

Rethinking the Assumptions About Boot Camps

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History and Nature of Boot Camps

THE RELATIVELY recent implementation of military-style correctional programs as an alternative sanction has elicited diverse opinions regarding their ethics, rehabilitative potential, and purpose. Commonly called “shock incarceration” or “prison boot camp” programs, these facilities employ strict discipline and military drill as key elements. For the purposes of this article, the term “boot camp” will be used to describe these programs because “shock incarceration” has been associated in much of the literature with other types of sanctions that cannot be defined as boot camp programs (Cronin, 1994, p. 1). In 1983, Georgia and Oklahoma opened the first modern prison boot camps. By 1994, a total of 29 states were operating 59 separate boot camp facilities (Cronin, 1994, p. 11). Current literature indicates that almost all state governments, along with many counties, are currently operating boot camp programs, have used them in the recent past, or are developing such a program (MacKenzie & Hebert, 1996, p. vii).

According to Parent (1989, p. xii), prison boot camps have a historical tie to earlier community corrections programs such as “Scared Straight” and “shock probation” and challenge programs such as “Outward Bound.” For the purposes of this research, these types of programs will not be included since they differ significantly from present-day boot camp programs. The conditions that past researchers have established for a program to be considered a prison boot camp are not fulfilled by any of these programs.

Boot Camp Core Components

A general definition of boot camp facilities is problematic since programs differ in their basic components. This has caused confusion and debate among researchers as to what programs should be defined as boot camps:

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There is no widely accepted or official definition of the term “boot camp.” Because boot camps have proven so popular with legislators and other potential backers, no doubt many program developers find it prudent to stretch the term to include as broad a range of programs as possible. (Cronin, 1994, p. 1)

The National Institute of Justice (1996, p. 3) solicited research that specifically addressed the question “What is a boot camp?”

These differences are often problematic for analysts because evaluative results of one boot camp program cannot be generalized to other facilities. The only component that almost all research has identified as being prerequisite for a program to be considered a boot camp is a military type of structure, regimen, and discipline. More generally, common elements of boot camp facilities cited by most researchers (MacKenzie, 1990, pp. 44-45; GAO, 1993, p. 11; Cronin, 1994, p. 1; Parent, 1989, p. 11) are (1) a regimented military-style program, (2) strict discipline and rules, (3) young, first-time, nonviolent inmates, and (4) programs that are a shorter alternative to a prison sentence. The most recent and comprehensive publication on boot camps narrows that spectrum somewhat by removing the offender age and crime stipulations (MacKenzie & Hebert, 1996, p. viii). This softening of the classification requirements solves some of the dilemma in defining what constitutes a boot camp. However, it does little to address the complex issue of variation between facilities.

Program Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of prison boot camps have been the focus of much of the descriptive literature. A potential cause of the popularity of boot camp programs may be that they have multiple goals that can satisfy the objectives of different interest groups: “In a sense, shock incarceration is a program that can be—at least in perception—all things to all people” (Parent, 1989, p. xi). The actual or perceived goals provide a basis for analyzing the success or failure of boot camp programs. Most researchers agree (Parent, 1989, pp. 11-12; Osler, 1991, pp. 35-36; GAO, 1993; Cronin, 1994, p. 6) on five basic goals: (1) incapacitation, (2) deterrence, (3) rehabilitation, (4) reduction of prison costs and crowding, and (5) punishment. Whether these goals are achieved successfully is an issue that directly affects correctional policy and critical analysis of these programs. Further, they provide a basis for determining success or failure

of boot camp programs. Program goals or components may have to be altered to make them achievable.

General Accounting Office (1993, p. 20) statistics indicate that administrators vary in their support of these different goals for boot camp programs. Rehabilitation received the highest level of support among administrators, with more than 90 percent ranking it as of great or very great importance. The second most important goal according to administrators was reduction in costs. Nearly 87 percent ranked this goal of at least great importance. Reduction of crowding was ranked as of great or very great importance by more than 81 percent of respondents. More than 83 percent of administrators ranked protecting the public (incapacitation) as a goal of great or very great importance. Deterrence received far less support, with just over 35 percent ranking it of at least great importance. The lowest scoring goal among administrators surveyed was punishment, with only 20 percent of respondents ranking it of great or very great importance (GAO, 1993, p. 20).

Boot Camps at the Local and Federal Levels

Although most research on boot camps has focused on facilities operated at the state level, boot camps also are being operated by federal and local governments. Local governments have begun operating boot camp facilities as a method of diverting some of the jail population away from state correctional facilities. According to Cronin (1994, p. 32), the locally operated boot camp facilities are similar to the state facilities in their goals and services, but are less able to address crowding problems than state-operated boot camps. The jail boot camp programs surveyed by Austin, Jones, and Bolyard (1993, p. 3) were generally smaller and shorter in duration than state facilities. The first federal boot camp for men opened in 1990, and a facility for women opened in 1992. The federal program has a duration of 180 days (Cronin, 1994, p. 33; Klein-Saffran, Chapman, & Jeffers, 1993, pp. 13-14; GAO, 1993, p. 35; Klein-Saffran, 1991, pp. 2-3). Two noteworthy differences in the federal boot camp program are (1) its lack of summary punishments for minor infractions (Cronin, 1994, p. 33; Klein-Saffran, 1991, p. 4) and (2) a relatively intensive and extended aftercare supervision component (GAO, 1993, pp. 43-44).

Evaluative Research

Because boot camps have been operating only since 1983, evaluative research on this subject is somewhat limited. Of the 26 states surveyed by the General Accounting Office (1993, p. 22), only five reported having completed any formal evaluation. Moreover, several validity and reliability concerns have been raised regarding this body of research (Cronin, 1994; Salerno, 1994; GAO, 1988, 1993; Mack, 1992; Osler, 1991; MacKenzie, Gould, Riechers, & Shaw, 1990; MacKenzie, 1990). De-

spite limited evaluation and understanding of the effects of boot camp programs on participants, these programs continue to be popular as new and innovative correctional options. MacKenzie (1994, p. 66) notes the need to "use science to help us decide whether boot camp prisons can achieve the desired goals or, if necessary, be redesigned to reach these goals."

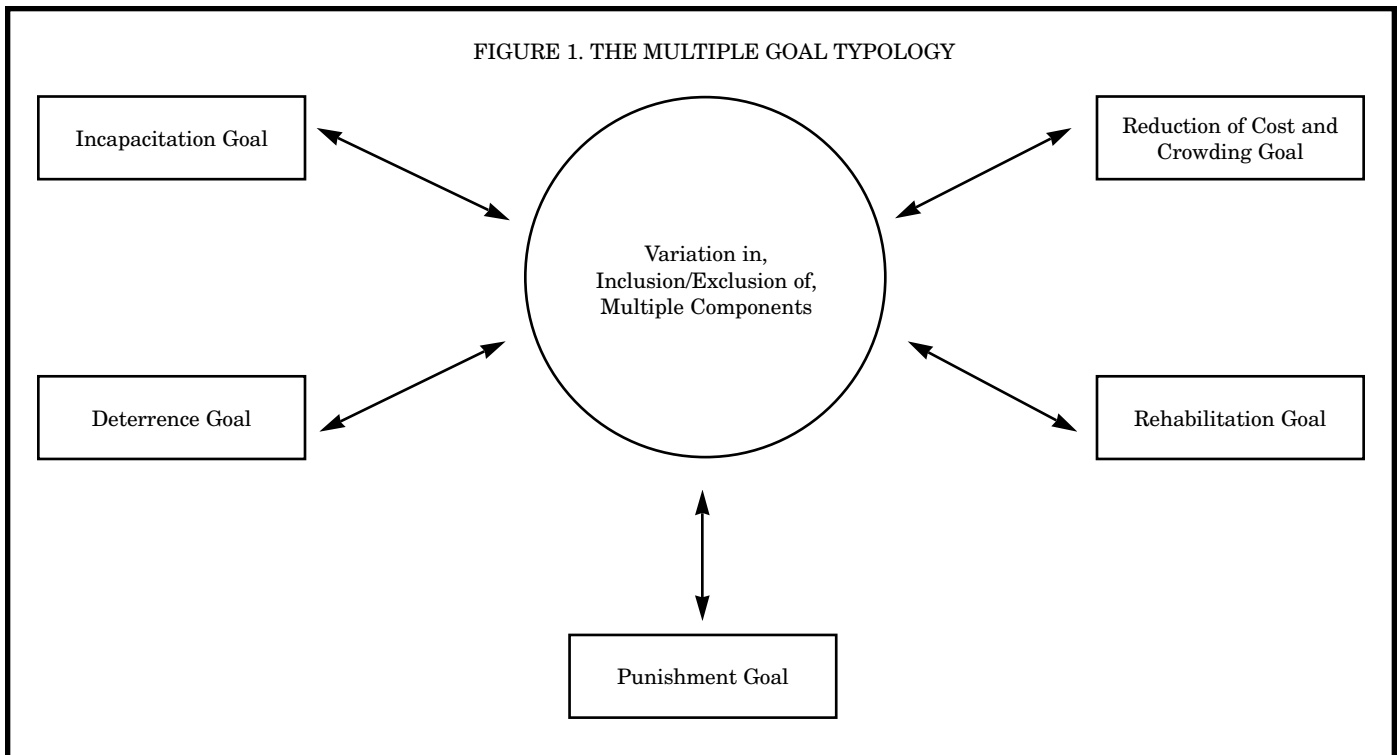
Perhaps the most compelling problem for researchers is the applicability of the results of empirical research of one boot camp program to others. "These differences are expected to result in differences in the success or failure of programs in reaching their goals" (MacKenzie, 1990, p. 50). The validity of interagency comparison is at least questionable if not highly problematic (Mack, 1992, p. 145); however, this type of comparison has fueled the debate and has been used by both proponents and critics of boot camps to bolster their arguments (MacKenzie, 1990, pp. 44, 50-51).

Multiple Goal Typology

This section describes a typology that seeks to explain the differences between boot camp programs as a function of their emphasis on different goals. The typology's theoretical foundation is provided by the work of MacKenzie (1990), who divided boot camp programs according to their level of emphasis on rehabilitation. Boot camps were classified as having a "high" or "low" focus on rehabilitation (programs were considered to have a high level of focus on rehabilitation if the amount of time spent in rehabilitative activities was equal to or greater than the number of hours spent working). Even if modified, this model entails numerous problems. Labor, physical exercise, military regimen, and drill could be considered as punishment (which MacKenzie did not address), but they may in fact have rehabilitative value. More importantly, though, this model only addresses two of the five commonly accepted goals of boot camp facilities (Colledge, 1996). The typology proposed here, the Multiple Goal Typology, addresses some of the shortcomings of MacKenzie's classification system.

Methods

From the 26 state facilities listed by the General Accounting Office (1993, pp. 56-58), the researchers contacted 25 boot camp administrators by telephone and asked them to participate in this study. One facility was not included in this solicitation as the researchers were unable to make telephone contact. The researchers asked the administrators to provide documentation that described their respective facilities. This information included policy manuals, inmate handbooks, internal and external evaluations, and mission statements. Fifteen administrators agreed to participate and sent information describing their respective facilities. This provided a response rate of 60 percent. The researchers



used information in these documents to supplement existing descriptive statistics available in current literature (GAO, 1993; Cronin, 1994). Two locally operated boot camp facilities provided on-site interviews and tours in addition to descriptive information.

Constructing the Typology

The Multiple Goal Typology, illustrated in figure 1, addresses the differences between boot camp programs with regard to their components and how those differences affect the five common goals: incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, reduction of prison costs and crowding, and punishment (Parent, 1989, pp. 11-12; Osler, 1991, pp. 35-36; GAO, 1993, p. 20; Cronin, 1994, p. 6). This spectrum of goals raises questions regarding what boot camps are truly designed to achieve, how greatly they differ in their emphases on these goals, the achievability of these goals (success or failure), and to what extent the programs' components reflect their stated goals. If boot camp programs differ in their stated goals, one should expect variation among program components (GAO, 1993; Cronin, 1994).

Achievability of Goals as a Function of Components

This section addresses the hypothetical relationships between various components and the five common goals of boot camp programs. Differences in program components reflect the focus on, and affect the achievability of, the separate goals. Fluctuations in one or more specific components may have different effects on the separate goals.

Previous research by MacKenzie (1990, p. 47) separated varying characteristics of boot camp programs into four distinct categories: selection decisions, community supervision upon release, program characteristics, and program location. MacKenzie recognized the fact that differences in boot camp program components may represent potential problems and benefits for goal achievement. This research seeks to build upon MacKenzie's work by presenting a more complete picture of hypothetical effects of variation in the multiple components of boot camps.

The multiple components of boot camp programs addressed in this research are broken into five categories similar to those used by MacKenzie (1990). The components will be grouped into selection criteria, participant selection controllers, program characteristics, capacity and location components, and community supervision issues. Table 1 presents these component categories and for each lists the relevant component variables, describes the type and range of variation of individual components, and identifies the hypothetical relationships between each component and the five goals. A positive (+) sign in the table indicates that inclusion of or increase in the component variable hypothetically has a positive effect on the achievability of the specific goal. A negative (-) sign indicates that inclusion of or increase in the component variable hypothetically has a negative effect on the specific goal's achievability. A zero (0) indicates that little or no effect is expected on the specific goal. In some cases, components may have multiple effects upon specific goals, which indicates that

the relationship between the component and the specific goal may be conditional.

Selection Criteria Components

Selection criteria identify the range of possible offenders who could be placed in a boot camp program. Boot camp programs vary on selection components such as age, prior and violent offenses, physical and mental restrictions, sentence type, and original sentence length. Age-related components may have conditional relationships with all of the major goals by providing a larger group from which to select potential participants. Increases in minimum age restrictions can reduce the potential pool of offenders. Conversely, decreases in maximum age restrictions should have a similar diminishing effect on the potential offender pool.

Accepting offenders into boot camp programs with prior or violent offenses, who would ordinarily have been sent to a traditional prison facility, should reduce the ability of a program to achieve the goals of incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and punishment. A longer incarceration time may allow for greater rehabilitative potential for the offender if effective programs are available in prison. The absence of restrictions on the basis of prior offense(s) should increase the ability to achieve reduction in prison costs and crowding if the original incarceration length would have been longer.

Physical and mental restrictions may reduce the ability of boot camps to achieve all of the five major goals of boot camp programs by reducing the potential pool of offenders eligible for the program. However, the boot camp facility may realize indirect cost and crowding reductions by diverting offenders from the program who do not have the physical or mental ability to complete it and replacing them with more suitable candidates.

Sentencing components have multiple hypothetical effects upon goal achievement. If a boot camp is used as an alternative sentencing option that lengthens the actual time spent incarcerated, the goals of incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and punishment should be enhanced. Conversely, using boot camp as an alternative to probation should result in a net-widening effect (MacKenzie, 1990, p. 47), thus thwarting reductions in prison cost and crowding. Increasing minimum and maximum original sentence lengths will reduce incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment goals while increasing potential for realizing cost and crowding reductions. Effects of variation in original sentence length on rehabilitation will depend upon success of treatment programs available in prisons versus those in boot camps.

Participant Selection Controllers

The participant selection process also may affect the potential to achieve organizational goals. Selection decisions generally are controlled by the sentencing judge, the correctional authority operating the boot camp program, or a combination of the two entities (GAO, 1993; Cronin, 1994). Hypothetically, judges selecting boot camp participants would be less interested in achieving cost and crowding reductions than correctional authorities would.

Other decision makers in the boot camp selection process are the potential participants themselves. We assume that potential boot camp participants would choose not to participate in a boot camp program if it means a longer period of incarceration. This leads to a negative relationship between voluntary participation components and the goals of incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment. Inversely, programs allowing inmate

TABLE 1. COMPONENTS OF BOOT CAMP PROGRAMS AND HYPOTHETICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TYPOLOGY GOALS

Selection Criterion Components							
Component	Type	Range	Incapacitation	Deterrence	Rehabilitation	Cost/Crowding	Punish
Min. Age	Age/Yrs	0–18yrs	–/0	–/0	–/0	–/0	–/0
Max. Age	Age/Yrs	22 yrs–No Max.	+/0	+/0	+/0	+/0	+/0
Prior Offense	Categorical	Yes/No	–	–	–/0	+	–
Physical Restrict	Categorical	Yes/No	–/0	–/0	–/0	–/+	–/0
Mental Restrict	Categorical	Yes/No	–/0	–/0	–/0	–/+	–/0
Violent Offenders	Categorical	Yes/No	–	–	–/0	+	–
Sentence Type	Categorical	Prison./Prob./Parole	–/+	–/+	–/+	–/+	–/+
Min. Sentence	# of Years	0–2.5 Years	–	–	+/-	+	–
Max. Sentence	# of Years	3.0–No Max.	–	–	+/-	+	–

TABLE 1. COMPONENTS OF BOOT CAMP PROGRAMS AND HYPOTHETICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TYPOLOGY GOALS—Cont'd.

Participant Selection Controllers							
Component	Type	Range	Incapacitation	Deterrence	Rehabilitation	Cost/Crowding	Punish
Correctional Authority Selects	Categorical	Yes/No	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Judge Selects	Categorical	Yes/No	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Selection by Judge and Corr. Auth.	Categorical	Yes/No	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
Voluntary In	Categorical	Yes/No	-	-	0	+	-
Voluntary Out	Categorical	Yes/No	-	-	0	+	-
Governing Authority	Government	Fed/State/Local	0	0	0	0	0
Program Characteristics							
Component	Type	Range	Incapacitation	Deterrence	Rehabilitation	Cost/Crowding	Punish
Counseling	Hours/Day	0-24	0	0	+	-/0	0
Education	Hours/Day	0-24	0	0	+	-/0	0
Edu. Budget	Dollars	0-Unlimited	0	0	+	-	0
Vocational	Hours/Day	0-24	0	0	+	-/0	0
Military Regimen	Hours/Day	0-24	+/0	+/0	+/0	0	+/0
Summary Punishments	Categorical	Yes/No	0	+	0	0	+
Physical Labor	Hours/Day	0-24	+	+	0	+/0	+
Physical Training	Hours/Day	0-24	+/0	+	+/0	0	+
Community Service	Categorical	Yes/No	-	+/0	0	+	+/0
Restricted Privileges	Categorical	Phone, Visits	+	+	0	+/0	+
Induction Process	Categorical	Yes/No	0	+	0	0	+
Progressive Levels	# of and Length	1-Unlimited	0	0	+/0	0	0
Demotion Possible	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	0	-	+
Graduation Ceremony	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	+	-	0
Summary Punishments	Categorical	Yes/No	0	+	+/-	0	+
Program Length	# of Days	30-240	+	+	+	-	+

TABLE 1. COMPONENTS OF BOOT CAMP PROGRAMS AND HYPOTHETICAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH TYPOLOGY GOALS—Cont'd.

Program Capacity and Location Components							
Component	Type	Range	Incapacitation	Deterrence	Rehabilitation	Cost/Crowding	Punish
Total Capacity	# of Beds	24–2773	0	0	0	+/-	0
Total Prison Population	Numeric	Unknown	0	0	0	-	0
Number of Security Staff	Numeric	1–No Limit	+	0	+/0	-	+/0
Number of Service Staff	Numeric	0–No Limit	0	0	+	-	0
Volunteer Staff	Numeric	0–No Limit	+/0	0	+/0	+	0
Multiple Use Facility	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	+/0	+	0
On Existing Prison Site	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	0	+	+
Capacity Male	# of Beds Male	24–2623	0	0	0	+	0
Capacity Female	# of Beds Female	0–150	0	0	0	+/-	0
Coed Facility	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	0	+/-	0
Community Supervision Issues							
Component	Type	Range	Incapacitation	Deterrence	Rehabilitation	Cost/Crowding	Punish
Halfway House	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	+/0	-	+
Job Assistance	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	+	-/0	0
Training Programs	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	+	-/0	0
Length Monitored	# of Days	0–No Limit	+	+	+/0	-	+
Post-release Counseling	Categorical	Yes/No	0	0	+	-/0	0
Electronic Monitoring	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	0	-	+
Intensity of Supervision	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	+/0	-	+
Urinalysis	Categorical	Yes/No	0	+	+/0	-	+
Partial Confinement	Categorical	Yes/No	+	+	0	-	+

self-selection (voluntary participation) may realize reductions in prison cost and crowding as potential participants with longer original sentences opt for shorter boot camp incarceration. There is no significant information at this time linking the governing authority component to variation in achievability of goals; however, this does not preclude that such relationships might exist.

Program Characteristics

The next components to be addressed are those related to program characteristics. Hypothetically, increases in counseling, education, vocational training,

and educational budgets should result in an increased ability to rehabilitate offenders. A negative relationship is predicted between these four components and cost and crowding reductions due to increased rehabilitative programming costs. This negative relationship may be mitigated by counseling, education, and vocational training provided by community organizations without charge to the boot camp facility. Both county boot camps that participated in the study reported that community organizations provided rehabilitative services to their programs without cost.

Increases in physical training, labor, and military regimen may have a positive effect upon the goals of inca-

pacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and punishment. Boot camp facilities devoting more time to military regimen, physical training, and labor should have a greater ability to incapacitate offenders through increased monitoring and control. Likewise, increases in deterrence and punishment goals may be realized by increasing time spent in military drill, physical training, and labor.

The use of inmate labor for community service projects indirectly might reduce government costs by reducing labor costs to public and community organizations. Officials of one of the counties reported using inmate labor to assist low income and elderly members of the community with housing repairs, to restore a local area high school football field, and to perform several other community service projects.

Restricted privileges, induction processes, and possibility of demotion vary among boot camp facilities. Boot camps with extensive restrictions should realize increases in incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment while possibly decreasing costs to the facility. Induction processes, such as head shaving and verbal intimidation of new inmates, should increase levels of punishment and deterrence. Demotion for poor behavior or lack of progress, leading to a longer period of incarceration, should lead to increases in the goals of punishment, deterrence, and incapacitation while increasing cost and crowding.

The use of summary punishments for rule infractions is a relatively common element among boot camp programs (GAO, 1993, p. 18; Cronin 1994, p. 24). The extent to which facilities use these punishments varies. Federal boot camp programs do not use these types of punishments at all (Klein-Saffran, 1991, p. 4). The use of summary punishments are expected to have positive effects upon the goals of deterrence and punishment; however, the effect of these punishments upon rehabilitation are undetermined.

The existence of a graduation ceremony for inmates completing the boot camp program may have some rehabilitative effect on participants by reaffirming their accomplishment in completing the program. Additionally, it may instill confidence and a positive perception of the boot camp experience. We expect that a graduation ceremony will increase costs to some extent.

Maximum program length varies extensively among state-operated programs from a low of 30 days to a high of 240 days (GAO, 1993; Cronin, 1994). Both county boot camp programs included in this study reported lengths of 180 days. Increases in program length should improve all major goals with the exception of cost and crowding reductions. The increased program duration will directly increase cost and crowding levels.

Program Capacity and Location

Variations in total capacity of boot camp facilities directly affect the potential to achieve cost and crowding

reductions. Increasing the capacity of a boot camp facility will increase cost and crowding reductions if the program admits offenders who would have been sentenced to a longer prison term. If the offenders would not have been sent to a correctional facility, or would have spent a shorter time incarcerated, increasing capacity will increase prison cost and crowding. Ability to reduce costs and crowding is mitigated by the total prison population of the jurisdiction. If the total prison population is extremely large in comparison to the total capacity of the boot camp facility, the number of offenders diverted may not have a significant effect on cost and crowding.

Staffing levels have some hypothetical effects upon achievement of boot camp goals. Increasing the number of security staff should lead to increased incapacitation levels by providing closer supervision. This also may increase the punishment and rehabilitation goals of boot camps depending on roles that security staff play (counseling versus control). Greater numbers of service staff should increase the rehabilitative capacity of a boot camp by increasing the number, quality, and intensity of training and rehabilitation programs. Increases in paid staff, however, will increase the costs of boot camp operation. Boot camp location within a multiple-use facility or on an existing prison site should reduce the cost of providing inmate services and programs. Placing a boot camp on an existing prison site should increase punishment and deterrence by providing a reminder of the possible result of future crime and increase incapacitation where greater levels of security are present.

Increasing capacity to house male inmates should reduce prison costs and crowding. Some different problems are presented for boot camp facilities that are designed to house female inmates. Including females in boot camps, especially coed facilities, may result in fraternization if inmates are not kept in check by closer supervision (resulting in possible higher staffing costs). Not admitting females into boot camp programs may present equal opportunity litigation problems (Klein-Saffran, Chapman, & Jeffers, 1993, p. 4).

Community Supervision

Community supervision issues make up the final set of component/goal relationships. Cowles and Castellano (1995, p. 121) note the importance of aftercare in successfully reintegrating offenders into the community. Placing released inmates in a halfway house or some other form of partial community confinement should increase incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment goals and may increase rehabilitation if treatment is continued at the new placement location. The operating expense of a halfway house facility will likely increase costs.

Post-release rehabilitative components such as job assistance, training programs, and counseling should increase the rehabilitative capacity of boot camp pro-

grams by extending treatment and easing transition into the community but also will increase costs. The effects of increased cost of post-release treatment and training programs are mitigated in instances where community organizations provide services without charge to boot camp graduates. Both county boot camp facilities reported that community organizations provided treatment and training services free of charge to participants upon release.

Increasing the length of time that inmates are monitored after release should increase the achievability of incapacitation, deterrence, punishment, and possibly rehabilitation while increasing costs. We anticipate that increasing the intensity of community supervision will have effects similar to extending the length monitored. The use of post-release sentencing options such as electronic monitoring and urinalysis should have positive effects on the goals of incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment, but have a negative effect on cost and crowding reductions. Urinalysis may positively affect the goal of rehabilitation if it helps the offender abstain from drug and alcohol use. Increasing the intensity of post-release supervision should have a positive effect on incapacitation, deterrence, and punishment. It also may increase rehabilitation where the restrictions assist inmates in their transition to life in the community. Increasing intensity of supervision likely will lead to increases in cost of post-release supervision and may increase crowding if it causes a higher level of revocations.

Conclusion

The Multiple Goal Typology presents a method of understanding differences in boot camp facilities based upon variation in components and the resulting differential emphasis on separate major goals. This preliminary typology provides a framework for understanding the relationship between components and goals. The components of boot camps clearly vary among different facilities. These component differences reflect each individual facility's focus upon specific goals and each facility's ability to achieve these separate goals.

The key to determining overall success or failure of boot camps lies in understanding the differences between them and the effect of these differences upon their goals. Program evaluation should be based upon the true goals. A facility scoring high on the deterrence

and rehabilitation goals but low on the cost/crowding should be evaluated based upon recidivism rates rather than upon ability to reduce prison costs. Finally, the proposed typology leads to an increase in generalizability of evaluative research on boot camp facilities. Future research testing the multiple goal scale will be required to provide empirical evidence of the extent of similarity or dissimilarity between programs. Boot camps may be grouped in a rational manner based on real and measurable similarities, enabling generalizations of the results of evaluative studies of similar facilities.

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