

Research in Review

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Summary and Major Findings of Articles Reviewed in This Issue

Sheldon X. Zhang. 1998. "In Search of Hopeful Glimpses: A Critique of Research Strategies in Current Boot Camp Evaluations." *Crime & Delinquency*, 44(2), 314-334. Page 2

This study argues that current approaches to evaluating the effectiveness of motivational boot camps do not provide an accurate representation of the operations and outcomes of these camps, resulting in a possible underestimation of their impact on inmate behavior. Specific suggestions are offered for more rigorous and revealing designs for the evaluation of these camps.

W. Wesley Johnson, et. alii. 1997. "Getting Tough on Prisoners: Results from the National Corrections Executive Survey, 1995." *Crime & Delinquency*, 43(1), 24-41. Page 4

This study presents the findings of a survey of the attitudes of correctional administrators towards services and amenities available to prison inmates. This survey had been sent to superintendents within Pennsylvania. This article provides an example of how responses to an actual survey sent to DOC officials are translated into published research.

Michael D. Reisig. 1998. "Rates of Disorder in Higher-Custody State Prisons: A Comparative Analysis Of Managerial Practices." *Crime & Delinquency*, 44(2), 229-244. Page 5

This study explores how the management styles of prison administrators influence the behavior of state prison inmates. Prisons that employ less rigid, more open managerial systems are found to experience lower levels of inmate disorder than prisons run in a more traditional, command and control fashion. Implications for prison administrators are discussed.

Angela S. Maitland and Richard D. Sluder. 1998. "Victimization and Youthful Prison Inmates: An Empirical Analysis." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 55-73. Page 6

This study explores the victimization experiences of young adult offenders in a state correctional institution. The findings of this research call into question some of the commonly held assumptions about the experiences of young inmates. This study provides interesting insight into the prison experiences of young inmates.

Thomas E. Hanlon, et. alii. 1998 "The Response of Drug Abuser Parolees to a Combination of Treatment and Intensive Supervision." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 31-44.

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This study follows a sample of severely drug addicted offenders during their first year of parole, as they participate in a program of intensive treatment and monitoring. This research finds that stable employment and ongoing participation in treatment are the most powerful predictors of success in parole for this population.

Jeremy F. Mills, et. alii. 1998. "Measuring Alcohol Abuse and the Incidence of Serious Misconduct in Violent Offenders." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 45-54.

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This study examines the utility of a measure of alcohol dependence for predicting the occurrence of institutional misconduct among violent offenders. The study finds that the predictive power of the Alcohol Dependence Scale is not as great as expected, although it can yield some information about which inmates may be seriously disruptive.

Robin Weeks and Cathy S. Widom. 1998. "Self Reports of Early Childhood Victimization Among Incarcerated Adult Male Felons." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(3), 346-352.

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This study investigates the relationship between childhood victimization and subsequent criminal behavior. It finds that many serious adult offenders have experienced physical and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, as children. Physical abuse was most commonly reported, followed by neglect and sexual abuse.

Michael S. Vaughn and Leo Carroll. 1998. "Separate and Unequal: Prison Versus Free World Medical Care." *Justice Quarterly*, 15(1): 3-40.

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This article examines the provision of health care to prisoners, outlining two major philosophical schools-of-thought on such care. The authors discuss how the courts have ruled on prisoner lawsuits alleging improper medical care. They find that the courts have approached prisoner health care litigation from the perspective of *less eligibility*, where inmates are viewed as having fewer rights to relief than free citizens.

Detailed Reviews

Sheldon X. Zhang. 1998. "In Search of Hopeful Glimpses: A Critique of Research Strategies in Current Boot Camp Evaluations." *Crime & Delinquency*, 44(2), 314-334.

This article presents an interesting review and critique of current efforts at the evaluation of correctional boot camps. The author offers suggestions for improving the research designs used to evaluate boot camps. This article is worth reading for anyone looking for an overview of how such camps have been studied and assessed.

This article notes that most motivational boot camps share the goals of rehabilitation, attitude restructuring, and reduction of prison overcrowding. A recent survey of boot camp managers finds that recidivism reduction and drug education are the most commonly cited goals for boot camps,

with punishment and deterrence being thought of as less important by boot camp administrators.

The article points out that there is little definitive knowledge about the extent to which boot camps achieve their goals. Few evaluations have yielded rigorous, positive evidence of the effectiveness of these camps. Most studies have indicated either no effect or mixed effects. The best evidence that we have to date about the impact of boots camps suggests that they differ little from traditional correctional institutions in changing the institutional or post-release behavior of inmates. Thus, the existing body of boot camp evaluation literature provides corrections officials and other public policy makers with little firm basis for judgement of these camps.

The author argues that this negative or ambiguous body of literature should not serve to undercut the basic concept of a motivational boot camp. Instead, he offers suggestions for improving the design of boot camp evaluations. Briefly, he argues that comparison groups that have typically been used in boot camp evaluations are inadequately constructed, and could lead to an underestimation of boot camp effects. More attention needs to be given by researchers to the creation of these groups.

Second, more attention needs to be given to system-level outcomes, such as the impact of boot camps on the reduction of prison overcrowding. Important evidence of boot camp effectiveness may be concealed by an over-reliance upon individual level outcome measures, such as recidivism. Third, researchers should employ broader measures of individual outcomes. It is not sufficient to look only at recidivism. Rather, researchers should more thoroughly explore the impact of boot camps on participants' employment activity, social readjustment and family relationships. Finally, researchers need to examine how the various programmatic components of boot camps interact with one another to produce differing outcomes. On a related point, researchers should also pay greater attention to boot camp components that are not formally codified in policy and procedure manuals. For example, the attitudes of boot camp officers and treatment staff towards the inmates cannot be fully controlled by policy. These "non-programmatic", informal elements of the boot camp experience can contribute much to the outcomes produced by boot camps.

The author asserts that researchers need to structure their evaluations to provide boot camp administrators with specific conclusions about realistic goals, and effective programmatic combinations and modalities, for boot camps. In addition, researchers should strive to produce a "profile" of the successful boot camp participant, which can be used by corrections officials to target these camps to those inmates most likely to benefit from them. The author concludes that by taking these directions in program evaluation, researchers can produce reliable and valid knowledge that can be better applied to the management of motivational boot camps.

W. Wesley Johnson, et. alii. 1997. "Getting Tough on Prisoners: Results from the National Corrections Executive Survey, 1995." *Crime & Delinquency*, 43(1), 24-41.

This article reports on a survey of top corrections officials that explored attitudes towards punishment and amenities for state prison inmates. This survey was sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in 1995. The author has recently sent a similar survey to the superintendents of our level four SCI's, as a follow-up to his previous work. He sent PRS a copy of this earlier article as a courtesy. This article is included in this issue of *Research in Review* to provide insight into how survey responses of individual corrections officials are translated into published research.

This article discusses the "no-frills" prison movement of the past decade, in contrast to a more lenient correctional pattern that had been established in the 1960's and 1970's. The authors note an increased emphasis upon punishment, retribution and the restriction of inmate privileges. They discuss the political, legal and social context of this shift, noting an increased public demand to get tough on criminals, supported by some degree of relaxation of judicial scrutiny of prison operations. They present examples from various states of recent initiatives to scale back amenities enjoyed by inmates, such as weightlifting, inmate theatrical groups and higher education programs.

The object of this study is to explore the attitudes of correctional administrators towards these amenities, as well as their actual efforts to reduce amenities in their institutions. Superintendents from 823 correctional institutions nationwide were surveyed. Responses were received from 641 (78%) of these superintendents.

This survey indicates that superintendents *are most strongly in favor of reducing or eliminating* the following amenities for inmates: cosmetic surgery/dentistry, condom distribution, pornography, conjugal visits, boxing/martial arts programs, civilian clothing and college education programs. There was relatively little support for reducing or eliminating the following amenities: GED and vocational training programs, libraries and basic sports programs (e.g. intramural baseball).

The superintendents responding to the survey indicated that the following amenities *had actually been cut back at their institutions*: college programs, boxing/martial arts, civilian clothing, conjugal visits, and tobacco use. Thus, there exists a basic correspondence between superintendents' *personal beliefs* about which amenities should be eliminated, and their *official actions* to actually eliminate amenities. Of course, superintendents typically do not have full reign to curb amenities as they see fit, but they do seem to be able to realize their strong preferences in this matter.

This study also found that the superintendents rated incapacitation as the most important goal of a correctional institution, followed by deterrence, rehabilitation and retribution. Their ratings of the desirability of these amenities were then correlated with various demographic variables.

The authors conclude that correctional administrators are heavily influenced by legislative and popular demands for changes in the living conditions and services available to prisoners. They argue that correctional leaders should take a stronger stand in informing political decision makers about which correctional programs are to be considered "frills", and which are to be considered

essential. In sum, this study offers insight into corrections executives' opinions about inmate privileges.

Michael D. Reisig. 1998. "Rates of Disorder in Higher-Custody State Prisons: A Comparative Analysis Of Managerial Practices." *Crime & Delinquency*, 44(2), 229-244.

This article explores the factors that contribute to the maintenance of order and stability within maximum security state correctional institutions. It provides insight into how the attitudes and management philosophies of prison administrators contribute to an atmosphere of order or chaos within such institutions.

The author discusses the various schools-of-thought on the maintenance of safe prison environments. He notes that much of the existing literature focuses upon the "inmate society" as the primary variable contributing to prison disorder. In other words, disorder is commonly thought to be imported into institutions by offenders who are incapable of civil behavior in any environment.

More recently, the focus of research on prison disorder has shifted to the managerial and leadership attitudes and practices of correctional administrators. This newer school-of-thought argues that, while inmate society is an important contributor to prison disorder, poor management practices also seriously undermine efforts to build stable institutions.

The inquiry into prison management practices reveals three models or styles of management: the control model, the responsibility model, and the consensual model. Briefly, the control model emphasizes close oversight by prison managers of all aspects of life within the institution. The responsibility model emphasizes inmate self-governance, where the prison management role is more facilitative than directive. The consensual model is a hybrid of control and responsibility approaches, where prison managers adopt features from both strategies. The author reviews the strengths and weakness of these approaches to prison management.

The author explores rates of disorder within prisons operating under each of these three models. Drawing upon previous empirical research, he hypothesized that prisons operating under the control model will experience lower levels of disorder than prisons operating under either of the other two models. He surveyed 439 corrections employees from eleven maximum security state prisons, receiving 306 replies (70 percent response rate). These surveys collected respondents' subjective assessments of levels of disorder within their institutions. The superintendents of these facilities were also administered a different survey, to assess the prison management style.

This research finds that the above hypothesis is not supported. Prisons operating under the responsibility and consensual models exhibited lower levels of disorder than prison operating under the control model. While the author acknowledges that the characteristics of the sample may have distorted the results, he argues that his findings call into question the common assumption found in practitioner and academic circles that rigid, highly formalized prison management systems will

produce higher levels of order among inmates.

The author concludes that due to rapidly rising numbers of serious offenders within state prisons, as well as increasing demands for punishment and incapacitation of offenders, prison administrators need to re-examine management practices that may no longer be appropriate to a dynamic corrections environment.

This research is well reported and appears to be well constructed. There is some reason for concern about the sampling strategy used by the author; it may not have produced an adequately representative picture of the three models of prison management. This sort of concern attends any use of small, exploratory samples of organizations. Also, it is unclear whether the conclusions drawn from this study can apply to lower security prisons. It would be worthwhile for future research on this topic to explore a more diverse sample of institutions. On the whole, though, this article offers some interesting insight into how prison management styles influence inmate behavior.

Angela S. Maitland and Richard D. Sluder. 1998. "Victimization and Youthful Prison Inmates: An Empirical Analysis." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 55-73.

This article reports on the results of survey of youthful offenders at a state correctional institution. The young offenders were asked about the extent to which they had been victimized by other inmates at the institution. This research adds interesting insight to the literature on prisoner victimization.

The authors note that a variety of factors have contributed to an ongoing problem of inmate on inmate violence and other misconduct within state prisons. These factors include overcrowding, rapid growth of prison systems, longer prison terms, the demise of a traditional "inmate code", and the emergence of "state raised", repeat offenders. They also note that existing research on violence within prisons has produced mixed results, with some studies indicating high levels of violent misconduct such as sexual assault, and other studies indicating relatively low levels. The authors discuss methodological shortcomings of previous studies, which produce conflicting findings.

The authors note that one significant weakness in the existing research is that little attention has been paid to violence by and against young adult offenders. Most of the existing research has studied the traditional, adult inmate. To address this deficit, they gathered data from 111 inmates housed at a medium security correctional facility in the Midwest designed to house inmates between the ages of 17 and 25. The inmates were surveyed about the extent to which they had been victimized by other inmates at that institution. The survey also gathered information about the respondents' demographic variables and measured their impressions of the institutional "climate".

This study found that the most commonly reported forms of victimization included verbal harassment, property theft, and simple physical assault. Less commonly reported forms of victimization included assault with a weapon, extortion and sexual assault. Indeed, sexual assault

was reported by only one respondent. This study did find that most respondents have experienced several forms of victimization, with the typical inmate reporting ten different forms of victimization.

The authors also correlate these reports with respondents' demographic characteristics, as well as with their scores on various personality and attitude measures. For example, white inmates report higher levels of victimization than non-white inmates. Victims were more likely than non-victims to have been on probation more often, and to have poor adjustment within the institution.

The authors conclude that their findings call into question several traditional assumptions about prison violence, such as the prevalence of sexual assault. They call for additional study of the exact nature of victimization experienced by young inmates, as well as of the types of young inmates most likely to become victims of various types of offenses within institutions.

This research is exploratory, and utilizes a limited sample that cannot be generalized beyond the population of the institution from which it is drawn. Further, the instrument seems to have some limitations, such as the small range of victimization experiences asked of the respondents. The study might have been improved by correlating inmate self-reports with institutional records of inmate victimization, as well as with staff perceptions of such victimization. Finally, any study of this type raises questions about the honesty of respondent self-reports of experiences that are embarrassing and painful. These limitations notwithstanding, this article provides insight into the experiences of young adult offenders.

Thomas E. Hanlon, et. alii. 1998 "The Response of Drug Abuser Parolees to a Combination of Treatment and Intensive Supervision." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 31-44.

This study examines the impact on drug abusing parolees of a regimen of intensive treatment and supervision. Success was indicated primarily by arrest rates, relapse activity and employment patterns. This article provides insight into the effectiveness of various strategies for monitoring and treating drug abuse among parolees.

The authors notes that there is a well documented pattern of high re-addiction and recidivism rates among drug addicted parolees. Some studies have found that nearly 90 percent of offenders with substance abuse histories relapse into narcotics use upon release from incarceration. Other studies have indicated that drug addicted offenders have recidivism rates of over 70 percent. Thus, the authors note that substance abuse is one of the most significant impediments to the successful reintegration of offenders into society. It is particularly important, then, to study the effectiveness of various approaches to mitigating the substance abuse problems of this population.

This study examines a program of intensive treatment and supervision of drug addicted parolees in Maryland. These were individuals who were still considered to be addicted upon their release from incarceration, in spite of various treatment services that they had received within prison. The treatment regimen during parole involved weekly counseling sessions, intensive work

with the parolees to develop their social support systems and life skills, and frequent drug testing.

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors contributing to success and failure of 237 severely addicted parolees who participated in the program. Information about successful and unsuccessful program participants was gathered from parole department records and from questionnaires administered to parolees. Failure was defined as rearrest, re-commitment, or parole violation.

This study found that approximately one-half of the sample of 237 parolees experienced some type of criminal failure during their first year of parole. Of those rearrested, most were for drug possession. Over 25 percent were reincarcerated. Seventy percent tested positive for drugs at some time during the year, with the average time to relapse being 3 months from release. Most of the parolees had some sort of employment activity during their first year of parole, although this activity was sporadic for many.

The authors found that stability of employment activity and maintenance of a regular treatment schedule were highly correlated with success during the first year of parole (i.e. no criminal activity during the first year). Successful parolees were twice as likely to be employed as failed parolees. Similarly, successful parolees spent almost twice as much time in treatment as failed parolees. Finally, successful parolees showed less drug use, and longer time to relapse, than failed parolees. Various demographic variables, such as success in school and number of previous convictions, were also associated with parole outcome.

The findings of this study lend support to the conclusion that programs that encourage work and ongoing treatment for drug addicted parolees will contribute to their successful reintegration into society. Other than the possibility of selection bias and intentional distortion of participant self-reports of employment and drug activity, I can identify no major weakness in this study.

Jeremy F. Mills, et. alii. 1998. "Measuring Alcohol Abuse and the Incidence of Serious Misconduct in Violent Offenders." *The Prison Journal*, 78(1), 45-54.

This research studies the relationship between dependence on alcohol and serious behavioral problems of violent offenders in federal custody in Canada. This study demonstrates a relationship between alcohol abuse and impulse control among prison inmates.

The authors (all of whom are corrections officials in Canada) discuss the connection between alcohol abuse and violent behavior among offenders. It is well noted in the literature that criminal deviance, and especially violent deviance, can often be traced to alcohol abuse. Illicit production and consumption of alcohol within the correctional environment has also been closely linked to institutional misconduct. Finally, alcohol abuse is often cited as a precursor, or an aggravator, of drug abuse. Thus, the authors make the case that the study of alcohol abuse can contribute to the understanding of the institutional adjustment of violent offenders.

The authors studied 207 violent offenders within a federal prison in Canada. Information about the inmates' scores on the Alcohol Dependence Scale ADS (routinely administered at intake) was gathered to assess the extent of their alcohol abuse. Information about their institutional adjustment and misconduct history were gathered from institutional records. These two data sets were correlated, using a variety of statistical techniques, to test the hypothesis that the level of self-reported alcohol abuse is positively associated with institutional misconduct.

The authors found that nearly 75 percent of the inmates had either low or no alcohol dependence. While the raw numerical ADS score is not clearly related to institutional misconducts, several items from this scale held some power for predicting misconduct. Most notably, when the inmates were clustered into categories of alcohol dependence, ranging from none to severe, several patterns emerged. Those inmates in the severe category had no associated institutional misconducts, perhaps indicating that they are too severely incapacitated by their addiction to present much of a problem within the institution. Similarly, inmates with low alcohol dependence scores had relatively few disciplinary problems. The most serious behavioral problems were found among those inmates in the moderate to substantial alcohol dependence category.

The authors conclude that, while the Alcohol Dependence Scale may not be as powerful a predictor of institutional misbehavior as commonly indicated in the literature, it can yield some insight into what types of inmates may be more inclined to engage in serious misconduct.

This research relies exclusively on the ADS as a predictor of institutional misconduct, and utilizes a limited sample of inmates. It would be useful to replicate this study with other drug and alcohol dependency measures, such as the Addiction Severity Index (currently used by our RSAT program), using a more diverse sample of inmates. It may be that multiple measures of substance dependence can provide more robust predictions of institutional maladjustment. Despite its limitations, this is an interesting study of the predictive power of behavioral assessment instruments.

Robin Weeks and Cathy Widom. 1998. "Self-Reports of Early Childhood Victimization Among Incarcerated Adult Male Felons." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 13(3), 346-352.

This article examines the extent to which male state prison inmates have experienced physical or sexual abuse or neglect as children. This study provides support for the commonly held notion that many offenders have been abused as children, and that this abuse may be a cause of their subsequent criminal deviance. Important relationships between types of abuse, and types of offending as adults, are discussed.

The authors discuss the extensive body of literature on the relationship between childhood abuse and criminal deviance. Numerous research reports have either studied or presumed a link between child abuse and offending. It is widely assumed that the trauma resulting from such abuse results in psychological or even neurological damage which puts the child at greater risk for self-destructive impulsive behavior as adults. Such behavior can be manifest in substance abuse and

criminal activity. The authors argue that, while the correlation between child abuse and subsequent criminal activity is often taken as a given, the link has not been adequately documented.

To explore the existence and nature of such a link, the authors studied a sample of 301 male felons at a medium security adult correctional facility in New York state. The vast majority of the inmates in this sample had been incarcerated for violent and/or sexual offenses. The inmates were asked to report about their experiences with abuse and neglect as children. Information about their criminal histories was gathered from state records.

This study found that 68 percent of the inmates in the sample had been victims of some type of child abuse or neglect, most before the age of twelve. Most of this involved physical, rather than sexual, abuse. This study also found that 35 percent of the inmates reported experiencing "severe" physical abuse as young children. Approximately 14 percent of the inmates reported experiencing childhood sexual abuse.

Contrary to the findings of many previous studies, this study found that violent and non-violent offenders reported similar levels of childhood physical abuse. Sex offenders were twice as likely as non-sex offenders to have been sexually abused as children. Finally, 20 percent of violent offenders reported childhood neglect, compared with only 6 percent of non-violent offenders.

The authors conclude that, while a history of child abuse and neglect does not inevitably lead to criminal deviance, it is a powerful predictor of serious offending. They note that more needs to be learned about how childhood victimization interacts with other life experiences to produce criminal deviance. Finally, a better understanding of the childhood victimization experiences of adult offenders can contribute to the refinement of treatment programs for them.

This appears to be a well designed and reported piece of research. Its major limitation - the reliance upon offender self-reports of painful and embarrassing experiences which may be intentionally or unwittingly distorted in recall - is shared by most studies of its kind. In sum, this study provides interesting insight into childhood experiences which may be major contributors to adult criminal deviance.

Michael S. Vaughn and Leo Carroll. 1998. "Separate and Unequal: Prison Versus Free World Medical Care." *Justice Quarterly*, 15(1): 3-40.

This article presents a theoretical and legal exploration of the state of health care for prison inmates. The authors examine competing philosophical positions on the provision of medical care to inmates, and assess how the courts have used these positions to guide their rulings on health care related inmate lawsuits against prisons.

The authors note that there are two primary moral-philosophical approaches to understanding the provision medical and health services to inmates. The *principle of equivalence* treats medical

care as a universal good that should be available to all members of society, regardless of their status as free or incarcerated citizens. Thus, inmates are entitled to the same standard of care that they would receive on the outside. They note that this position is an extension of the Hippocratic Oath, and has been endorsed by most major professional medical societies, such as the American Medical Association. They also presume that this position would be adopted by most health care providers.

The *principle of less eligibility* stands in contrast to the principle of equivalence. The principle of less eligibility lies at the core of the contemporary movement to "get tough on criminals" and treats prisons as instruments of punishment and deterrence. Prisons must offer harsh conditions to inmates, and in most cases must offer living standards which are below the lowest standard available to free individuals in society. Only in this way will prisons be thought of by potential criminals as undesirable places to be avoided at all costs. Under the principle of less eligibility, inmates are entitled only to that medical care which is necessary for the maintenance of life and basic physiological functioning. Thus, inmate medical care need not equal that found in free society.

Having outlined the two common philosophical approaches to inmate medical care, the authors then examine how the courts have adopted these approaches. They do this primarily through an examination of court rulings on lawsuits alleging poor medical care, filed by inmates against prisons under Section 1983 of 42 United States Code. They conclude from their review of twenty years of prisoner litigation that the courts have tended towards the principle of less eligibility in their disposition of prisoner medical lawsuits. They find that the courts are much more inclined to provide relief to free citizens who file medical lawsuits, than to prisoners filing them.

In sum, while the authors draw no conclusions about the overall quality of health care provided to inmates, they argue that the courts have set the bar higher for prisoners claiming malpractice or inadequate treatment by prison health care providers. While the authors do not discuss any specific implications of their study for Pennsylvania, this article does provide an interesting review of the legal issues surrounding inmate health care.