. New York’s Youth Leadership Academy seems comparatively inexpensive in that it costs slightly over \$1 million for approximately 80 youths, or just under \$13,000 per youth annually (National Association of State Budget Officers, 1995). By 1997, there were more than 75 juvenile boot camps operating in 33 states (RTIC, 1997). In looking at the proliferation of juvenile boot camp programs, one needs to keep in mind that those 75 programs were just those associated with official state juvenile justice systems. If we count private camps and those established by local jurisdictions, the number would be far higher.

3.2. *The poor apparent results of juvenile boot camps*

Given the vast differences in the programs—especially in aftercare—the sixteen years since the first Georgia adult boot camp opened represents insufficient time to say with any sense of definition that they are effective or ineffective. Less than a decade of juvenile boot camps makes meaningful analysis even more difficult. A 1997 study of the first four years of juvenile boot camp operation by Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice obviously was disappointing to that agency as recidivism rates ranged from 63 to 74 percent for the first offenders that went through one of Florida's six camps then in operation. In fact, 13 percent of those who finished the boot camp program were sent to adult prison after they were re-arrested. The senior attorney for Florida's Juvenile Justice Advisory Board, in commenting on this study, says that boot camp graduates who are re-arrested are being charged with more violent or aggressive offenses. A supervisor of one of the programs says that the statistics, however, don't tell the whole story. Some of the boot camp graduates were re-arrested for crimes they had committed prior to assignment to the boot camp program. These were crimes that were unknown to law enforcement officers at the time of assignment to boot camp. Also, this same individual points out that when the programs started there was a huge backlog of youths considered high-risk, so the boot camps received some of the worst offenders (Kaczor, 1997).

Instilling some discipline into the lives of youthful offenders should result in some positive results. It is interesting that Arizona started a joint program with the U.S. Marine Corps called Juvenile All Weekend Supervision (JAWS). Juvenile offenders spend one full weekend with Marine volunteer instructors from the Yuma, Arizona Marine Corps Air Station learning obedience to orders and discipline. They then are expected to finish another month of aftercare in JAWS II (Cantu, 1998). While the initial results of the JAWS program were encouraging, we doubt that a single weekend is going to instill new purpose of life into very many juveniles, and would want to track their graduates for at least a year before declaring the program a success. The type of behavior exhibited by these juveniles takes time to develop; to change that behavior will take more than just a few days of discipline.

In addition to programs such as JAWS, others are experimenting with models that downplay the military component and stress the aftercare. Articles in *Corrections Today* (Sharp, 1995; Krisberg, 1995) emphasized that there is a new generation of programs more concerned with treating youthful offenders and providing them with education rather than punishing them military-style. These programs still are outnumbered, however, by those utilizing the more conventional boot camp approach.

One might ask: are these new programs really even boot camps, or are they a new evolutionary model simply based on the military-style boot camps? In an NIJ report (MacKenzie and Hebert, 1996), we see there are basically three types of boot camps: the military drilling style that focuses on strict discipline; the rehabilitative approach; and, the educational/vocational model. Most of the current camps, while perhaps employing parts of the two latter styles, still concentrate on the military drill as their central theme.

In studying the Alabama boot camp program, Burns and Vito (1995) say that the general idea of a boot camp is to use the physical and disciplinary aspects of boot camps to motivate delinquents to reform. Castellano, as reported in *Corrections Today* (Sharp, 1995), empha-

sizes that the military training has little impact, and that it is the aftercare that counts. An important question we therefore have to answer is: if the boot camp portion serves little if any purpose at all, could we eliminate that costly aspect and go directly to the aftercare? On the other hand, many of these youth already have served and failed at an intensive supervision of probation that is essentially what the concept of aftercare often is. Once these youngsters have failed at the intensive supervision, perhaps the boot camp experience serves as a "wake-up" call to allow them to return to a period of intensive supervision on aftercare. Unfortunately, the limited data available don't necessarily indicate that it is the boot camp experience that makes aftercare effective.

The Criminal Justice Section of the American Bar Association (ABA) (Beyer, 1996) says that boot camps just don't make sense, and draws on a number of other reports to reach this conclusion. One of the studies cited by the ABA even claims that the harsh discipline of the camps is merely a disguise for the mistreatment of those in the camps. Another report, perhaps less biased, points out that statistically juvenile boot camps simply can't save money unless capacities are expanded and stays shortened. David Altschuler, a professor at Johns Hopkins Institute for Policy Studies, says that the boot camps are limited to "shock incarceration" and that one major problem is that they are leaving aftercare to already overburdened juvenile probation and parole officers (Beyer, 1996). The U.S. government, as represented by the OJJDP, has concluded that juvenile boot camps are not providing the answer to reducing recidivism. The Criminal Justice Policy Council (1999), a Texas-based, state think-tank, bluntly says that they are popular because those involved in sentencing like them, but that they are not effective (Brewer, 1998).

3.3. The cost factor

As discussed above, juvenile boot camps always have been far more costly than juvenile probation, including supervised intensive probation. Nevertheless, state legislatures seem willing to pour enormous sums into new juvenile boot camp programs in spite of the limited number of inmates served. A new boot camp to open in North Texas, for example, will be a 20,000 square foot facility, but will house only 40 inmates at any given time (Brewer, 1998). Figures are not available as to the cost per juvenile, but a facility of that size and with that number of participants likely will exceed the \$85.90 per day cost for a detention facility (figure from the Criminal Justice Policy Council, 1999).

The Koch Crime Institute reports that the average cost for juvenile boot camps that operate a three-month cycle is \$8,370 and for the six-month cycle the cost is \$16,740. That works out to an average boot camp cost per youth per year of \$33,480 (Zaehringer, 1998). Taking the above figure of \$85.90 as the per day cost for a detention center, the annual cost would be \$31,354, or slightly less than the average boot camp. On the other hand, the Koch Crime Institute figures that in Kansas, which does not yet have juvenile boot camps, the per year cost to house an offender in a Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration Institution is \$47,400 (Zaehringer, 1998), or about \$130 per day. The average per day cost for standard detention facilities as compared with juvenile boot camps obviously will not be as great as the tremendous difference in cost as compared to simple juvenile probation. One problem in comparing total costs is that the juvenile boot camp offenders spend much shorter times at

their facility than do offenders sent to traditional juvenile correctional institutions (Brewer, 1998).

3.4. Diversity of programs

Juvenile boot camp programs vary in cost, size, style, staff-to-inmate ratio and effectiveness. In researching this topic, one finds not only a diversity of programs, but polemical positions representing both extremes as to whether the programs should be continued, stopped or even increased. From the original Louisiana juvenile program to the three pilot OJDP programs and on to some of the newer programs in Florida, Georgia and Texas, we see some similarities, but also different approaches and results.

As an example of this diversity, we can look at four very different juvenile boot camp programs in just one state—Texas. Not all of them perhaps can be classified as the military style camps most of the public associates in their minds with juvenile boot camps (Cooley, 1998), but they are representative of the various styles found in the United States.

The Specialized Treatment and Rehabilitation Program (S.T.A.R.) in Montgomery County near Houston was the first to integrate the military style, but the primary purpose still is education and counseling. In fact, one of S.T.A.R.'s primary goals is to diminish disruptive behavior in schools while allowing participants to remain in school. As such, the S.T.A.R. boot camp program is a non-residential day program, which allows participants to remain in their communities and homes (Trulson, 1998, 34–35). According to S.T.A.R. officials, currently over 50 juveniles from 11–17 years of age are involved in this program. The inclusion of younger ages instead of the traditional 17–19 age group obviously creates some problems. The U.S. Justice Department found in its study of Georgia's juvenile boot camp programs that younger children in those camps had been harmed both physically and psychologically (AP, June 1, 1998).

McLennan County, near Waco, Texas, runs a more conventional boot camp program called C.O.R.P.S., which stands for Court-Ordered Residential Programs and Services. Only 16 juveniles at one time are assigned to the program, which tries to avoid 16–17 year old juveniles because they are deemed more resistant to rehabilitation. Burglary and assault offenses characterize those assigned to the program by court order. Participants generally present substance abuse problems and may be in the program for a drug-related offense. According to the director of C.O.R.P.S., they are required to complete 2,880 hours, or the equivalent of 120 days. The program averages between 4 and 6 months, with an average stay of five months (Davidson, 1998).

The Challenge Boot Camp Program in El Paso, Texas, is limited to twelve male juveniles from 14 to 17 years of age. This is the only camp that accepts those who could be classified as Type A Violent Offenders at the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) detention system, but this boot camp program excludes juveniles adjudicated for sexual assault and arson as well as juveniles with high mental health needs. The program is characterized by a very low student to staff ratio (approximately 3.5:1) and a very aggressive attitude toward the juvenile. Recidivism, according to the El Paso County Juvenile Department, is only 30–40 percent (Torres, 1999).

The TYC boot camp at Sheffield keeps juveniles in the program from nine to twelve

months. Patterned after the Youth Leadership Academy in New York, TYC boot camp concentrates more on counseling than the “in your face” aggressive method of other camps. Youths come from all over the state, and thus there is no mandatory family counseling involved. According to Ali Elizondo (1999), commandant of the camp, aftercare is from three to six months at the Schaeffer Halfway House in El Paso.

Taking a three year period up until September 1997, and looking both at re-arrest and re-incarceration, the recidivism rate at Sheffield was a very low 25.8 percent. Since then, according to TYC camp officials, the current rate is 20 percent return rate to TYC within one year, and 38 percent for re-arrest. More data are needed on the specific types of individuals who are admitted to Sheffield before labeling this program a success (Elizondo, 1999; Tyler, Stalnaker and Darville, 1999). What these programs show is that even within one state we are likely to find juvenile boot camps ranging from the strictly “in-your-face” military style to those stressing greater counseling and emphasis on long-term problem-solving. Such diversity may represent an attempt to customize programs to fit specific juveniles’ needs, or it may indicate that we still don’t know what works best.

4. Socio-demographic variables toward and against recidivism

Recidivism rates reflect more than a wide gap from the best to the worst; they also reflect the problem in determining the effectiveness of juvenile boot camps. First, as pointed out above, an in depth study almost certainly would show differing criteria even for the definition of recidivism. Secondly, juvenile boot camps are such relatively new creations that the requisite years of collected data simply are not available to make a detailed assessment. Third, we are now seeing a downward progression in age for juvenile offenders assigned to boot camps; that alone will skew the data. Fourth, by their very nature boot camps serve a very small segment of the juvenile delinquent population, thus both limiting effectiveness overall and providing insufficient data. And fifth, as we saw above, some boot camps take the “incorrigibles,” while others state that they seek to avoid those who are most likely to recidivate.

The Criminal Justice Section of the American Bar Association (Beyer, 1996) believes that the rigid structure, the punitive nature and the inherent unfairness of the juvenile boot camp experience causes a negative reaction from adolescents. To evoke more positive responses, this office recommends programs that encourage young people to make choices and to be involved in establishing their daily routines. Somehow these youth also need to learn to appreciate their family structure and at the same time fulfill their need to belong.

The question here is: can those goals be accomplished in a structured program where youths typically get up around 5:30 in the morning and live sixteen hours of their day with no say in how they spend their time? Another problem facing juvenile boot camps would seem to be the lack of any consistency within/or between the programs. The Koch Crime Institute (Zaehringer, 1998) reported that the length of programs varies from 30 days at a camp in Alabama to 300 days at the original program in Orleans Parish. Our own review of programs confirms this wide difference, except that now there are programs as short as simply a weekend (JAWS). Most of the ones surveyed, however, range between 90 and 180

days. Does the amount of time spent in a boot camp program correlate with recidivism, and if so, is there an optimal time period? Nothing studied to date seems to answer this question.

In terms of another variable, The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) (1998) reports that a survey of New York state adult male felons found a close correlation between child abuse and later criminal behavior. This survey found that 35 percent of the inmates reported they had suffered severe physical abuse as a child. While physical abuse was the most common form, sexual abuse was reported by about 14 percent; this figure was much higher for those convicted of sex offenses. Neglect was a common factor for about 20 percent of those felons convicted for violent offenses, with neglect in this case including children who were left alone by their parents or in general lack adequate parental supervision. This 1998 report ("Early Childhood Victimization Among Incarcerated Adult Male Felons") makes clear the idea that while few researchers have made a systematic study of this situation, there seems little doubt that there is some correlation between abuse and criminal behavior. Obviously not all persons abused as children turn to delinquent behavior as there are multiple factors involved in the delinquency process.

Although boot camps are highly structured with strict controls, some younger inmates have been sexually assaulted while at boot camps, and we should assume others simply are physically assaulted by the older juveniles (See, for example, AP, June 1, 1998, U.S. Department of Justice study), or even in isolated cases by camp officials. We need to ask if placing ever younger adolescents in with those several years older doesn't lead to the same problems as we have seen in adult prisons. Victimization is a very real possibility especially for younger offenders. In a case known to one of the authors, a twelve year-old male was a victim of sexual assault. He had to be returned to his place of residence from a boot camp after only twenty days because of reported sexual assaults by other juveniles.

Based on the literature available, we might conclude that juveniles who either are known to have been abused or who self-report abuse as children are more likely to recidivate even after boot camp experience unless the aftercare program takes into consideration the earlier abuse and provides appropriate counseling. Researchers need to look at what happens to some of the younger juveniles in the boot camps, and how that affects them once they finish the program.

Another conclusion we can draw related to recidivism is that youth who have been members of gangs also are more likely to return to criminal practice after commitment to a boot camp program unless aftercare is designed to give the adolescent a sense of being a productive segment of society. The gang subculture gives certain youth a sense of belonging. While the boot camp experience can result to a degree in some bonding because of shared hardship, we do not believe it carries over into everyday life the way gang membership does. By looking at such studies as the National Institute of Justice's (1998) "Criminal Behavior of Gang Members and At-Risk Youths," we can see once again that gangs in this country are becoming more violent, and gang leaders certainly tend to become involved in more serious delinquent behavior. While boot camps might try to involve the non-violent delinquent, lessons learned in a gang prior to boot camp could well lead to boot camp failure even for non-violent gang members who perhaps view the experience as a momentary lapse in their gang-related activities (Tyler, Stalnaker, Darville, 1999).

Age also undoubtedly plays a role in the effectiveness of boot camp regimens. More

research is needed, but if not molested by older members, the more youthful offenders likely get the bigger “jolt” out of boot camps. The earlier the contact with and the more intense is that contact, the more likely a child is to follow the role model established in such a relationship. Differential association theory tells us that our youth learn delinquent behavior in small, informal groups, and that contacts established in early childhood have more impact than those later in life (Shoemaker, 1996, 138).

Parental support—or lack thereof—plays an important role in recidivism. Also, on the same subject, the degree of parental insistence on attendance at a boot camp should be noted. A child who feels he is pushed into a boot camp by parents unwilling or unable to deal with his behavior is less likely to look on the experience as a positive value. At the same time, parental involvement gives both the parent and the juvenile a proprietary interest, and thus they are more likely to see value in a successful outcome (see, for example, Travis Hirschi’s social control theory ideas in Shoemaker, 1996, 173–175).

According to the February 1996 NIJ study on boot camps, juveniles who might most likely be chosen for participation are the very ones that educators see as not only resisting authority but who also have poor social skills and self-concepts. Those in this second category often are underachievers who lack the insight into the connection between their behavior and its effect. The report goes on to say that educators recommend “an atmosphere of challenge and experiential learning.” Boot camp programs appeal to the public, and that appeal in turn develops pressure on juvenile justice agencies to implement such programs, but no matter how popular, these programs by themselves stand little chance of providing those social skills and self-images deemed necessary for the rehabilitation of the individual. This failure would seem to be the most difficult obstacle in making juvenile boot camps effective in reducing recidivism.

5. The importance of aftercare

While boot camps themselves might have not only a military regimen plus vocational and psychological counseling and even educational training, the Koch Crime Institute points out (Zaehringer, 1998) that while aftercare should be considered a key element in juvenile boot camp programs, it often gets less attention than needed simply because probation and parole officers are overworked. Perhaps expressing this situation, the National Institute of Justice *Survey of Probation and Parole Agency Directors, 1995*, highlighted the concern expressed by probation and parole agency directors over juvenile boot camps while stressing the need for other alternative sanctions. Many of those surveyed did not want the boot camp programs, and cited not only ineffectiveness but the additional staff time required.

According to the OJJDP in September 1997, reintegration into the community is the key element to boot camp success. To ensure continuity, an aftercare counselor should, at a minimum, be involved at the beginning of residential placement and again prior to release back into the community. Proper reintegration must first include appropriate assessment and classification criteria, followed by including family and community in individualized case

planning. Ideally, every community-based agency that anticipates contact with the juvenile in aftercare should play a role in the reintegration process.

Following assessment and individualized case planning, is intensive supervision. Conditions should be tailored to the needs of the individual with realistic and enforceable expectations as overly burdensome conditions can undermine positive change. Conditions should include positive reinforcement, and rewards and graduated sanctions should be available.

One common problem with applying positive reinforcement is that some parents simply give up trying to establish parental control and tell authorities that they do not want the child. In effect they are saying that the state can do whatever it wants with the juvenile. These are the parents who juvenile probation officers say frequently do not even bother to show up for court sessions involving their child. Without parental and other support, the juvenile will most likely be at a higher risk for recidivism. In any case, the odds are against correcting inappropriate behavior that has taken a lifetime to develop in just a few short months in a boot camp followed by an aftercare program (Tyler, Stalnaker and Darville, 1999).

While on aftercare, a period generally lasting six to twelve months, should the only measurement of recidivism be an adjudication for a new offense? What happens to the juvenile who "tests the limits"? What about repeated technical violations, such as a positive drug screen or failure to attend school? These are the violations that place the juvenile at risk for committing a new law violation. At times an aftercare worker must either re-evaluate and intensify the networking of services, i.e., substance abuse counseling, or return the juvenile to camp for a brief period. This action should decrease the likelihood of recidivism. All resources must be exhausted in an effort to deter the juvenile from committing a new offense.

In 1997 in Texas, 126,132 juveniles were referred to probation authorities from various sources. Approximately five percent of those referrals are placed into residential non-secure programs (Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, 1998). Unfortunately, most of these juveniles return from institutionalization to the same environment from which they came, usually negating the progress made, no matter what type program. Take the example of a case in which one of the authors was directly involved. This case concerned a fifteen-year-old pregnant juvenile who involved herself in a lifestyle of prostitution, drug use and crime, which mirrored the environment in which she was forced to live. Eventually she was arrested and adjudicated for a property offense. A few weeks after the birth of her child, she was fortunate to be placed into a federally-funded substance abuse program for six months while her mother (who had a pending aggravated robbery charge) cared for the daughter's child. A state-supported program afforded her the opportunity to receive an additional three months of treatment after discharge from the first substance abuse program. The second program allowed her to bring her child with her and learn parenting skills. Now 18 and pregnant again, she has returned to her former lifestyle and her mother continues to care for the first child (Tyler, Stalnaker and Darville, 1999). Perhaps concentration on equipping these children with the skills to cope would be more appropriate than trying to change lifelong behavior patterns. Recognizing that parental involvement is crucial, is it realistic to think these programs can actually change the significant others and the environments from which some of these children come?

6. Conclusions and analysis

The overall conclusion we must draw from this study is that juvenile boot camps are likely to be ineffective both in terms of costs and recidivism unless they incorporate a program to give a delinquent the skills, the motivation, and the resources to avoid the environment and lifestyle that contributed to the delinquency in the first place. A short-term shock-incarceration program such as those employed by many of our growing number of juvenile boot camps is unlikely to correct inappropriate behavior that has taken a lifetime to develop. New skills and self-confidence are far more important to a former juvenile delinquent's future than is short-term, forced compliance with society's rules. The implication, therefore, is that no matter what an adolescent learns in juvenile boot camp programs, he/she must have support for a new lifestyle after leaving the boot camp in order to avoid recidivism.

Some specific conclusions based on this preliminary study of juvenile boot camps are relatively easy. For example:

- We know that more states are using them, and more are likely to start new programs, as predictions show all 50 states likely are to have at least one juvenile boot camp program by the year 2000.
- Age for inclusion has gone down dramatically, as we saw in Texas-based programs, and we now have 12 and 13-year-olds frequently thrown together with older juveniles. This situation can lead both to physical or psychological harm to the younger inmates and to the latter's learning of more violent behavior from their older colleagues.
- The military style is popular with the public and political leaders because it projects the image of getting tough on juvenile crime. Since juvenile crime is a major concern to our society, anything that gives the appearance of trying to stop it is going to be popular.
- Boot camps are designed for extremely small numbers of juvenile delinquents, and even if the recidivism rates were cut to far below the national average, we still are not putting a serious dent in delinquency.
- In addition to the small numbers of juvenile delinquents served, the staff to inmate ratio of necessity must be much smaller than that in traditional detention facilities. The greater personal attention demands, therefore, more human resources than in alternative programs.
- Boot camps for juveniles vary greatly in style and even purpose. This diversity makes it difficult to determine what is effective and what is not. Different definitions of recidivism also make comparisons difficult.
- Boot camps are more costly than more traditional probationary approaches.

Some of the other conclusions reached in this study require more analysis and can't be determined simply by looking at the numbers involved. Some of these more subjective conclusions include:

- Just as real military boot camps serve a temporary purpose of taking a civilian and showing him or her how to go about becoming a soldier, juvenile boot camps are temporary training grounds from which some graduates may be changed, but many

also will return to former habits once released from the discipline and control of boot camp instructors.

- Boot camps, whether for adults or for juveniles, are not stand-alone solutions. It would be naive to assume that a few months in a controlled environment will make permanent changes to delinquents' lives once they are outside that environment and faced with problems that contributed to their delinquency.
- The U.S. Department of Justice has confirmed that shock-incarceration programs have done little to reduce recidivism, one of the major stated goals of juvenile boot camps. In spite of this determination, juvenile boot camps are more popular than ever. The only conclusion we can draw from these two pieces of contradictory data is that too often we let superficial short-term results, the needs of political power and public demand for increased vigilance against delinquency color our perspective of a program's effectiveness.
- Nationally, recidivism rates for juvenile boot camp graduates seem to be disappointingly high, although there are some exceptions. One argument by proponents of juvenile boot camps could be that by turning around only a handful of each group going through the program, some good is accomplished. But if recidivism rates remain high, we need to re-evaluate whether the programs are cost effective.
- Even if participation is voluntary, the participant might feel only that he/she is accepting the lesser of two evils; thus, long-term motivation is limited. Adolescents seem to do better at those activities they choose for themselves rather than those forced on them by parents or society.
- We agree with various evaluations that seem to show that the long-term impact of juvenile boot camp programs is similar to traditional, and usually less costly, measures such as probation and supervised intensive probation. This conclusion implies that juvenile boot camps need more evaluation and perhaps restructuring before they can become an important tool in dealing with juvenile delinquency.

We believe that one problem other than the great diversity in evaluating juvenile boot camp programs is that juvenile boot camps cannot compare directly with the adult versions, and any such comparison would be self-defeating. We have a juvenile justice system because the needs of juveniles are different from those of adults; thus, we need to tailor programs to juvenile needs instead of merely trying to imitate. That said, states no longer seem willing to tolerate the original idea of *parens patriae* that stressed the needs of rather than the guilt of the juvenile (See Siegel and Senna, 2000, 85). With that in mind, we must ask whether juvenile boot camps are designed more for punishment than for rehabilitation. While boot camp costs vary considerably, as do costs of other, more traditional programs, across the nation juvenile boot camps incur considerable costs. Because of this added cost, and because they must direct their attention to a very small proportion of the juvenile delinquent population, purely military style juvenile boot camps at this time do not seem to be the answer to the problem of juvenile delinquency unless punishment is the actual objective. Even then, the costs seem to outweigh the gain for society. Some juvenile boot camp programs on the surface show potential, but to classify them as successful on the basis of only a few years' statistics would be premature.

Boot camps are perhaps the most visible means of showing the public that those responsible for trying to curtail juvenile crime are taking the initiative. One question might be: do we use boot camps simply because they appeal to the public's image of "getting tough" on juvenile crime rather than because we believe they will accomplish the goal of reducing juvenile crime and recidivism? Phrased differently, we must ask ourselves if juvenile boot camps are so popular because of their political appeal rather than because they work.

The Executive Director of one of the three juvenile boot camp programs funded by the OJJDP, has said: "The military structure gives these kids strong motivation and a sense of control and empowerment. They work from early in the morning to late in the evening. The atmosphere here is quite different from the institutions where 20 or 30 kids sit in a day room and watch TV all day. In the boot camp, the kids are emotional and positive" (OJJDP, 1996).

While we don't disagree with the general idea of the comments, factors other than "emotion," "empowerment," and "self-control" need to be considered. One can be emotional even when engaged in delinquent behavior. And perhaps the feeling of power is exactly the reason many of our adolescents are involved in delinquency. Self-control obviously is extremely important for someone who makes decisions of right or wrong, but we have to ask: is the self-control that juvenile boot camp administrators see actually simply a temporary extension of the control they and their staff exert over the participants? And will that "self-control" disappear as soon as the ex-boot camp inmate is subjected to every day decisions that he or she must make alone? An adolescent can exhibit a considerable degree of self-constraint in the face of direct parental control, but what happens when peer pressure takes over for that imposed control? For the most part, boot camp participants return to the same environments from which they came, with the same pressures. They need more resources than the simple adherence to greater authority imposed on them for a relatively short period of time in a juvenile boot camp. Community and parental support, educational and vocational training, programs designed to increase the positive self-image of juveniles, and case workers who understand the need to motivate for the long-term rather than simply accepting short-term solutions to societal problems are some of these resources we would have to add to the disciplinary approach of the juvenile boot camp.

References

- Altschuler, D. M., & Armstrong, T. L. (1994). Intensive aftercare for high-risk juveniles: a community care model. Program summary. Washington, DC: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.
- Associated Press.* (June 1, 1998). U.S. Justice Department says boot camps do more harm than good. Available On-line at <http://silcon.com/~ptave/usjd.htm>.
- Banstetter, T. (April 6, 1997). Boot camps fall short. Available On-line at <http://www.n-jcenter.com/reprise/bootcamp.htm>.
- Beyer, M. (1996). Juvenile boot camps don't make sense. American Bar Association, Criminal Justice Section.
- Bourque, B. B., Han M., & Hill, S. M. (1996). A national survey of aftercare: provisions for boot camp graduates. National Institute of Justice *Research in Brief*.
- Brewer, J. M. (1998). North Texas boot camp tries to turn young offenders around. Available On-line at <http://www.texnews.com/1998/texas/boot0202.html>.

- Burns, J. C., & Vito, G. F. (1995). An impact analysis of the Alabama boot camp program. *Federal Probation*, 59, 63–67.
- Cantu, E. (March 23, 1998). JAWS Marines take bite out of juvenile crime. *USMC News Wire*.
- Coolley, M. P. (1998). About face! Are juvenile boot camps on the right track? *State Bar Section Report Juvenile Law*, 12(3).
- Criminal Justice Policy Council. (1999). *Oranges to oranges: comparing the operational costs of juvenile and adult correctional programs in Texas*.
- Davidson, R. (1998). Telephone interview. Mr. Davidson is the director of C.O.R.P.S. in McLennan County, Texas.
- Elizondo, A. (1999). Telephone interview. Mr. Elizondo is the commandant of the Texas Youth Commission Juvenile Boot Camp at Sheffield, Texas.
- Hayeslip, D. W. (1996). The future of boot camps. National Institute of Justice Report. *Correctional Boot Camps: A Tough Intermediate Sanction*.
- Kaczor, B. (1997). Studies find boot camps have high re-arrest rates. *Bradenton Herald Internet Plus*. Available On-line at <http://bhip.com/news/22.boot.htm>.
- Koch Crime Commission. (1995). *Boot camps: mixed reviews*.
- Krisberg, B. (1995). The legacy of juvenile corrections. *Corrections Today*, 57(5).
- Landers, E. S. (April 14, 1998). Boot camps training juveniles for fight of their lives. *Asbury Park Press*. Article available On-line at <http://www.injersey.com/news/younglives/story/1,1783,70504.00.html>.
- MacKenzie, D. L., & Hebert, E. E. (1996) *Correctional boot camps: a tough intermediate sanction*. National Institute of Justice Report.
- National Association of State Budget Officers. (1995). State innovations in juvenile justice. *NASBO Information Brief*, 3(1).
- National Institute of Justice. (1998). Criminal behavior of gang members and at-risk youths: summary of a presentation by C. Ronald Huff. *National Institute of Justice Research Preview*. FS-000190.
- National Institute of Justice. (1998). Early childhood victimization among incarcerated adult male felons: summary of a study by Robin Week and Cathy Spatz Wisdom. *National Institute of Justice Research Preview*. FS-000204.
- National Institute of Justice. (1998). Texas' Project RIO: re-integration of offenders. *Program Focus series*, NCJ 168637.
- National Institute of Justice. (1995). *National Institute of Justice survey of probation and parole agency directors*. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (October 1997). Issues and trends in state juvenile justice reform. *Juvenile Justice Reform Initiatives in the States, 1994–1996: Program Report*, 29–32.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1996). Juvenile boot camps: lessons learned. *Fact Sheet*—9636.
- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (July 1996). State responses to serious and violent juvenile crime: Research Report.
- Parent, D. G. (1996). Boot camps and prison crowding. National Institute of Justice Report, *Correctional boot camps: a tough intermediate sanction*.
- RTIC. (1997). Boot camps for troubled kids. Available On-line at <http://www.dtic.mil/soldiers/sep97/features/rtic.html>.
- Santana, S. (1999). Telephone interview. Mr. Santana is the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for El Paso, Texas.
- Sharp, D. (June 1995). Correctional options: boot camps—punishment and treatment. *Corrections Today*, 57(4).
- Shoemaker, D. J. (1996). *Theories of delinquency: an examination of explanations of delinquent behavior*. Third edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Siegel, L., & Senna, J. (2000). *Juvenile delinquency: theory, practice, and law*. Seventh edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Texas Juvenile Probation Commission. (December 1998). *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1998*.
- Torres, M. (1999). Telephone interview. Mr. Torres is the director of the Challenge Boot Camp Program in El Paso, Texas.
- Trulson, C. R. (1998). School-based juvenile boot camps: an introduction and evaluation of specialized treatment

- and rehabilitation (STAR). Unpublished Master's Thesis, submitted to the faculty of the College of Criminal Justice, Sam Houston State University.
- Tyler, J. E., Stalnaker, K., & Darville, R. (1999). Juvenile boot camps: are they worth the cost? *Texas Probation*, XIV(4), 15–18.
- U.S. Department of Justice. (1994). Researchers evaluate eight shock incarceration programs. *National Institute of Justice Update*.
- Zaehring, B. (1998). Juvenile boot camps: cost and effectiveness vs. residential facilities. *Koch Crime Institute White Paper Report*.