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GLUECK METHOD OF PAROLE PREDICTION APPLIED TO 1,861 CASES OF BURGLARS*

Michael Hakeem

Drs. Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck have suggested that their method of parole prediction should be applied to a new sample of cases. The writer of this article has carried out that suggestion, and this is a report of his findings. Mr. Hakeem, a sociologist in the Illinois Division of the Criminologist, is assigned to the Pontiac Branch of the Illinois State Penitentiary.—EDITOR.

Introduction

This is a report on the application of the Glueck method of parole prediction to 1861 cases of white adult burglars. Research in parole prediction, probation prediction, and prediction of criminality has made considerable progress since Burgess¹ effected Hart's² suggestion of constructing a prognostic device which would foretell a subject's chances for making a successful parole adjustment. A general discussion of the prediction of criminality and of the technical aspects of the statistical procedures utilized cannot be presented here.³ Lack of space prohibits also a comparative appraisal of the Glueck, Burgess, Monachesi, Vold, and other techniques of prediction.⁴ In general, parole prediction can prove to be a realistic, practical, and fruitful approach to the problem of the determination of eligibility for parole and to related problems.

The Gluecks have encouraged repetition of their procedure of constructing prediction tables in the following statement: "It will be valuable to test the extent of reliability of such tables by constructing them on the basis of another sample of

* This is a condensation of a report submitted to the Graduate School of The Ohio State University for advanced credit in off-campus research. The writer acknowledges his indebtedness for the advice of Prof. Walter C. Reckless and for the help of John F. Schmidt who made some of the statistical computations.

¹ Ernest W. Burgess, "Factors Determining Success or Failure on Parole," in Andrew A. Bruce and others, *The Workings of the Indeterminate-Sentence Law and the Parole System in Illinois*, Springfield, Ill., 1928, pp. 205-234.

² Hornell Hart, "Predicting Parole Success," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 14:405-413 (November, 1923).

³ The following material should be consulted: Robert M. Allen, "A Review of Parole Prediction Literature," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 32:548-554 (January-February, 1942); William F. Lanne, "Parole Prediction as Science," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 26:377-409 (September, 1935); Elio D. Monachesi, "An Evaluation of Recent Major Efforts at Prediction," *American Sociological Review*, 6:478-486 (August, 1941). The most comprehensive bibliography available on prediction of criminality is the following: Michael Hakeem, "Prediction of Criminality," shortly to be published.

⁴ See Jerome Michael and Mortimer J. Adler, *Crime, Law and Social Science*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., New York, 1933, pp. 193-210 for a succinct comparison of the Glueck, Burgess, and other methods of parole prediction. For a very interesting and able application of both the Glueck and Burgess methods and a comparison of the results obtained by the use of each method see George B. Vold, *Prediction Methods and Parole*, The Sociological Press, Hanover, N. H., 1931.

offenders and comparing the results with those obtained herein."⁵ However, the purpose of this study is not to compare its results with those obtained by the Gluecks, except incidentally. A detailed and valid comparison would be impossible mainly because of differences in the definition of factors, differences in the period of time allowed to elapse before judgment was made in regard to the successful or unsuccessful outcome of the subject (from the viewpoint of desistance from, or continuation of, criminal behavior), and differences in the reliability of the data. Rather, the study is merely an attempt to apply the Glueck method to a different group of subjects from that used by the originators of that method.

Application of the Glueck Method

The Glueck method of parole prediction is completely set forth in an exhaustive study of the pre-institutional, institutional, and post-institutional lives of five hundred men paroled from the Massachusetts Reformatory.⁶ Methodologically, the present research follows the Glueck technique rather faithfully.⁷ Therefore, a rehearsal of the procedures followed in this study presents at the same time a description of the procedures followed by the Gluecks.

The present research differs in one respect from almost all other studies on parole prediction. The difference lies in the fact that in this study the cases dealt with are homogeneous in regard to offense. The sample used is restricted to subjects who had been committed to the penitentiary for the crime of burglary (including attempted burglary). Thus the offense is held constant.⁸

Success or failure on parole was defined in exactly the same manner as it was defined by Burgess in his prediction study.⁹

⁵ Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck, *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1930, p. 286.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapters XVI, XVII, and XVIII. The Gluecks presented their prediction method in the following article also: "Predictability in the Administration of Criminal Justice," *Harvard Law Review*, 42:300-329 (January, 1929).

⁷ In another study by the Gluecks in which they examined the cases of five hundred women who had served time in the Massachusetts Reformatory for Women, a slightly different method of parole prediction was followed. Instead of using the "coefficient of mean square contingency" to measure the relationship between certain factors and parole outcome, as the investigators did in their study of five hundred men, they used the "maximum difference of percentage method." Cf. Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck, *Five Hundred Delinquent Women*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1923, pp. 284-298. In the present study, the method described by the Gluecks in *Five Hundred Criminal Careers* is followed.

⁸ In at least one other study on the prediction of criminality the offense was held constant, inasmuch as the study was restricted to cases of embezzlers. Cf. Elizabeth Redden, *Embezzlement, a Study of One Kind of Criminal Behavior with Prediction Tables Based on Fidelity Insurance Records*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago Library, 1939.

⁹ Ernest W. Burgess, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

Success on parole means that the subject had been discharged from parole at the termination of a period of time (varying in different cases) without having violated any of the conditions of parole during that period. A "major" violation is the commission of a new crime while on parole. A "minor" violation or a "technical" violation is the infraction of a parole rule other than the commission of a crime. Leaving the state without permission, riding in an automobile without permission, and failure to submit the required monthly reports are illustrations of "minor" violations. In the Glueck study, the definition of success or failure was determined on the basis of the subject's adjustment in a five-year *post-parole* period. In the present study, however, parole outcome was judged on the basis of the subject's adjustment *while on parole*, that is, on the basis of violation or non-violation of parole.

The sample used comprises 1861 cases of burglars who were paroled from three branches of the penal system of Illinois between January, 1925 and December, 1935. This constitutes the total number of burglars (exclusive of Negroes) who were paroled from the penitentiaries during that period of time. Their parole outcome (that is, success or failure on parole) was determined in 1939, therefore sufficient time had elapsed to make a follow-up investigation.

The factors used in this study as a basis for parole prediction are as follows: sentence, time served during last prison commitment, type of offender, previous criminal record, criminal mobility, number of associates (in crime), age, nativity of parents, home condition, marital status, work record, employment status at time of arrest, pre-institutional community, venereal infection, use of alcohol, intelligence rating, social type, personality classification, psychiatric prognosis, family interest, disciplinary record, parole community, and post-institutional job. Each factor was divided into subclasses.

The cases were sorted into three groups, according to adjustment on parole, and the three groups were designated as "successful," "minor violators," and "major violators." Tabulations were made to determine the number of subjects in each of the three categories who fell in the various subclasses of each of the twenty-three factors. The percentage of the subjects falling in each subclass was then calculated. The chi-square test was applied to determine the probability that differences between the actual and the theoretical frequencies would occur by chance. The coefficient of mean square contingency yielded by relating each factor to parole outcome was then computed. The probability that the chi-square was due to chance was also computed for each factor. The customary five per-

cent level of significance was used so that any value less than .05 was deemed significant.

Table I is one of the twenty-three tables which were prepared, and it is presented below as an illustration of the results obtained by the procedures described.

TABLE I
PSYCHIATRIC PROGNOSIS RELATED TO PAROLE
ADJUSTMENT

Psychiatric prognosis	Successful		Minor violation		Major violation		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Unfavorable .	67	26.6	101	40.1	84	33.3	252	100
Doubtful	410	47.7	254	29.6	195	22.7	859	100
Favorable	452	73.2	100	16.2	65	10.5	617	100
Total	929	53.8	455	26.3	344	19.9	1728*	100

* One hundred and twenty-six cases were excluded because information about "psychiatric prognosis" was lacking; seven cases with a "problematic" prognosis were excluded.—Coefficient of contingency, .31.

In Table II is presented a list of the twenty-three factors which were considered for their possible relationship to parole outcome, and the coefficient of mean square contingency is set forth for each factor. The factors are arranged in rank order, from that with the highest to that with the lowest coefficient. In regard to each factor but two ("venereal infection" and "criminal mobility") the probability was less than .01. The probability for each of the two excepted factors was so high that the chi-square was very clearly due to chance. It is notable

TABLE II
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 22 FACTORS TO OUTCOME

Factor	Coefficient of contingency with parole outcome
Psychiatric prognosis . . . . .	.31
Social type . . . . .	.29
Previous criminal record . . . . .	.27
Work record . . . . .	.27
Type of offender . . . . .	.24
Pre-institutional community . . . . .	.23
Time served . . . . .	.21
Disciplinary record . . . . .	.21
Family interest . . . . .	.20
Sentence . . . . .	.19
Number of associates . . . . .	.16
Personality classification . . . . .	.16
Intelligence rating . . . . .	.15
Age . . . . .	.14
Use of alcohol . . . . .	.13
Marital status . . . . .	.12
Parole community . . . . .	.12
Home condition . . . . .	.11
Employment status at arrest . . . . .	.10
Post-institutional job . . . . .	.08
Nativity of parents . . . . .	.08
Venereal infection . . . . .	.03
Criminal mobility . . . . .	.02

that all but, two of the twenty-three factors considered were related, more or less, to parole outcome.

Those factors which showed low coefficients of contingency (.21 or less) and which therefore had a relatively small degree of relationship to outcome on parole were eliminated.¹⁰ The six factors which were retained for use in the construction of the parole prediction table are: psychiatric prognosis, social type, previous criminal record, work record, type of offender, and pre-institutional community.

Since these are the crucial factors for purposes of the present study, it will be necessary to present a description and definition of each one of them and the subclasses which each subsumes. "Psychiatric prognosis" refers to the combined judgment of sociologists and psychiatrists as to the probability that the subject will relapse into criminal activities after his release from prison. After admission to the penitentiary, a prognosis was made for each subject in this study. The prognosis is not based on a sociometric device; it is based on a clinical appraisal of the individual case, and in order to arrive at such an appraisal a thorough case history is prepared and studied. Incorporated in this case history of the subject are all of the medical, social, criminological, psychiatric, and psychological data which are accumulated.¹¹ As can be seen from Table II, the prognosis showed the highest degree of relationship to parole outcome. In other words, of all the factors which have been studied for their possible relationship to parole outcome, none is as significant as the "psychiatric prognosis." This may be well expected inasmuch as the prognosis represents the combined judgment of several experts, and it is also a composite judgment based upon a large number of interrelated facts. The various prognoses are designated as follows: "favorable," "problematic," "doubtful," and "unfavorable," and in the order given, these represent what are believed to be progressively poorer prognoses in regard to the required adherence of the subject to the parole rules.¹² These designations are not sharply defined, and they do not represent rigidly demarcated categories. However, rather loose working definitions are available. The fact that this factor is so closely related to parole outcome is in itself partial proof of the utility and validity of the factor and its underlying concepts.

¹⁰ For use in their prediction tables, the Gluecks retained all the factors whose coefficients were over .20.

¹¹ For a complete description of the procedures which are undertaken by the professional staff of the Illinois State Prison System to prepare case histories and to derive a prognosis (as had been done in the case of each subject in this study) see the following: *Annual Report of the Criminologist*, pp. 11-43, reprinted from the 1940 annual report of the Illinois State Department of Public Welfare.

¹² Because of the small number of cases involved, those with a "problematic" prognosis were excluded from consideration in this study.

"Social type" has been divided into the following subclasses: "farmer," "inadequate," "marginal," "maladjusted," "floater and ne'er-do-well," and "drug addict or drunkard." Each subject was included in one of these categories on the basis of the judgment made by the sociologists. Here again, to arrive at a judgment the entire case history of the subject was examined. If a subject had been reared on a farm and did farm work during the greater part of his adult life he was classified as a "farmer," even though he showed traits which would have made him eligible for inclusion in any of the other categories of "social type." An "inadequate" subject is one who, although steadily employed and placed in equable circumstances, nevertheless is easily disorganized and is repeatedly ineffectual in resolving even minor crises which arise. A "marginal" individual was defined as one who is characteristically in a precarious situation, as far as his socio-economic adjustment is concerned. The "marginal" person is one who frequently resorts to the assistance of social agencies in the solution of problems.¹³ The "maladjusted" person finds it difficult to make an acceptable adjustment in almost any set of circumstances. The chief characteristics of the individual who falls in this category are chronic upheaval in social relationships, excessive instability, lack of dependability, irresponsibility, and marked social immaturity. A subject who is excessively mobile, who lacks social affiliations, and who is improvident is classified as a "floater and ne'er-do-well." The last category in this factor, "drug addict or drunkard," is reserved for those who were seriously excessive drinkers or drug addicts, or both, for several years prior to their commitment to the penitentiary. Only very loose and condensed working definitions have been presented here. Although the criticisms leveled at the use of this subjective and inadequately defined factor are well taken, nevertheless, it is important to note that a rather high coefficient was obtained by relating it to parole outcome.¹⁴

To determine the "previous criminal record" of the subject, all the offenses which he perpetrated during his entire career (prior to the offense which led to his last commitment to the penitentiary), whether or not they were officially recorded, were taken into consideration. In addition to the interviews with the subject, the sources of information in regard to crimi-

¹³ This definition is not to be confused with the sociological concept of marginality as set forth in the following: Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted*, Harper & Brothers, New York, 1921, p. 61.

¹⁴ Criticisms directed against the use of "social type" as a parole prediction factor are set forth in the following: Ferris F. Laune, *Predicting Criminality, Forecasting Behavior on Parole*, "Northwestern University Studies in the Social Sciences," No. 1, Northwestern University, Evanston and Chicago, 1936; George B. Vold, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

nal record included reports of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reports of the Illinois Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation, and correspondence with social and law-enforcing agencies. The categories into which the subjects were divided, on the basis of "previous criminal record," are as follows: "none," "arrests and fines," "probation," "jail, workhouse, etc.," "boys' school," "reformatory," and "penitentiary." In the order given, these represent what are considered to be increasingly more serious forms of punishment or increasingly more drastic forms of penal and correctional treatment. Sacrificing refinement of classification for simplicity, each subject was classified under only the most serious form of punishment or the most drastic kind of treatment (including probation) which he had received, taking into consideration his entire criminal career. For example, if a subject had a previous criminal record consisting of arrests, fines, and probation, he was included under "probation." If he had a previous record of arrests, fines, probation, commitment to a boys' school, and commitment to a reformatory, he was included in the category designated as "reformatory." If the subject had no previous criminal record, he was included under "none," of course.

It is not surprising that the factor of "previous criminal record" has been found to be an important one in its relationship to parole outcome. In a questionnaire which Lottier submitted to 30 examiners "regarded as highly competent," the following question was asked: "Which factors in an offender's case history do you consider most important for predicting future criminal behavior?" The examiners were presented with ten factors, among which was the factor of "criminality, present and past arrests and sentences." The examiners were requested to arrange these items in accordance with their judgment as to the relative importance of each factor in relation to the possibility of future criminality. Of the 28 returns, all but eight listed criminality or work record as most predictive. It so happens, according to Lottier, that the eight examiners who listed a factor other than criminality or work record as the most important were the less formally trained workers.¹⁵

"Work record," the next factor to be considered, is concerned with an appraisal of the entire work history of the subject, prior to his commitment to the penitentiary. Most of the information which was secured by interviews with the subject, in connection with this factor, was verified through correspondence with employers, relatives, and social agencies. A judgment was made in regard to the regularity of the subject's employ-

¹⁵ Stuart Lottier, "Predicting Criminal Behavior," *Federal Probation*, 7:9-10 (October-December, 1943).

ment. Each individual was classified as a "regular," "irregular," or "casual" worker. The distinction between an "irregular" and a "casual" work record is that an "irregular" work record shows higher occupational mobility but more lengthy periods of employment than a "casual" work record.¹⁶

The factor with the fourth highest coefficient, "type of offender," is closely related to "previous criminal record," inasmuch as the classificatory scheme of types of offenders is based on the actual extent of the previous record. "First offender" is the designation applied to those subjects who had no previous record. "Occasional offender" is the designation applied to those who had a police record but who were without convictions or commitments for felonies. Those whose record showed misdemeanors only were included in this subclass. If the subject had one or more convictions for felonies he was classified as "recidivist." The term "habitual offender" was reserved for those who had depended almost entirely on crime for their livelihood. On the basis of these definitions, each subject was classified in one of these four groups.

The subclasses of the last factor to be described, "pre-institutional community," are as follows: "rural" (under 2,500 population), "town and village" (2,500 to 10,000 population), "small city" (10,001 to 25,000 population), "city" (over 25,000 population), and "Chicago and Cook County." A subject was classified in one of the above categories on the basis of his predominant residence from the age of eight to the time of his commitment to the penitentiary.

Returning now to the procedure for the derivation of the prediction table, the next step involves the listing of the actual percentages of "major" parole violators for each of the subclasses of the six factors described above—factors which have been found to be most closely associated with parole outcome. For example, below are listed the subclasses and the percentage of "major" violators for each subclass of the factor designated "psychiatric prognosis."¹⁷

TABLE III
PSYCHIATRIC PROGNOSIS

Subclass	Percent of major violators
Unfavorable	33
Doubtful	23
Favorable	10

This indicates that 33 per cent of those who had an "unfavorable" prognosis were "major" violators, that those whose prognosis was "doubtful" violated parole to the extent of 23 per

¹⁶ Because of the small number of cases involved, those with a "regular" work record were excluded from consideration in this study.

¹⁷ See Table I, *supra*.

cent, and that those with a "favorable" prognosis contributed only 10 per cent of their number to the "major" violators. The remaining factors were similarly analyzed.

Using all the percentages which were listed in accordance with the procedure just described, the lowest score and the highest score it was possible for a subject to have were calculated. To determine the lowest score it was possible to have, the lowest percentages listed in the six factors (the lowest in each factor) were added; to determine the highest score possible, the highest percentages in the six factors were added. The lowest score possible was found to be 75; the highest was 205. Class intervals were set up between these extremes. Each subject was then individually scored on the basis of the subclass in which he fell in regard to each of the six factors; that is, the subject's score on any factor was the percentage of major violators listed for the subclass in which he happened to fall. For example, in regard to "psychiatric prognosis," if a subject fell in the subclass designated "unfavorable," "33" was the score accorded him for that factor; if he had a "doubtful" prognosis his score was "23"; and if his prognosis was "favorable," his score was "10." The total score for each subject was the sum of the scores he had on the six factors. Each case was then cross-tabulated according to its total score and parole outcome. Table IV shows the results yielded by these operations. Obviously, cases in which information about any one of the six factors was lacking had to be omitted from the scoring process. There were 1657 cases in which information in regard to each of the six factors was available, and the calculations shown in Table IV are based on that number of cases.

Table IV is the predictive instrument the derivation of which has been the object of the somewhat involved procedures which have been described in this report. An examination of the table will reveal the variations in the parole violation rates and the parole success rates among the subjects who fall in the different score-classes. It can be seen that a subject whose score is between 75 and 104 has better than 7 out of 10 chances of making a successful adjustment on parole. On the other

TABLE IV
PERCENT OF PAROLE SUCCESSES, MINOR AND MAJOR
VIOLATORS TO MAJOR VIOLATION SCORE

Major violation score	Parole outcome			
	Successful	Minor violators	Major violators	Total
75 — 104	72.6	18.2	9.2	100
105 — 134	51.2	29.6	19.2	100
135 and over	9.1	12.6	78.3	100
Total	53.2	26.5	20.2	100

hand, if a subject's score is 135 or over he has only about 1 out of 10 chances of being successful on parole. From a different point of view, it is obvious that a subject whose score is in the lowest possible bracket has 1 chance in 10 of becoming a major violator; on the other hand, a subject whose score is in the highest possible bracket has almost 8 chances in 10 of becoming a major violator. Thus, the parole risk differential found in the subjects whose scores vary becomes unmistakably clear, and the implications of such findings can be exceedingly important to criminologists.

Conclusions

The present research has carried out the recommendation of the Gluecks that their parole prediction method be applied to a new sample of cases. Their methodology was closely followed, but the factors used, the definition of "parole failure" and "parole success," the length of time allowed to elapse before judgment of parole outcome was made, and a number of other items were incomparable with those used by the Gluecks, and therefore a comparison of the results of the present study with the results of their study is not possible, except in a very superficial way.

The most noteworthy result of this study is its demonstration of the predictability of parole outcome. It is noteworthy because it has shown, as all previous attempts at prediction have shown, that no matter what the specific techniques, the specific factors, or the specific definitions of parole or post-parole outcome, it is possible, by statistical analyses and an actuarial technique, to utilize the experiences of paroled subjects to establish a scheme of predicting future criminality or parole outcome of subjects, before their release from penal and correctional institutions.¹⁸

¹⁸ See the following parole and probation prediction studies: Ernest W. Burgess, *op. cit.*; Mildred Ross Kibrick, "Predicting Success or Failure on Probation of the White Delinquent Girl," unpublished M. A. thesis, The Ohio State University Library, 1944; Clark Tibbitts, "Success or Failure on Parole Can Be Predicted, A Study of 3,000 Youths Paroled from the Illinois State Reformatory," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 22:11-50 (May, 1931); Courtland C. Van Vechten, Jr., *A Study of Success and Failure of One Thousand Delinquents Committed to a Boys' Republic*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago Library, 1935. In addition to the works by Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck which have been cited, see the following works by these writers: *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 177-190; *Later Criminal Careers*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1937, Chapter XII and pp. 201-202; *Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up*, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1940, Chapters XII, XIX, and XX and pp. 270-273; *Criminal Careers in Retrospect*, "Harvard Law School Studies in Criminology," The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1943, Chapters XIV, XV, and XVI and pp. 285-287, 291-292. For another study on probation prediction see Elio D. Monachesi, *Prediction Factors in Probation*, The Sociological Press, Hanover, N. H., 1932.

Although the coefficients of mean square contingency which were found by relating each of several factors to parole outcome are not markedly high in the present study, it is clear that there exists a reasonably close association between the parole outcome of the subject and the following factors: "psychiatric prognosis," "social type," "previous criminal record," "work record," "type of offender," and "pre-institutional community." It is also clear that the results yielded in the present study can be used for predictive purposes so that, on the basis of experience with a large number of cases, it is possible to establish an experience table to test the "parolability" of a subject.

The best test to which a parole prediction table can be put is the test involved in the application of the table to a new group of cases, in actual practice (that is, a follow-up study). The prediction table derived in this study must be so applied before a conclusive appraisal of its validity can be determined. That is a necessary next step. Furthermore, the present study has not dealt with the problem of the comparison of different methods of prediction in order to determine which is the most accurate, as Vold has done.¹⁹ However, in that connection also, the final answer will be yielded only as a result of actual experience in using the different methods. As a matter of fact, not all the possible methods of predicting criminality have been explored. For example, one method which has not been applied to criminological data has been suggested by Reckless who in turn has been advised by Toops in regard to the feasibility of applying this method to the problem of the prediction of criminality. This method is known as the "multiple ratio correlation method."²⁰ There are a great many research problems in the prediction of criminality to be attacked, and there are many technical points to be clarified, but repeated studies, including the present one, have shown that research in prediction can be a profitable approach for criminology and penology.²¹

¹⁹ George B. Vold, *op. cit.*

²⁰ Walter C. Reckless, *The Etiology of Delinquent and Criminal Behavior: A Planning Report for Research*, Social Science Research Council, New York, 1943, pp. 83n-84n.

²¹ For an excellent discussion of some technical problems involved in parole prediction methodology see William F. Lanne, *op. cit.* For a rejoinder to this article see R. L. Huff, "Is Parole Prediction a Science?" *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 27:207-218 (July, 1936).