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## Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency. By Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck.

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*Children's Court, Erie County*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY. By Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. New York: Commonwealth Fund. 1950. Pp. 399. \$5.00.

The invitation to review the newest of the Glueck researches into the intricacies of crime causation was welcomed by me for two reasons: the first, it gave me the opportunity to contribute to the first number of the Buffalo Law Review to be published by my Alma Mater (1919), and second, it speeded up my more careful reading and study of a book in which the advance publisher's announcements aroused my special interest as a Judge of a Children's Court, but which task, because of conditions, I was postponing until the leisure of the summer vacation months.

UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, despite its mass of statistical charts, figure and comparative percentages, is not a difficult book to read, and for one at all interested in the social and individual problems of the human being it is as absorbing as any good mystery story. To a judge of the Children's Court who has for 13 years had thousands of boys and girls under 16 years of age brought before him, charged with juvenile delinquency, this new work of the Gluecks holds out from its preface the promise to reveal the secret of selecting from the motley of first offenders the ones most likely to develop into criminals. The discoverer of that secret will enjoy the everlasting gratitude and admiration of all juvenile court judges and all social workers.

The Gluecks undertook a courageous job — a job for which lesser practitioners would neither have the patience nor the public confidence to finance the ten year study. They enlisted a large number of persons to assist them in "tapping innumerable sources for data, and in carrying out countless details"; likewise had the cooperation of numerous private and public agencies for data and materials; and, lastly, to carry on their project for the ten years required, they succeeded in convincing many persons and foundations to provide grants in sufficient quantity to bring the work to a successful conclusion.

For their field of operations the authors decided to select a group of 500 boys who were committed to correctional schools, most of whom had court records reflecting persistent delinquency, hoping through this to eliminate any question that the delinquents might be accidental or minor offenders. On the other side they selected 500 boys from among the general public school population, who were known to be non-delinquent not only by absence of official court records but also by special investigation of doubtful situations.

The two groups were matched as nearly as practicable not only in respect to age and general intelligence (factors involving only the boys themselves), but also with reference to ethnic-racial derivation and pointedly, residence in underprivileged neighborhoods.

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The technique of how the selections were made, how matched, how backgrounds were studied and how the data was prepared for statistical treatment is explained in detail in a chapter covering 60 pages of the book.

The major portion of the book (250 pages) is devoted to the findings. A glance at the index will quickly show the minute details of study of every phase of life of each group, under these general headings: Home Conditions — Setting of Family Life — Quality of Family Life — The Boy in the Family — The Boy in School — The Boy in the Community — Physical Condition — Bodily Constitution — Qualitative and Dynamic Aspects of Intelligence — Dynamics of Temperament.

Many interesting findings are reported, some confirming the generally accepted and recognized factors contributing to delinquency, others definitely disproving popular assumptions and notions as to characteristics of the criminal type, as well as other studies made on a smaller scale or by less capable researchers.

The most significant is the finding that there is no criminal type to be recognized from outward appearance. In the field of somatic as well as psychic aspects the Gluecks find no evidence of the Lombrosian hypothesis of a born criminal type. For example:

“The view that delinquents are in poorer health than non-delinquents receives no support.”

“Although there is no over-all difference between the two groups as regards palatal abnormalities, a significantly lower proportion of the delinquents have prognathous jaws (believed to be a frequently-found characteristic of the ‘criminal type’), and a significantly higher proportion have low-arched palates, though the numbers involved here are small.”

Another popular misconception is corrected by finding that in verbal and performance intelligence “the early uncritical attribution of criminalistic tendencies largely to intellectual subnormality has been markedly attenuated.”

Not much statistical significance is attached to another finding which shows 18.6% of the delinquents and 13% of the non-delinquents studied were born out of wedlock, nor to the additional finding that in 6.3% of the delinquents and 2.2% of the non-delinquents the parents, though living together, have never married.

While the Gluecks begin their chapter “The Boy in School” with this startling statement, “under the impact of intensive clinical exploration of human motives and behavior it is being realized more and more that schooling does not play as important a role in the development of character and conduct as was formerly supposed,” this reviewer feels that the finding that in 94.8%

of delinquents "truancy was the first and most frequent manifestation of maladjustment among the 478 delinquents who misbehaved in school" against only 10.8% in non-delinquents studied should arouse interest in this frequently disregarded symptom of serious trouble. They further find that "evident traits and tendencies involved in the form of social maladaptation which the law, representing society in general, calls delinquency are also found in excess among delinquents in maladaptation to the code of behavior governing the smaller society, the school."

The studies of home conditions, setting and quality of family life, neighborhood environment, have not revealed the possible roots of criminogenesis, nor statistically significant figures favoring non-delinquents over delinquents.

The Gluecks did, however, find important signs of future development in the social background, in the interpersonal relations in the family group, especially as traced to the discipline of the boy by his parents, the affection of the parents for the boy and family cohesiveness. Coupling these studies with results of Rorschach tests and psychiatric evaluations they developed very interesting tables from which the delinquency pattern of the delinquents studied seems to be predictable with reasonable certainty.

The Gluecks, however, emphasize that their prediction tables "should not be used mechanically nor as a substitute for judgment," and that the tables must be "in the hands of highly experienced persons and the necessary prediction scores must be derived from absolutely accurate data."

This reviewer has been much intrigued by the ingenuity of these tables and feels with the Gluecks that further developments of these tests and of gathering the critical data can lead to a usable and practical formula for selecting those in need of more intensive study and improved treatment.

It seems to this reviewer that this monumental work of the Gluecks would be more valuable had they carried their researches further into the non-physical forces and motivation which more and more are being recognized in the scientific world as supplying the dynamics which characterize the individual, and his acts. In many passages in reporting their work they recognize that "without consideration of the under-the-roof culture there can be no explanation of the differential influence of similar neighborhoods," but in their studies they seem to be satisfied with "dynamics of temperament" where they find "there is, then — no significant difference between the delinquents and non-delinquents in the incidence of any of the conflict-producing stresses involving association and interests outside the immediate family."

Religion, as a factor in the conduct of human being, is for all practical purposes of the study dismissed as "largely related to ethnic origins," and their "findings concerning the religion of boys and their parents are presented here (in a footnote) as a matter of interest." And again in the chapter entitled

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"Dynamics of Temperament" they say: "— few boys in either group reveal conflicts growing out of such possibly stress-producing situations as educational expectations (their own or society's), poverty, unsatisfactory relationships with adults other than the parents, community responsibility, religion, or even sexual interests."

In my 13 years as Judge of the Children's Court of Erie County (N. Y.), I have had appear before me 9,081 boys and 1,526 girls between the ages of 7 and 16 years, charged with juvenile delinquency. As in every other modern children's or juvenile court, in all of these cases investigations were made into the habits, surroundings, conditions and tendencies of the child by probation officers or social workers graduated from our universities and schools of social work. We have not noted any uniformity of physical or mental characteristics, much less any predominant criminal type, even in the recidivists who failed to respond either to case work services or to the best of the training schools, public or private.

In spite of the limits of our budget, which in all children's courts make analytical statistical studies practically impossible, I have had compiled, after several unsuccessful starts, figures that have puzzled me no end. These figures are compiled from the reports of the trained investigators. For the past four years they show the kind of homes the boys and girls came from and the status of their parents.

Year	Total Children	Kind of Home						Living With Both Parents	
		Good		Fair		Poor			
1947	835	463	55%	222	26%	150	18%	447	52%
1948	732	414	56%	208	28%	110	15%	439	60%
1949	771	445	57%	216	28%	110	14%	472	61%
1950	675	367	54%	207	30%	101	15%	399	59%

Another figure which is at considerable variance with that in the group selected for study relates to children born out of wedlock. In our case, the percentage of out-of-wedlock children appearing for delinquency runs about 4%, against the studied group of 18.6% and 13% for delinquents and non-delinquents respectively.

For many years I have been looking for a clue to what brings 55% of children from good homes and 60% of children living with both parents into court on delinquency charges. The one trait that predominates in our difficult and unsuccessful cases is the lack of a sense of moral responsibility either to themselves or their communities. Further inquiry reveals that in this group religion plays but a small part, if any, in family living and that membership in any church is at best only nominal. It should be mentioned here that under the Children's Court Act of New York State, as under most Juvenile Court Acts

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following the Model Uniform Juvenile Court Law, inquiry into the religion of the child is made to enable the court to preserve and protect the child's religious faith in the event of placement of the child away from his parents.

To be effective, religious motivation must come from sincere conviction and belief in the spiritual and supernatural destiny of man. I cannot agree with the authors that "religion is largely related to ethnic origins." Nor am I, for the purpose of this point, giving preference to one religious denomination over another. I know from personal experience and from observation of others that human conduct is not only influenced but controlled by the individual's understanding and acceptance of a moral code, and the strength of his character to live up to it. I cannot help feeling that the belief in the God of the founders of our country, Who as the Creator created us equal, and endowed us with certain unalienable rights, does influence not only the inner personal lives of the individual but also his respect for the rights of his fellow men.

How accurately the sincerity or depth of religious belief and its influence on particular acts can be measured scientifically, I do not profess to know. Somehow I feel that the Gluecks have the ingenuity, skill and experience that could devise the necessary technique and formulae.

The foregoing must not be taken as a condemnation of the otherwise excellent study. It is fortunate that the Gluecks are not satisfied to rest on their laurels and that in the Preface to *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* they promise that "this book represents the first analysis of the data of the causal mechanisms of persistent delinquency and express the hope that further reflection, particularly examination of more intimate intercorrelations of the constituents of the various levels of exploration, will very probably bring about deeper insights and some modification of present conclusions."

Students of social problems will find in *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY* an invaluable guide for their own explorations into the mysteries of human behavior.

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CASES AND MATERIALS ON LABOR LAW. By Milton Handler and Paul R. Hays.

St. Paul: West Publishing Company. 1950. Pp. 989. \$8.00.

Since the volume in question is a legal case book, and this is a legal journal, it seems rather incongruous for the review to be written by an economist. But what seems like an incongruity at first blush may well turn out to be a blessing upon further probing. For an outsider to the legal fraternity, like myself, may see the problems confronting the labor lawyer from a dif-