1966

More Discriminative Instrument for the Identification of Potential Delinquents at School Entrance

Eleanor T. Glueck

A MORE DISCRIMINATIVE INSTRUMENT FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL DELINQUENTS AT SCHOOL ENTRANCE

ELEANOR T. GLUECK*

In the course of exploring a method to identify potential delinquents in very early childhood, the writer uncovered two personality traits of high predictive value when combined with certain factors of family life. This resulted in a table for the identification of potential delinquents at 2–3 years of age.[1] The construction of this predictive device encouraged the writer to explore the possibility that the addition of these two traits to the cluster of the three social factors already comprising the Social Prediction Table, which was successfully validated by the New York City Youth Board and by the Maximum Benefits Project in Washington, D. C.,[2] would further increase its effectiveness in identifying potential delinquents at school entrance, that is, at 5½–6 years of age.

One of the major difficulties in the preparation and use of such devices has to do with the ambiguity of those cases which are placed in a group that have a predicted chance of delinquency or nondelinquency of 50-50. It is easy enough to identify children who have a very high (9 in 10) and a very low (1 in 10) chance of delinquency; but among those having about an even chance, the true delinquents cannot be differentiated from the nondelinquents.

In the original five-factor Social Prediction Table as published in *Unraveling Juvenile De-*

linquency,[3] this ambiguous group comprised 300 cases. In the related version of this table comprising three instead of five factors (see Table 1), developed during the course of the New York City Youth Board's experiment on the identification of potential delinquents, the ambiguous group was reduced to 194 cases. In the author's earlier papers, *Toward Improving the Identification of Delinquents* and *Toward Further Improving the Identification of Delinquents*, both of which appeared in this *Journal*,[4] a method is described of still further reducing the ambiguous middle group by applying to it a predictive device developed in *Unraveling* on the basis of five traits of temperament. This makes possible the distribution of some of the middle category cases among those having a 1 in 10 and those having a 9 in 10 chance of delinquency. However, the application of this device, requiring as it does a knowledge of five traits of temperament, complicates its usefulness. The author therefore gave consideration to exploring the effectiveness of a predictive device which would add to the three social factors (*supervision by mother, discipline by mother, family cohesiveness*) two traits that had been found effective in a cluster of five variables to identify potential delinquents among children 2–3 years of age. These two traits are *nonsubmissiveness to authority* and *destructiveness*.

AN IMPROVED TABLE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DELINQUENTS AT 5½–6 YEARS

The improved predictive table has resulted in a reduction of the middle group (the ambiguous cases) from 194 boys of *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* to 99. Because this reflects a greater discriminative capacity for identifying potential delinquents at 5½–6 years than is obtainable on the basis of the three-factor table, the author presents the new table as a significant step in the direction of improving the predictive device. One advantage is, of course, that it reflects the inter-

[1] The paper describing this device was prepared for presentation at the 5th International Criminological Congress, Montreal, August-September, 1965. The full text of this paper will appear in the Winter, 1966 issue of the *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*.

[2] Craig & Glick, *Ten Years' Experience with the Glueck Social Prediction Table*, 9 CRIME & DELINQUENCY No. 3 (1963); Craig & Glick, *A Manual of Procedures for Application of the Glueck Prediction Table* (N. Y. City Youth Board, 1964); Craig & Glick, *Application of the Glueck Social Prediction Table on an Ethnic Basis*, 11 CRIME & DELINQUENCY No. 2 (1965); Trevvett, *Identifying Delinquency-Prone Children*, 11 CRIME & DELINQUENCY No. 2 (1965).

[3] GLUECK & GLUECK, UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY 262 (1950).

[4] 53 J. CRIM. L., C. & P. S. 164 (1962); 54 *ibid* 178 (1963).

TABLE 1

TABLE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DELINQUENTS
AT 5½–6 YEARS, BASED ON THREE
SOCIAL FACTORS*

Score Class	Delinquency Rate	Nondelinquency Rate	Total No. of Cases
Less than 140.........	8.6%	91.4%	400
140–200..............	58.2	41.8	194
200 or Over.........	89.0	11.0	390

Predictive Factors†	Delinquency Scores
Supervision of Boy by Mother	
Suitable	9.9
Fair	57.5
Unsuitable	83.2
Discipline of Boy by Mother	
Firm but Kindly	6.1
Erratic.......................	62.3
Overstrict	73.3
Lax...........................	82.9
Cohesiveness of Family	
Marked	20.6
Some	61.3
None	96.9

* This table has been checked on 301 boys in high delinquency areas of New York City by the New York City Youth Board. For details, see Craig, Maude M., and Glick, Selma J., *A Manual of Procedures for Application of the Glueck Prediction Table*, New York City Youth Board, Office of the Mayor, 79 Madison Avenue, New York City, New York 10016, October 1964.

† Definitions appear at end of paper, pp. 29–30.

TABLE 2

TABLE TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DELINQUENTS
AT 5½–6 YEARS, BASED ON THREE SOCIAL
FACTORS AND TWO TRAITS

Score Class	Delinquency Rate	Nondelinquency Rate	Total No. of Cases
Less than 240.........	7.2%	92.8%	416
240–280..............	50.5	49.5	99
280 or Over...........	91.0	9.0	435

Predictive Factors†	Delinquency Scores
Supervision of Boy by Mother	
Suitable	9.9
Fair	57.5
Unsuitable	83.2
Discipline of Boy by Mother	
Firm but Kindly	6.1
Erratic	62.3
Overstrict	73.3
Lax.............................	82.9
Cohesiveness of Family	
Marked	20.6
Some	61.3
None	96.9
Nonsubmissiveness of Child to Parental Authority	
Absent	24.8
Present	78.0
Destructiveness of Child	
No Evidence	35.7
Evidence Present	74.2

† Definitions appear at end of paper, pp. 29–30.

action between environment and personality traits. In the preparation of the volume *Family Environment and Delinquency* it was made clear that children with certain traits react differently to a similar family setting than do children not so characterized; in other words, that the environment has a *selective* influence on children.[5]

⁵ GLUECK & GLUECK, FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND DELINQUENCY 155 (1962): "A third general finding of the analysis is that the influences of the home environment, even when they are criminogenic, operate selectively to propel toward maladjustment and delinquency certain children who are characterized by specific traits which enhance their vulnerability. Some of these traits are of an essentially constitutional orientation and are therefore relatively rigid; others are predominantly the product of sociocultural conditioning and are therefore more plastic and modifiable; still others—those for which evidence exists that they are brought about by the considerable influence of both genetic endowment and environmental stimulation—have been referred to the central area of our postulated

In order to determine whether the newer table does indeed more correctly place the delinquents and nondelinquents of *Unraveling*, it has been possible to cross-classify the status of the boys of *Unraveling* on the three-factor table (Table 1) and the new five-variable table (Table 2). These results are now presented in Table 3. Although the reader

biosocial continuum and may, in some measure, respond to re-education. Individuals differ in the degree of permeability or affinity to the elements in the social and cultural milieu in which they find themselves and to which they are subjected. It is the *concatenation* in the particular individual of the factor-trait interpenetrations of these influences from divergent sources that determines whether, at a certain point of pressure, resistance to antisocial self-expression will break down.

In other words, it is differential *contamination* rather than differential *association*, that is at the core of the etiologic process; and contamination depends not merely on exposure but also on susceptibility as opposed to immunity."

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF PLACEMENT OF BOYS OF *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* ON THREE-FACTOR
AND FIVE-VARIABLE TABLES TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL DELINQUENTS AT SCHOOL ENTRANCE

Chances of Delinquency on Three-Factor Prediction Table	Chances of Delinquency on Five-Variable Table						Total No. of Boys
	Low (Less than 225)		Even (225–275)		High (275 or Over)		
	No. of Boys	% of Total†	No. of Boys	% of Total†	No. of Boys	% of Total†	
Low (Less than 140)...................	10	31.3%	12	37.5%	10	31.2%	32
Even (140–200).......................	14	14.3	32	32.6	52	53.1	98
High (200 or Over)...................	11	3.7	75	25.1	213	71.2	299
Total..............................	35		119		275		429

Chances of Nondelinquency on Three-Factor Prediction Table	Chances of Nondelinquency on Five-Variable Table						Total No. of Boys
	Low (Less than 225)		Even (225–275)		High (275 or Over)		
	No. of Boys	% of Total†	No. of Boys	% of Total†	No. of Boys	% of Total†	
Low (Less than 140)...................	228	71.9%	77	24.3%	12	3.8%	317
Even (140–200).......................	37	50.7	29	39.7	7	9.6	73
High (200 or Over)...................	12	31.6	17	44.7	9	23.7	38
Total..............................	277		123		28		428

† The percentages are based on totals of the respective social prediction score classes.

can judge the outcome by a close study of this cross-classification, a few guidelines might be helpful:

(a) The three-factor table correctly indentifies either as delinquents or nondelinquents 713 (or 72.5%) of the boys.

(b) The five-variable table increases the correct identification to 782 (or 82.3%) of the entire group.

(c) The three-factor table places almost 20% of the boys in the ambiguous group (that is, having an approximately even chance of delinquency or nondelinquency), whereas the five-variable table leaves only slightly more than 10% in this ambiguous class.

(d) The improvement effected by this new table, therefore, has to do with the more correct placement of the boys in the middle predictive category *i.e.*, having an even chance of delinquency. Of 101

delinquents placed on the three-factor table in the ambiguous category (i.e., having about an even chance of delinquency and nondelinquency), 66 or 65.4% are now more discriminatively placed as having a high chance of delinquency; 25.7% remain in the approximately 50-50 chance group, and only 9 or 8.9% are erroneously placed as having a low chance of delinquency.

(e) As regards the nondelinquents of *Unraveling*, of 71 nondelinquent boys having an even chance of delinquency, 28 or 29.4% are now more discriminatively identified as having a low chance of delinquency; 35 or 49.3% remain in the 50-50 chance category; and only 8 (11.3%) are erroneously placed in the group having a high chance of delinquency.

It is clear that the five-variable table is an even more discriminating predictive device (Table 2) than is the three-factor table (Table 1).

Definitions

The definitions of the three social factors are from CRAIG & GLICK, A MANUAL OF PROCEDURES FOR APPLICATION OF THE GLUECK PREDICTION TABLE. These were expanded from the original definitions provided in GLUECK, S. &. E., UNRAVELING JUVENILE

DELINQUENCY. The definitions of destructiveness and nonsubmissiveness were supplied by Drs. Ernst and [the late] Anna Hartoch Schachtel who together carried out the Rorschach studies on the 500 delinquents and 500 matched nondelinquents of UNRAVELING

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY from which the traits of basic character structure were derived.

The variables appear in alphabetical order to facilitate cross reference.

Cohesiveness of Family

Marked: A strong "we" feeling among members of the family, evidenced by cooperation, group interest, including social and recreational pursuits, pride in the home, mutual affection and concern. There is an accepting and protective attitude between parents and children offering a sense of security. The family enjoys being together, planning together and having fun together. A feeling of unity prevails. A markedly cohesive family can exist even though a father or a father-substitute is not a part of the family group. If the mother is a warm accepting person, concerned for her children, fosters group interest, has pride in the home and a relaxed atmosphere prevails, the home can be rated as cohesive.

Some: This category implies that although the home may not be markedly cohesive, there are nevertheless some strengths, ties and security in the family's interpersonal relationships.

None: Self interest prevails. There is no feeling of unity within the family. Each member more or less shifts for himself. The atmosphere is tense and cold. This category is diametrically opposed to the markedly cohesive home.

Destructiveness

The tendency to destroy, to hurt, to be vindictive, directed against others or against himself (usually both trends run parallel, one of them being more manifest, the other more suppressed). Destructiveness is not to be confused with destructive-sadistic trends, which pertain to goals of drives.

Discipline of Boy by Mother

Firm but Kindly: Discipline based on sound reason which the boy understands and accepts as fair. This may include physical punishment, deprivation of privileges and the myriad other disciplinary methods employed. The child does not unduly fear the mother. She sets reasonable limits to his behavior and adheres to them.

Erratic: Inconsistent, unreasonable and vacillating. Such a mother may punish for disobedience at one time and overlook this conduct on another occasion. Discipline seems to depend on the mother's mood more than the boy's behavior. Included in this category too is a mother who may administer physical or verbal abuse without sound reason.

Overstrict: The mother is harsh, her expectations are too great and she severely punishes child for the slightest infraction of her orders.

Lax: The mother or mother substitute is negligent, indifferent and does not mind what the boy does as long as he does not bother her. The mother sets no goals or controls and allows the boy to do very much as he pleases.

Nonsubmissiveness to Parental Authority

The child has not abandoned self-assertion. A *markedly submissive* child is one who attempts to gain security by submitting to others, especially to those believed stronger (one or both parents).

Supervision of Boy by Mother

Suitable: This may include over-protection. There is concern for the boy and his activities. He is guarded and guided. The mother or mother substitute personally knows where the youngster is and with whom, at all times. She is aware of his leisure time activities and the youngster's associates. She is able to establish effective routines, which are consistent. If the mother is ill or works outside the home, there is a *responsible* adult in charge who supervises the boy in the manner described above, including close watching of the child, setting limits and consistency in her handling of him.

Fair: The mother, although not working and not incapacitated, gives only partial supervision. She is not sufficiently concerned with her son's associates. She may not be able to set realistic goals and may not be too consistent; or if the boy has several "caretakers" this may result in conflicting or inconsistent supervision. Although she provides supervision in her absence, the person to whom this responsibility is relegated does not have the maturity or judgment to supervise the boy closely and intelligently.

Unsuitable: Mother or mother substitute is careless in her supervision, leaving the boy to his own devices without guidance, or in the care of a wholly irresponsible or immature person who is not capable of supervising well.