

Winter 1960

Abstracts and Notes

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Abstracts and Notes, 50 *J. Crim. L. & Criminology* 477 (1959-1960)

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

Also assigned as error by petitioner was the failure of the trial court to order the production of a memorandum prepared by a government agent who had interviewed a prosecution witness prior to the trial. The court upheld the refusal of the trial court to compel production of the memorandum, holding that it contained the interpretations

and impressions of the agent and therefore could be of no use in impeaching the prosecution's witness.

(For other recent case abstracts see "Police Science Legal Abstracts and Notes," *infra* pp. 522-523).

ABSTRACTS AND NOTES

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF VANDALS

Despite the loss from vandalism and the special efforts of schools, police, courts and other community agencies to prevent this kind of property damage, comparatively little attention has been given to vandalism by social and behavioral scientists. This report summarizes one phase of a study of vandalism recently completed in New York City. In the study vandalism was defined as the offense "malicious mischief," specifically the willful destruction, damage, or defacement of property. Basic to the research was the assumption that, since crime consists of many kinds of behavior committed in a variety of situations, research in criminology should isolate and study particular types of offenses instead of crime and/or delinquency in general.

Official delinquency statistics indicate: far more boys than girls are involved in delinquency; the majority of delinquent children are fourteen years old or more; disproportionately more delinquents are drawn from the families of marginal groups on the American scene, including urban-dwelling Negroes and Spanish-speaking people; delinquents are also disproportionately drawn from families of lower socio-economic status. Are the sex, age, ethnic, and socio-economic characteristics the same for vandals as for other delinquents?

To answer this question comparisons were made between vandals and other delinquents. The vandal group consisted of some 291 juveniles who, while living in the Borough of The Bronx, New York City, in 1955, committed acts of vandalism and for this reason were enumerated in the Juvenile Delinquency Index of the New York City Youth Board. The other delinquents, or the non-vandal group, consisted of some 6,821

Bronx juveniles who in 1955 were enumerated in the same Index for offenses not involving vandalism. The age range for both groups was six through twenty years.

Significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of their sex, age, and ethnic characteristics. Thus, while the other delinquents were predominantly boys, the vandals were almost exclusively boys. While the majority of both groups were adolescents, the mean age of the vandals (12.94 years) was less than the mean age of the other delinquents (14.46 years)—substantially more of the vandals were less than twelve years of age, while substantially fewer of them were fifteen or more years of age. Finally, although as with the other delinquents the vandals were mostly white, comparisons with the other delinquents indicated that among the vandals whites were over-represented, Puerto Ricans were slightly over-represented, and non-whites were under-represented.

Tuberculosis prevalence rates were used to rank Bronx health areas according to their socio-economic level, with the areas with the highest rates being ranked at the lowest socio-economic level. No significant difference was found between the vandals and the other delinquents in terms of the socio-economic level of the health areas in which they lived. Both the distribution of the vandals and the distribution of the other delinquents uniformly increased as the socio-economic level of the areas in which they lived decreased. Although both vandals and other delinquents were found at all levels, almost half of both groups lived in the areas of lowest socio-economic level.

These conclusions agree with suggestions in

the literature that vandalism is almost entirely the behavior of boys, that such destruction is the behavior of both pre-adolescents and adolescents, and that while vandals are drawn from a variety of social classes, the bulk of them live in low income areas.

The conclusions do not agree with suggestions

that vandalism is unrelated to ethnic or racial group membership, that most vandals are adolescents in their late teens, and that vandalism is more prevalent among middle-class children.

JOHN M. MARTIN

Assistant Professor of Sociology
Fordham University

THE EFFICACY OF TEN OF THE GLUECKS' PREDICTORS

In their work "Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency," the Gluecks¹ proposed a number of simple prediction systems. Among these are a set of five items concerning personality description and a set of five items concerning parent-child relations. A combination of weighted failure scores is given which indicate a probability that delinquency will occur within each class interval of the score. The personality description items are: (a) adventurous; (b) extroverted in action; (c) suggestibility; (d) stubborn; and (e) emotionally unstable. The parent-child relationship items are: (a) father's discipline was erratic, or lax, or kindly; (b) father's affection was indifferent or warm; (c) mother's supervision was unsuitable, or fair, or suitable; (d) mother's affection was indifferent or warm; and (e) family cohesion was unintegrated, or some cohesion, or cohesive.

These items were rated after intensive interviews of cases selected from a follow-up study² of the population tested by Hathaway and Monachesi in 1947-48.³ The samples studied were each a composite of 187 cases from two delinquent and two nondelinquent samples each of which contained 50 percent of individuals who were delinquent and 50 percent who were not. From data about the populations from which these samples were drawn it is estimated that they represented 200 delinquents of whom 122 were severe delinquents and 677 nondelinquents.

Comparisons were made of ratings for these samples using the Gluecks' weighted score distributions. The power of the prediction was based

¹ GLUECK, S. & GLUECK, E. UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1950.

² WIRT, R. D. & BRIGGS, P. F. PERSONALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DELINQUENCY. PSYCHOL. MONOGR. (in press).

³ HATHAWAY, S. R. & MONACHESI, E. D. ANALYZING AND PREDICTING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY WITH THE MMPI. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1953.

on the effectiveness of the split for distributions of equal numbers, of delinquent and nondelinquent cases (where the chance rate would be 50 percent) and for distributions representative of the number in the populations from which they were taken. Six or possibly seven of the items appeared to relate to delinquency. These were father's affection, father's discipline, and family cohesion among the family data; and adventurous, extroverted, and emotionally unstable among the personality items. Possibly stubbornness was also effective. That three or four items did not respond may be attributed to the differences in samples, in raters, and in subjects. The item "suggestible" seemed to be the only one which was hard to rate. The two items relating to maternal behaviors should have been no less available than the information concerning behavior of the fathers. The probable relatively milder nature of the delinquents studied here is the most obvious explanation of those results which differ from the Gluecks' findings.

More important than the specific results is the possible implications seen here for future work. It is well to indicate that delinquency is not a unitary or homogeneous trait.² There seems to be a tendency among investigators to leave the individual differences between delinquents unexplored. The result of this omission is a general weakening of predictive systems since population equivalence is not insured. A second point is the question of more basic importance of the items themselves. Is there some reason why positive maternal influences are more often lacking in the early lives of institutionalized cases than among the on-the-streets delinquent? This could be an important point. Are suggestibility or stubbornness related in this same way to severity of delinquency? Possibly it is that the incarcerated delinquent is more often schizoid, a syndrome which often includes maternal rejection, suggestibility, and stubbornness. This cannot be

known because of the absence of exact personality evaluation in the Gluecks' study.

In the prediction studies both here and by the Gluecks' it is evident that the weighted failure score does tend to separate delinquents from the nondelinquents though less powerfully than reported by the Gluecks'. The concentration of each type of case seems to be determined to a large degree by the base rate rather than by the items in unselected cases. The 50-50 base rate

provides the best chance for making a prediction, though in practical settings such a population distribution is rare. It might be noted that even within the Gluecks' work the base rate could not exceed one institutionalized case to 49 out of the institution for the family factors or 1:13 for the personality traits in order to actually gain by using the weighted failure scores.

ROBERT D. WIRT AND PETER F. BRIGGS
University of Minnesota

SECOND U. N. CONGRESS ON THE PREVENTION OF CRIME AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS

The Second U. N. Congress on Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders will be held at Church House and Carlton Home, London, August 8 to 20, 1960. The Government of U. K. will act as host.

There will be three categories of participants:

1. Members officially appointed by governments which are experienced in prevention and treatment.

2. Representatives of specialized agencies and of non-governmental agencies which are interested in social defence.

3. Individuals who have a direct interest in prevention and treatment, such as police and correctional officials, members of courts and tribunals, social workers, university teachers, members of bar associations, etc.

The participants will include such others as individual experts or representatives of non-governmental organizations who are of high repute for scientific work in the field of the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders who may be invited by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to attend the Congress.

PROGRAMME

Subsequent to the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Committee on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the proposals of the Secretary-General, the Social Commission, at its twelfth session, approved the agenda of the Congress which includes the following items:

- (1) New forms of juvenile delinquency: their origin, prevention and treatment;
- (2) Special police services for the prevention of juvenile delinquency;

(3) Prevention of types of criminality resulting from social changes and accompanying economic development in less developed countries;

(4) Short-term imprisonment;

(5) Pre-release treatment and after-care, as well as assistance to dependents of prisoners;

(6) The integration of prison labour in the national economy, including the remuneration of prisoners.

For the consideration of the items on its agenda; the Congress will be divided into two main Sections and, if need be, several working groups will be organized. Lectures dealing with subjects closely related to the agenda items will also be arranged, and will be followed by round table discussions.

Approximately six plenary meetings of the Congress are planned, and the Sections will report to the plenary. The recommendations or conclusions of the Congress will be communicated to the Secretary-General and, if necessary, to the policy-making bodies of the United Nations.

The official languages of the Congress will be English, French and Spanish, and simultaneous interpretation from and into these three languages will be provided for all section and plenary meetings.

In addition, the programme of the Congress will include certain related activities such as an exhibition, visits to institutions, film showings, etc.

DOCUMENTATION

The Secretariat will lay before the Congress a general report on each agenda item, to be prepared by a rapporteur expressly appointed for