



Criminological Highlights

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Criminological Highlights is designed to provide an accessible look at some of the more interesting criminological research that is currently being published. There are six issues in each volume. Copies of the original articles can be obtained (at cost) from the Centre of Criminology Information Service and Library. Please contact Tom Finlay or Andrea Shier.

Contents: "Headlines and Conclusions" for each of the eight articles. Short summaries of each of the eight articles.

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This issue of *Criminological Highlights* addresses the following questions:

1. Is it good economics to have youth custody facilities managed by the private sector?
2. Did harsh mandatory minimum sentences reduce crime in Florida?
3. What are the conditions that enable mafia organizations to establish themselves in new territories?
4. Do police crackdowns on crime reduce residents' fears of being victimized?
5. Does it matter where former offenders live?
6. Why are black Americans over-represented in drug arrests?
7. Does being caught convince youths that crime doesn't pay?
8. Why has the shine worn off of boot camps?

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Pay now, or pay later: The immediate savings achieved from private management of juvenile correctional facilities are shown to be offset, in the long-term, by the additional correctional costs of increased recidivism.

Youth facilities run by for-profit companies were less expensive than state, county, or non-profit facilities. However, the additional correctional costs that would derive from higher recidivism rates would suggest that, in the long term, there would be no real savings to the state from using private for-profit facilities. Indeed, the fact that other costs (social as well as prosecutorial) were not included in the equation would suggest that nobody but the for-profit company benefited from for-profit management of youth facilities in Florida.

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The State of Florida was wrong when, in 2004, it announced that a new law that imposed mandatory minimum sentences for certain gun crimes had been directly responsible for a 28% reduction in violent gun crime rates.

In this case, it is almost certain that the imposition of harsh sentences for crimes carried out with firearms had no impact on crime rates. Nevertheless, Florida is being held out as another example of how ‘tough’ criminal justice policies can reduce gun crimes. As has been shown in studies of other cities – New York, Boston, and Richmond, Virginia (*Criminological Highlights*, 7(5)#2, 7(6)#1) – it is easy to make claims of effectiveness when crime is already decreasing. It is much harder to develop and implement policies that actually have an impact on crime.

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Those interested in keeping a mafia-type organization from successfully establishing itself in their communities might do better by focusing more on the “demand” for a mafia than on the “supply” of potential mafia leaders.

“Demand for criminal protection seems to be the key factor that links cases of successful transplantation” (p. 438) of mafias. Where “the state failed to create a system to adjudicate disputes quickly and effectively, thereby leaving significant sectors of the emerging market economy unprotected” there was a vacuum that could effectively be filled by a mafia. “It is the state’s failure to offer effective legal protection (and to ensure the existence of avenues for legitimate employment) that sets in motion a chain of events that might give rise to a new mafia” (p. 440).

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Residents of neighbourhoods in which the police have cracked down on gangs do not appear to experience lower levels of fear of being victimized.

The results of the analysis of the program “failed to reveal any positive effects... in terms of citizens’ perceptions of the threats confronting their neighbourhoods” (p. 84). Indeed, the data suggest exactly the opposite, with citizens’ predictions that they were likely to be victims of violent crime increasing. Given the evidence that suggests that such police actions are unlikely to have long term impacts (See *Criminological Highlights*, 7(6)#1, 7(5)#2), it would appear that caution should be exercised in assuming that no harm can come from such programs.

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Offenders who return to disadvantaged neighbourhoods are more likely to re-offend than are those who return to less disadvantaged neighbourhoods, even when the characteristics of the offenders are held constant.

Policy approaches to recidivism typically focus solely on changes that might be made to offenders while they are under the control of correctional authorities. These data suggest that for those convicted of crimes, the neighbourhood in which they subsequently reside is also important. Those offenders who end up living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are considerably more likely to re-offend. "Given the challenges of prisoner re-entry, particularly in a 'get tough on crime' era, former prisoners are even more reliant than ever on community services and personal networks not just to comply with the terms of their supervision but also to curb recidivism" (p. 189). Investing in poor communities, then, can serve to reduce re-offending by those returning to these neighbourhoods.

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A study of drug enforcement in Seattle, Washington, demonstrates that black Americans are over-represented in drug arrests because the local police focus their drug-enforcement efforts on black users of crack cocaine.

The choice of which drugs the police should target in their enforcement efforts inevitably determines which groups are likely to be arrested for drug offences. The focus on crack is not explicable solely in terms of where drug transactions take place or the frequency with which transactions take place. "It appears that both the focus on crack and the over-representation of Blacks... among those arrested for crack and other drugs reflect a racialized conception of 'the drug problem'... It appears that law enforcement practices in Seattle reflect a widespread cultural script about who and what constitutes the drug problem" (p. 436).

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Being arrested does not increase youths' perceptions that they will be caught in the future.

"The finding that arrests do not affect certainty perceptions contradicts one of the central tenets of deterrence theory. Punished individuals should be less apt to recidivate at least partly because they increase their estimate of the certainty of punishment" (p. 20). This does not occur, at least with people of this age and when asking about ordinary offences. It would appear that being apprehended does not cause a youth to 'learn the lesson' that 'crime does not pay.'

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Boot camps were once seen as being effective largely because they appealed to political leaders' views of what they considered to be 'common sense.' The fact that boot camps have begun to fall into disrepute demonstrates that occasionally systematic knowledge can trump incorrect 'common sense.'

Although boot camps varied considerably from place to place, there were overall similarities in this form of correctional program. Hence, researchers could evaluate a "boot camp" and place these findings in a larger research context of other studies that had found that boot camps didn't work. As time went on, it became more and more clear that the "boot camp" was no more effective than any other form of prison. At some point, in light of the accumulated evidence, the "common sense" approach to corrections that justified boot camps began to have as much credibility as the "common sense" practice a few centuries ago of bleeding sick people to rid them of disease.

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Pay now, or pay later: The immediate savings achieved from private management of juvenile correctional facilities are shown to be offset, in the long-term, by the additional correctional costs of increased recidivism.

Privately operated prisons in the U.S. house approximately 6.5% of adult prisoners and about 30% of juveniles who are in residential placements. In the State of Florida, youth facilities are publicly run either by the state or the county, and private facilities are managed either by for-profit or non-profit organizations. Economic theory would predict that private for-profit organizations “should operate efficiently due to the profit motive, but in the absence of explicit linkages between revenues and recidivism outcomes, they might make decisions designed to increase profits at the expense of increased recidivism” (p. 554). It has also been argued that “private non-profit operators ought to have the most success at decreasing recidivism due to their organizational and programmatic flexibility, their mission focus, their use of volunteers, and their freedom from political and profit constraints” (p. 554).

This study focuses on youths 17 years or younger who had been sentenced to moderately or highly restrictive facilities in Florida (111 facilities in all). They were followed for a year after being released. Because youths assigned to correctional facilities differ on various dimensions, it was necessary to attempt to control for other factors that could account for effects on costs and recidivism of different management structures. Statistical controls included various characteristics of the youth (e.g., gender, race, age at first offence, length of stay in the facility, offence, criminal history), the youth's own neighbourhood (e.g., crime rate, unemployment, percent incarcerated), the “restrictiveness level” of the facility, and the judicial circuit in which the youth had been adjudicated. Recidivism was defined in two ways: after being released, the youth either had been charged or had been adjudicated delinquent.

The one-year follow-up data suggested that, controlling for these various factors, youths assigned to for-profit facilities were about 5-6% more likely

to be adjudicated delinquent after they were released, and about 6-8% more likely to be charged than were youths assigned to county, state, or private non-profit facilities. These other three management arrangements did not differ substantially in their recidivism rates. These results are similar to others that have been reported (See *Criminological Highlights* 7(3)#3, 5(2)#1, 2(5)#2).

However, there were substantial immediate cost savings to the state by placing youths in the for-profit facilities. Taking into account the different types of youths sent to the various types of facilities, the cost of housing a youth in the for-profit facilities was estimated to be lower than the costs of state, county or private non-profit facilities. However, the cost savings come with a price. “Using a series of conservative assumptions concerning the future impact of the estimated differences in recidivism rates across management types, [the] cost-benefit analysis implies that the short-run savings offered by for-profit facilities over non-profit facilities are reversed in the long run due to

increased recidivism rates” (p. 582). The county operated facilities which were cheaper to run than state facilities also showed a long-term cost savings over the for-profit facilities.

Conclusion. Youth facilities run by for-profit companies were less expensive than state, county, or non-profit facilities. However, the additional correctional costs that would derive from higher recidivism rates would suggest that, in the long term, there would be no real savings to the state from using private for-profit facilities. Indeed, the fact that other costs (social as well as prosecutorial) were not included in the equation would suggest that nobody but the for-profit company benefited from for-profit management of youth facilities in Florida.

Reference: Reference: Bayer, Patrick and Pozen, David E. (2005) The Effectiveness of Juvenile Correctional Facilities: Public Versus Private Management. *Journal of Law and Economics*, XLVIII, 549-589.

The State of Florida was wrong when, in 2004, it announced that a new law that imposed mandatory minimum sentences for certain gun crimes had been directly responsible for a 28% reduction in violent gun crime rates.

During the 1990s, serious crime in most parts of the United States decreased. When crime rates are declining, politicians are often quick to claim that the policies they implemented are responsible for the decrease. Florida, in 1999, brought in a law that required minimum sentences of 10 years, 20 years, or life in prison for certain gun crimes. Speaking about the effects of this law in his testimony before a Canadian House of Commons Committee in November 2005, a prosecutor from the State of Florida asserted that “In the 10-20-Life period, violent crime is down 30%... fewer people were robbed... fewer people were killed... I’m a prosecutor. I’m in the courtroom every day. These laws are good.” Given what is known about the lack of impact of mandatory minimum sentences on crime elsewhere (e.g., *Criminological Highlights*, 6(2)#1, 5(2)#2,3(4)#6,7(3)#6), this assertion is surprising. This study examines the hypothesis that the change in penalty structure in Florida was responsible for a reduction in crime.

Crime generally, and violent crime in particular, had been decreasing in Florida since about 1990. Indeed, the *rate* of decrease appeared to be somewhat higher *before* the change in the law as compared to after. Indeed, sophisticated statistical analyses demonstrated, contrary to the prosecutor’s claims, that there was no real evidence of a decrease associated with the timing of the change in the law. These analyses also demonstrated that results are “highly sensitive to when you start calculating the percent change. and this is especially true in Florida’s case because some percent change calculations used by the state of Florida to assess [the] 10-20-Life [minimum sentence law] use data from the years before the passage of the law. Because total crime and homicides were high in these time periods, the use of data from these years as a base for calculating change is likely to inflate the apparent impact of [the law]” (p. 792).

However, there is a more important general point to be made: “Simple before/after comparisons cannot tell the public definitively whether the law was the cause of the change in crime. Many other factors that were occurring at the same time could also have led to changes in crime rates” (p. 793). These issues underscore the problems associated with making sweeping claims about a law’s effects in the absence of rigorous analyses that are sensitive to the possibility that other factors may be responsible for a drop in crime

Conclusion. In this case, it is almost certain that the imposition of harsh sentences for crimes carried out with firearms had no impact on crime rates. Nevertheless, Florida is being held out as another example of how ‘tough’ criminal justice policies can reduce gun crimes. As has been shown in studies of other cities – New York, Boston, and Richmond, Virginia (*Criminological Highlights*, 7(5)#2,

7(6)#1) – it is easy to make claims of effectiveness when crime is already decreasing. It is much harder to develop and implement policies that actually have an impact on crime.

Reference: Piquero, Alex R. (2005). Reliable Information and Rational Policy Decisions: Does Gun Research Fit the Bill? *Criminology and Public Policy*, 4(4), 779-798.

Those interested in keeping a mafia-type organization from successfully establishing itself in their communities might do better by focusing more on the “demand” for a mafia than on the “supply” of potential mafia leaders.

Until the early 1990s, the dominant theory explaining the success of mafia-type organizations in various parts of the world was that they were the product of social and economic backwardness and chaos. More recently it has been shown that “mafias emerge in modernizing societies that are undergoing economic expansion but lack a legal structure that reliably protects property rights and settles business disputes” (p. 412). Mafias “are groups specializing in providing criminal protection to both the underworld and the ‘upper world,’ and in several ways their actions parallel state action” (p. 412). In that sense, they can be seen as providing genuine services such as protection from extortion by others, elimination of competitors, protection against theft, etc. Why, then, are mafias successful in setting up organizations in new territories in some instances, and unsuccessful in others? This paper suggests that “state failures at the time of significant changes in the economy can open up opportunities for governance-type activities on the part of the mafia, including protection, regulation, dispute resolution, and taxation” (p. 414).

This paper examines attempts by an Italian mafia ‘family’ that has been located in southern Calabria, Italy since the late 19th century to establish mafias in two locations in northern Italy. One of these attempts was successful, the other not. The successful attempt at transplantation occurred in a town in which the demographic composition had changed dramatically, with the influx of a substantial number of people having been born outside of the province. As a consequence of this population increase, a demand for new housing emerged, which resulted in a construction boom. There were two important consequences of a sudden expansion of the construction business: (1) A shortage of skilled workers (particularly in the construction industry) led to competition for skilled immigrant workers who, in various ways, were hired illegally. (2) Without legitimate sources of protection in the case of disputes “a demand... emerged for an alternative, non-state source of protection” (p. 427). The existing institutions of civil society were not adequate to keep the mafia from becoming entrenched. By protecting employers and ensuring work for migrants, support for the

establishment of a local mafia was ensured.

The unsuccessful attempt by members of the Calabria-based mafia occurred in a city that had also expanded substantially, but where most of the expansion had been the result of movement of people from neighbouring areas. The wealth of the city came largely from creating an export market of goods (e.g., furniture, shoes) and services requiring high levels of skill. In the early 1970s, when some prominent people received threats and demands for money, and there were large scale thefts of truckloads of furniture, the local mafia leaders suggested that they could provide protection from such occurrences. However, the mafia were unable to establish themselves as protection providers because state and civil structures were seen as being capable of dealing with the problem. In effect, there was no demand for mafia services. Local civil society, characterized by strong interpersonal trust among citizens, effective state protection, and the existence of legitimate employment opportunities was quick to rally against outside

criminal organizations. In the end these features did not create ‘space’ for a mafia to move in: new immigrants found legal employment, and “employers would not benefit from the creation of a cartel... since they were mainly exporting their goods to diverse markets in northern Europe and the U.S.” (p. 438).

Conclusion. “Demand for criminal protection seems to be the key factor that links cases of successful transplantation” (p. 438) of mafias. Where “the state failed to create a system to adjudicate disputes quickly and effectively, thereby leaving significant sectors of the emerging market economy unprotected” there was a vacuum that could effectively be filled by a mafia. “It is the state’s failure to offer effective legal protection (and to ensure the existence of avenues for legitimate employment) that sets in motion a chain of events that might give rise to a new mafia” (p. 440).

Reference: Varese, Federico (2006). How Mafias Migrate: The Case of the ‘Ndrangheta in Northern Italy. *Law & Society Review*, 40 (2), 411-444.

Residents of neighbourhoods in which the police have cracked down on gangs do not appear to experience lower levels of fear of being victimized.

The American “Weed and Seed” programs appear to be based on the notion that by encouraging and enabling the police to remove offenders from neighbourhood streets (the ‘weed’ phase), residents will be able to take more control of their communities. Then, by providing various programs (the ‘seed’ phase), communities will eventually become safe without the need of special police interventions. Aside from the question of whether the programs have direct effects on reducing crime, possible unintended consequences of such programs have not been examined.

This study examined the impact on the perception of safety of a “weed and seed” program in one neighbourhood in Santa Ana, California. Interviews with residents were carried out 1 or 2 years prior to, and 1 or 2 years after, a large police operation (in March 2000) in which scores of people were arrested and charged with offences. After the police sweep, some recreation programs and a community cleanup program were implemented, though little seems to be known about how many people from the community were involved with, or benefited from, these programs.

In the ‘experimental’ area in which the police action took place, the police sweep seemed to have *increased* the level of concern in the community about gangs. Prior to the sweep, 5.9% of the residents had concerns about street gangs. In the years after the sweep, this increased to 21.1% having these concerns. In contrast, in ‘control’ neighbourhoods in Santa Ana (in which there were no special police activities) complaints about gangs were fairly constant (11.7% of those interviewed in the first period and

11.4% in the second period expressed concerns). In addition, people in the ‘experimental’ neighbourhood were no more likely to change their views about the prevalence of crime and disorder problems than were people in the ‘control’ neighbourhoods.

Residents of Santa Ana were also asked whether they feared being a victim of crime. Prior to the arrest sweep, 9% of those in the ‘experimental’ neighbourhood thought that they were likely to be a victim of crime. After the sweep, this proportion doubled (18.3%). In contrast, in other Santa Ana neighbourhoods, the perceived likelihood of victimization went down slightly.

Conclusion. The results of the analysis of the program “failed to reveal any positive effects... in terms of citizens’ perceptions of the threats confronting their neighbourhoods” (p. 84). Indeed, the data suggest exactly the opposite, with citizens’ predictions that they were likely to be victims of violent crime increasing. Given the evidence that suggests that such police actions are unlikely to have long term impacts (See *Criminological Highlights*,

7(6)#1, 7(5)#2), it would appear that caution should be exercised in assuming that no harm can come from such programs.

Reference: Bridenball, Blaine and Paul Jesilow. (2005) Weeding Criminals or Planting Fear: An Evaluation of a Weed and Seed Project. *Criminal Justice Review*, 30(1), 64-89.

Offenders who return to disadvantaged neighbourhoods are more likely to re-offend than are those who return to less disadvantaged neighbourhoods, even when the characteristics of the offenders are held constant.

Studies that focus on recidivism risk typically focus on individual characteristics of offenders. These studies have found, for example, that those who have large numbers of prior offences, substance abuse problems, or little education are more likely to re-offend than those without these characteristics. “Notably absent from recidivism studies are measures reflecting the neighbourhood contexts in which former prisoners live” (p. 166). Since the characteristics of neighbourhoods are known to influence the likelihood that an individual will offend – above and beyond the characteristics of that individual

This study looks at 5002 offenders who were receiving community supervision in the Portland, Oregon area. Some were on probation, but others had been released from prison. Using arrests within a 12-month period as the measure of recidivism, it was found that the usual set of individual characteristics – e.g., being male, Black or Native American, being released from prison (as opposed to simply serving time on probation), being a property or drug offender, and having larger numbers of prior arrests – increased the likelihood of re-offending.

The major contribution of this paper, however, was that the researchers obtained measures of economic disadvantage of the (first) neighbourhood in which an offender lived after being convicted and released into the community. An index of neighbourhood disadvantage was created for each census tract using four measures: (i) the proportion of people living on public assistance, (ii) the proportion living below the poverty level, (iii) the proportion unemployed, and (iv) the median income. Above and beyond characteristics

of the individual offenders, this “economic disadvantage” measure of the community in which the offender subsequently lived proved to be a predictor of recidivism: those offenders who lived in disadvantaged communities were more likely to recidivate. The probability of being re-arrested for an average offender living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods was .59. For an average offender returning to an average community, the recidivism rate dropped to .50. Average offenders returning to the most advantaged neighbourhoods had a probability of re-arrest during the first year of only .42.

Conclusion. Policy approaches to recidivism typically focus solely on changes that might be made to offenders while they are under the control of correctional authorities. These data suggest that for those convicted of crimes, the neighbourhood in which they subsequently reside is also important. Those offenders who end up living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are considerably more likely to re-offend. “Given the challenges of prisoner re-

entry, particularly in a ‘get tough on crime’ era, former prisoners are even more reliant than ever on community services and personal networks not just to comply with the terms of their supervision but also to curb recidivism” (p. 189). Investing in poor communities, then, can serve to reduce re-offending by those returning to these neighbourhoods.

Reference: Kubrin, Charis E. and Eric A. Stewart. (2006) Predicting Who Reoffends: The Neglected Role of Neighbourhood Context in Recidivism Studies. *Criminology*, 44(1), 165-197.

A study of drug enforcement in Seattle, Washington, demonstrates that black Americans are over-represented in drug arrests because the local police focus their drug-enforcement efforts on black users of crack cocaine.

The over-representation of black Americans among those arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for drug offences is well established. The difference between the arrest rates for white and black Americans changed dramatically between 1980 and 2000. In 1980, the arrest rates were approximately 650 and 350 per 100,000 population for Blacks and Whites, respectively. By the end of the century these had increased to 2907 and 463 per 100,000 population for Blacks and Whites, respectively. *Why* black Americans are (increasingly) over-represented is, however, less clear.

This paper explores various explanations for the over-representation of black Americans among those arrested for drug offences in Seattle, Washington. The explanations that have been offered include disproportionate drug use, differential visibility of drug transactions (e.g., open air vs. indoor), the disproportionate enforcement focus on certain drugs (e.g., crack cocaine), and a special focus on black crack users. Using a combination of systematic observations of drug transactions on the street, drug treatment records, interviews with drug users, and arrest records, the paper examines each of these explanations.

Drug-use data suggested that in Seattle, Blacks are over-represented as users of crack cocaine, whereas Whites are over-represented as users of methamphetamine. Although black residents were disproportionately likely to be users of crack cocaine, they were even more likely to be arrested for this drug than their drug-use rate would predict. One reason for this was that almost 50% of all simple drug-possession arrests were for crack cocaine. Two-thirds of all "buy-bust operations" were focused on crack cocaine. Black residents constituted

63% of those arrested for crack cocaine, but only 22% of those arrested for any other drug. (Blacks constitute 8% of the Seattle population). Looking at estimates of the number of outdoor drug transactions for four serious drugs (methamphetamine, crack, powder cocaine, and heroin), it appeared that crack cocaine accounted for approximately a third of the transactions, but 75% of the arrests. "Law enforcement's overwhelming focus on crack does not appear to be a function of the frequency with which crack is exchanged..." (p. 432). Nor does it appear to be that those involved in the use or sale of these drugs are more likely to be involved with violence or guns. In addition, these arrests on the street involved only small amounts of drugs and money. Measured as the amount of money or drugs apprehended per officer-hour spent, these were very inefficient police activities when compared to "search warrant arrests" (p. 434). By focusing on outdoor drug activities and on crack cocaine, police inevitably end up focusing on black residents. In addition, it appeared that in two neighbourhoods in which drug transactions were observed by the researchers, Blacks

were more likely to be arrested than their involvement in drug transactions would suggest. The main determinant of the over-representation of black residents, however, was the focus on crack cocaine, not the location of the arrests.

Conclusion. The choice of which drugs the police should target in their enforcement efforts inevitably determines which groups are likely to be arrested for drug offences. The focus on crack is not explicable solely in terms of where drug transactions take place or the frequency with which transactions take place. "It appears that both the focus on crack and the over-representation of Blacks... among those arrested for crack and other drugs reflect a racialized conception of 'the drug problem'... It appears that law enforcement practices in Seattle reflect a widespread cultural script about who and what constitutes the drug problem" (p. 436).

Reference: Beckett, Katherine, Kris Nyrop, Lori Pfingst, and Melissa Bowen. Drug use, Drug Possession Arrests, and the Question of Race: Lessons from Seattle. *Social Problems*, 52 (3), 419-441.

Being arrested does not increase youths' perceptions that they will be caught in the future.

Deterrence theory assumes that in considering whether to commit an offence, people estimate their likelihood of being apprehended and the expected punishment they would receive if this occurs. But how do people know what their likelihood of being apprehended is? One might assume that to some extent it would depend on their own personal experiences. This study examines the impact of being arrested on youths' estimates of whether they would be arrested by the police if they chose to offend.

The objective certainty of being apprehended for offending is likely to be impossible for potential offenders to estimate. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to assume that if they were to be apprehended, offenders would be likely to modify their perception of the likelihood that they would be apprehended in the future.

This study examines data from a panel study of American young people who were interviewed when they were 17-23 years old and again four years later. When first interviewed, they were asked to estimate the likelihood that they would be arrested (a) if they attacked someone, and (b) if they stole something worth more than \$50. Four years later they were asked the same questions. The measure of interest was, essentially, the change in certainty. Respondents were also, at each point in time, asked to report any offences they had committed during the year prior to the interview. They were also asked to indicate the number of close friends whom they believed had offended. In the second interview, they were also asked if they had been arrested since the previous interview.

The main results are simple to summarize: the number of times the respondent was arrested between the two interviews was unrelated to the respondent's estimate of the change in the perceived certainty of apprehension. This was true for both theft and violence-related offences. In other words, being arrested did not change a person's view of the likelihood of arrest in the future. Furthermore, this lack of effect was found both for those with relatively high rates of offending prior to the first interview and those with relatively low rates of offending. The analyses included the young person's self-reported offending as a control. Those who reported a high rate of offending were *less* likely to think that they would be apprehended in the future. The explanation for this finding is simple: successful punishment avoidance appears to reduce perceived certainty of apprehension. But being apprehended does not affect one's perceived likelihood of being caught. Perhaps young people figure that they have learned from their mistakes and any "deterrent" impact is counteracted by the belief that they now know better what not to do.

Conclusion. "The finding that arrests do not affect certainty perceptions contradicts one of the central tenets of deterrence theory. Punished individuals should be less apt to recidivate at least partly because they increase their estimate of the certainty of punishment" (p. 20). This does not occur, at least with people of this age and when asking about ordinary offences. It would appear that being apprehended does not cause a youth to 'learn the lesson' that 'crime does not pay.'

Reference: Pogarsky, Greg, KiDeuk Kim, and Ray Paternoster (2005). Perceptual Change in the National Youth Survey: Lessons for Deterrence Theory and Offender Decision-Making. *Justice Quarterly*, 22 (1), 1-29.

Boot camps were once seen as being effective largely because they appealed to political leaders' views of what they considered to be 'common sense.' The fact that boot camps have begun to fall into disrepute demonstrates that occasionally systematic knowledge can trump incorrect 'common sense.'

In various parts of the world, boot camps were seen by politicians as a useful solution to the problem of offending by young males. Ontario, for example, opened its own boot camp in the late 1990s (as part of the then government's 'common sense revolution'—see *Criminological Highlights* 4(1)#1). In the United States, boot camps were seen as a way of changing offenders by way of military discipline “that would not be mistaken for lenient, bleeding-heart corrections” (p. 57). However, “corrections is a field in which quackery is pervasive” (p. 55; see also *Criminological Highlights* 6(2)#4) and the early love affair with boot camps demonstrates that common sense is sometimes more persuasive than knowledge. Part of the attraction of boot camps was they used a language that “resonated with the prevailing political climate” (p. 58). Hence, there was no need to look at evidence of whether such regimes were effective: “common sense” told their advocates that “the discipline of military experience would transform the immature and wayward into mature and contributing citizens” (p. 58)

In the early days of infatuation with boot camps, there were, of course, no data directly on the question of their effectiveness. But the first evaluations suggesting that they were not effective were met with scepticism from the boot camp advocates. For example, a spokesman for the Governor of Georgia, when confronted with studies showing the ineffectiveness of boot camps said that “We don't care what the study thinks.” It is clear that what the study “thought” (or showed) was less important than the data-free thoughts of an elected official. In effect, what was said is that intuitions and ideology, in corrections, should trump systematic information.

Why, then, are boot camps falling out of favour after (only) 20 years? It would seem that part of the problem is that “boot camps are portrayed as places where youths are humiliated

and potentially abused; as places where adult bullies are given unfettered power over vulnerable charges...” (p.65). This may not have been as attractive to the public as some had thought. “But the most devastating blow to the boot camp movement has come from another source: evidence-based corrections.” Over time, the accumulated evidence (e.g., see *Criminological Highlights* 7(5)#7; 3(4)#3, 2(4)#1) became more and more difficult to ignore: boot camps were consistently shown to be no more effective than traditional correctional regimes. And the evidence was hard to ignore, given how consistent it was.

Conclusion. Although boot camps varied considerably from place to place, there were overall similarities in this form of correctional program. Hence, researchers could evaluate a “boot camp” and place these findings in a

larger research context of other studies that had found that boot camps didn't work. As time went on, it became more and more clear that the “boot camp” was no more effective than any other form of prison. At some point, in light of the accumulated evidence, the “common sense” approach to corrections that justified boot camps began to have as much credibility as the “common sense” practice a few centuries ago of bleeding sick people to rid them of disease.

Reference: Cullen, Francis T., Kristie R. Blevins, Jennifer S. Trager, and Paul Gendreau (2005). The Rise and Fall of Boot Camps: A Case Study in Common-Sense Corrections. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 40 (3/4), 53-70.