Note on Plans for Further Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency

Sheldon Glueck
Eleanor T. Glueck
tige. If the present shortage of such personnel is to be alleviated, ways of providing greater incentives must be devised.

NOTE ON PLANS FOR FURTHER "UNRAVELING" JUVENILE DELINQUENCY
Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck

In Chapter XXII of Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency entitled "Looking Forward," we have set out briefly what we consider to be some essential next steps in "unraveling" juvenile delinquency and we have asked for suggestions from fellow scientists regarding further explorations of our vast materials.

Although in Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency the broad general findings of the far-flung investigation are set down, there are still many hidden meanings contained in the source materials which will come to light only through intensive intercorrelation of the data in each area of the research. On pp. 284-285 we said:

Some of the significant findings and implications of this type of research can be determined only by detailed statistical intercorrelation of the specific factors of the various areas of study. Speaking generally, two types of correlations are called for: the binding together of disparate data within any single field or at any single level of the inquiry, and the interrelation of the pattern of most significant findings of each area with those of other areas. The former is necessary in order to sharpen the meaning of those factors whose ultimate significance can be seen more fully from their relative positions in an inductively patterned cluster of closely related elements; the latter is necessary because the order of causal sequence is more likely to be detected by intercorrelation of data from levels of varying depth or rigidity than it is by interrelation of data within any one level, and because subtypes can thereby be ascertained in terms of meaningful cross-relationships.

To some extent, certain of these inter-area correlations are already implicit in the instrumentalities used in exploring some particular area. For example, the Rorschach typology of personality and character that emerges from the raw data is based essentially on the impact of early environmental forces (largely in terms of parent-child emotional relations) upon the child; again, some aspects of intelligence are based partially on social conditioning, opportunity to learn, and so on. But apart from such integrations implicit in the scope of certain of the instruments of the inquiry, there are facts derivable from disparate areas, a truer significance of which can be determined only by their detailed interrelation. Indeed, the present tendency is more and more in the direction of abolishing sharp distinctions between body and mind, personality and culture—a trend reflected in the increasing employment of such concepts as "biosocial," "psychosomatic," "psychosocial," "socio-cultural," and the like.

Some of the more important questions that will concern us in further, more detailed explorations of our materials are:

What causal syndromes can be inductively arrived at and defined by means of correlation of the various factors within each level of the inquiry? What syndromes will emerge from a comparison of delinquents and non-delinquents on the basis
of a breakdown into ethnico-racial groupings? Into somatotypes? Into age, at onset of delinquency? Into kinds of home atmosphere in which the boys were reared? Into types of delinquent acts?

Further, what somatopsychic types will emerge from detailed cross-correlations between somatotypes and various characterial and personality traits? A more exact appreciation of the significance of constitutional typology in the causation of persistent delinquency than has yet been established awaits the result of such correlations. Is it possible to isolate and clearly distinguish the psychopathic from the psychoneurotic delinquent? And if so, what differences emerge when these two types are compared with the remaining delinquents? What psychosocial types can be defined by detailed cross-correlations between character types (as determined by the Rorschach Test) and fundamental social data, such as parent-child affectional relationships, different forms of disciplinary practices, and the like?

A host of subsidiary problems also awaits further exploration. For example, why is it that some of the factors often regarded by criminologists and clinicians as highly criminogenic do in fact not markedly differentiate our delinquents from the non-delinquents? How can we account for the numerous factors that have turned out to be neutral or "complacent." What are the differentiating factors which account for the persistent delinquency of the boys included in this study and the non-delinquent behavior of some of their brothers?

To round out the picture, it will also be necessary to determine the resemblances and differences between the delinquents and non-delinquents as they reach early adulthood. Why do some of the delinquent boys abandon their anti-social behavior while others continue in careers of crime? In what respects do those non-delinquents who later develop into delinquents differ from the rest of the non-delinquents?

These and many more questions of scientific and social importance remain to be answered. We welcome suggestions from scientists conversant with one or another of the specific fields of inquiry encompassed in this research."

We are now at work upon some of these intercorrelations and plan to initiate others in the near future. We have virtually completed one set of intercorrelations, which deals with the relationship between the somatotypes of the five hundred delinquents and five hundred non-delinquents and various characteristics of their personality, temperament and social background. Numerous other intercorrelations, involving in all some twenty-four thousand tables, are already in process. These intercorrelated patternings will serve as the basis for a series of monographs on various aspects of the general subject of social maladjustment versus social adjustment and will throw considerably more light than was possible in Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency upon the whole problem of crime causation. These correlations should also contribute toward a clearer understanding of the role of hereditary versus environmental factors in determining human behavior.

Another aspect of our research program already under way has to do with a reinvestigation of the five hundred delinquent boys and their five hundred matched non-delinquents in early adulthood. The boys included in the inquiry were originally examined and studied at the age-range of eleven to seventeen years. They are now young adults,
and a reinvestigation of them in their middle twenties is already under way in order to determine whether the changes in the major aspects of their life activity that have taken place with the passage of time are typical of the entire group or only of delinquents, and also to determine the extent to which the delinquents make suitable social adaptations and the non-delinquents become criminals.

Beyond this, we are also carrying forward a systematic investigation into the behavior of the five hundred delinquents during and following the various forms of peno-correctional treatment to which they have been subjected since the onset of their delinquent careers until age twenty-three. The purpose of this is to check on the validity of the prediction tables which we have developed in a prior study, Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up. When the five hundred delinquent boys in Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency were originally taken on for examination, a prediction chart was prepared for each one on the basis of the above-mentioned tables, and laid aside pending the gathering of the information concerning his conduct during the various peno-correctional experiences to which he might be subjected, in order eventually to determine the extent to which the predictions have been accurate. We are already beginning to analyze some of these materials, with highly gratifying results.

This aspect of our research program has the additional purpose of providing clues to what constitutes effective treatment in various types of cases. Eventually we should be able from this analysis to construct further predictive instrumentalities for the determination of the specific type of correction or therapy to which a particular type of offender is most likely to respond with desirable results to himself and society.

Yet another aspect of our current research program has to do with the prediction of behavior of both delinquent and non-delinquent boys in the Armed Forces. The successful validation of one of our prior prediction tables dealing with the behavior of civilian delinquents in the Armed Forces (see 28 Mental Hygiene, No. 3, July, 1944) encourages us to proceed with this.

It is also our intention to test out the series of prediction tables that have been developed in Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, Chapter XX, on one or more series of children at the point of or soon after school entrance in schools not only in “underprivileged areas” but in middle and upper middle-class neighborhoods, both urban and rural.

It will be seen from the foregoing that our research program has envisaged, from the beginning, the greater and greater refinement of data and intercorrelations. Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency was
the first and basic step, which perforce had to consist of the comparison of delinquents and non-delinquents *en masse*. Significant as are the findings of that work, they are but the first assay of the rich ores of comparable data that the many-sided digging into various levels of fact has brought to the surface. Neither “hunches” nor theoretical speculations, can conjure away the facts, even though those facts may not fit neatly into various preconceptions about human nature and crime causation. Nothing has been so lacking in criminology (and, indeed, in most sociologic disciplines) as reliable facts considered in the light of adequate controls. We, too, have had certain preconceptions about the causes of delinquency; but in UNRAVELING, as in our prior works, we have earnestly sought to follow the advice of Thomas Huxley to Charles Kingsley:

“Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing.” Excellent counsel! Let us hope that biosocial scientists, and especially criminologists, will more and more abide by it.