

father's inferiority and inadequacy. So he goes about accomplishing his purpose in his own way, and his behavior marks him as a problem. He defies the parental authority which stands in his way of becoming independent. He is disobedient and insolent, and even resorts to questionable means of obtaining money to buy his own playthings. As is usually the case, the situation is carried over into the school, where his record is none too good.

There is much to be done in this case, but the first step indicated for the boy is to put him in a military or boarding school where he can compete on his own merits and learn the game of give and take.

In this very brief and superficial discussion I have tried to bring out these points:

Feelings of inferiority are practically universal, but they are scarcely deserving of the name complex unless the compensatory reaction is anti-social or brings about friction in the individual's environment.

Inferiority complexes are probably founded on two factors: one an actual marked inferiority, the other an imaginary inferiority arising from the ego, ambition or emotions within the individual himself.

Extravagant behavior represents the individual's effort to compensate for his inferiority in one respect by placing himself in a superior position in some other way.

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DELINQUENCY AND FEEBLE-MINDEDNESS

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"The intelligence of the conventional criminal is of a low order and verges rather upon the cunning of the savage, the simplicity of the child and the instinctiveness of the animal."¹ Thus wrote August Drahm in 1899. He was supported in his ideas by Lombroso. Their studies mark the beginning of a period rich in scientific research and in the promulgation of many theories regarding the causes and treatment of delinquency. Among these theories and beliefs, there are a few which have been quite generally accepted, and one of these concerns this subject of the intelligence of the delinquent and its influence in the causation of his unacceptable behavior.

The inferior order of the intellect of the delinquent was not an entirely new idea conceived by present-day criminologists, but its general recognition has been established in very recent years. It came about in somewhat the following way. The anthropometric measurements made by Lombroso led him to a belief in the existence of physical differences between the delinquent and the non-delinquent individuals. This made it possible for him to account for criminality and delinquency very largely on an hereditary basis, influenced, of course, to some extent

¹August Drahm, "The Criminal," p. 92.

by some environmental and accidental factors, but, on the whole, it relieved the desire for explanation on the principle that there are innate differences between the delinquent and the non-delinquent. Then, in 1913, Charles Goring, in an exhaustive study of the English convict, was able to disprove this belief of physical differences in the criminal. With the destruction of this explanation, it was felt that the delinquent must differ psychologically or mentally, and this belief has stimulated many researches and formulated a new explanation. It was about this time that the psychologists had invented their new measuring stick of the mind, the intelligence tests, and, on being introduced in this country, it was quite natural that they should be tried out on delinquent individuals, with the hope that they would scientifically establish mental differences that would help to explain the problem of delinquency.

The tests were accordingly administered. They fulfilled all expectations. "Studies showing 60, 70 and even 90 per cent of delinquents testing feeble-minded were reported" ¹ Such reports lent scientific accuracy to the popular conceptions and were quickly accepted by many psychologists and social workers. They provided a ready explanation to the problem of delinquency and brought psychologists and their tests into court. Given a delinquent individual, he was tested, found to possess inferior intelligence, and the problem of causation was solved. The individual was delinquent because he was feeble-minded and could not be expected to be other than socially maladjusted.

This idea of the intimate relationship between delinquency and feeble-mindedness has become an accepted principle of explanation. The deduction was rapidly made that all feeble-minded are potential delinquents because they are feeble-minded. Once feeble-mindedness is established, we are relieved from further explanation, and our responsibility lies in proper segregation. This has become the general attitude of courts, psychologists and social workers. Mental tests have almost become a routine in courts and with social agencies dealing with delinquent children. If mental deficiency can thereby be established the problem is solved. The defective child has come to be regarded as incapable of social adjustments. The terms defective and delinquent have become synonymous. It is believed that social behavior is largely dependent upon intelligence, reasoning ability and judgment. If an individual has defective judgment, his social behavior cannot be expected to be acceptable, and must necessarily come in conflict with social customs, morals and law. He simply doesn't know any better. If, on the other hand, a delinquent is found to have adequate intelligence, he is labeled willfully perverse and is in need of punishment.

This explanation, however, has not remained unquestioned. It is an interesting query: how much does intelligence and reasoning and judgment influence social behavior? Does the child who truants from school, or the child who steals a bicycle or the girl who commits sex offenses do so because he or she doesn't know any better, or because he has poor judgment in these matters? We find these delinquencies occurring in both feeble-minded and in superior children. Can they be explained on the one hand on the basis of defective mentality and on the other by willfulness or poor training or unfortunate circumstances? May there not be common factors in both?

¹R. Pintner, "Intelligence Testing," p. 284.

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That delinquency can be explained either "en masse" or even in any individual on the basis of one causation such as feeble-mindedness or mental subnormality, is a theory which cannot be proven, even though such a common factor as mental deficiency may appear to be present in a majority of cases. We have always to beware of our natural tendency to search for an explanation, and to classify and pigeonhole. Such a simple explanation has a tendency to satisfy to the extent of relieving us from further responsibility, especially when that explanation lies beyond our immediate power to remedy. This may well be the case with the feeble-minded delinquent. We have apparently found a cause for his delinquency and we have then satisfied our sense of responsibility for complete understanding. It is a very convenient explanation and classification. In this respect it becomes necessary to recall the scientific principle that there is no single explanation (no one cause) for anything in the world, that causation is always multiple. The problem of delinquency cannot be explained either in the whole or in any individual by any one cause such as feeble-mindedness. This has led many investigators to seriously question this supposed relationship between delinquency and feeble-mindedness. The disproof of it is principally established by two arguments: first, the earlier investigations, which found a high percentage of feeble-minded among delinquents, have not been verified by subsequent studies; second, it has been found that the feeble-minded individual is by no means always a potential delinquent, and that when delinquency occurs in the feeble-minded, it is not the mere fact of feeble-mindedness in and of itself that produces delinquency.

Recent studies of delinquents indicate a far smaller percentage of feeble-mindedness than we were at first led to believe. The 60, 70, and 90 per cent reports have been modified to 7 to 31 per cent. There are a number of reasons to account for these discrepancies. Some of them are due to faulty construction of the intelligence tests, which have been greatly remedied through experience. The most important reason is to be found in differences of interpretation of what constitutes feeble-mindedness. The upper limit of deficiency has generally been lowered from twelve to eight or nine years. The army experience has helped to these changes. Perhaps the most comprehensive study of the relationship of intelligence to delinquency has been made under the direction of Dr. Herman Adler, of Illinois. These results indicate that in adult offenders, the distribution of intelligence ratings is identical with the distributions of United States Army Draft. There is no heavier percentage of feeble-mindedness among adult offenders than was found in the United States Army. Among juvenile offenders in state institutions, however, a heavier percentage was found, but the tendency is to interpret much of this difference on the selective factors of the court. The mentally low-grade juvenile offender is much more apt to be sent to institutions for delinquents than the high-grade. For example, about 90 per cent of the girls in the State Industrial School were committed for sex offenses, while only 10 per cent of the boys were charged with this offense. The girls' school had 50 per cent more feeble-minded individuals than the boys. Obviously these girls did not represent all the sex offenders in the state, and because of the very nature of the offense, the high-grade sex offenders were either not apprehended, could take care of themselves, or were given more chances on probation than the low-grade, for whom the court held little hope of successful treatment.

Of the first 444 cases studied by the Child Guidance Clinic in the Twin Cities this past year, about 14 per cent were found to be feeble-minded. A large number of these were not referred as definite behavior problems, but for vocational guidance. Another 15 per cent were found to be subnormal or borderline; 55 per cent were found to be average in intelligence, and 16 per cent were superior. This indicates that in comparison with non-delinquent children, a slightly heavier percentage of children were referred who were mentally inferior; and other things being equal, it is believed that the mentally handicapped child is somewhat more likely to become delinquent and to develop behavior disorders than one of average or superior mentality. But the reason for this, as we wish to point out later, is not because feeble-mindedness produces the delinquency, or that feeble-mindedness is in and of itself the cause. The important thing here to be recognized is that children of all grades of intelligence develop behavior disorders and that all children are more or less potential delinquents. The vast majority of delinquents are not feeble-minded, and intelligence becomes only one of a large number of conditioning factors in the determination of delinquency.

Some interesting studies have recently been made of the feeble-minded themselves. In a study of 201 ex-students of special classes for mental defectives in Cincinnati after a 5-year interval, it was found that only 22.2 per cent had court or correctional institutional records, and over 53 per cent were gainfully employed. Of 121 individuals diagnosed feeble-minded by the Cincinnati Vocational Bureau from four to six years previous to 1923, only 18.2 per cent had court or institutional records.

This brings us to the very meat of the problem. Given a feeble-minded, delinquent child, how much does the fact of feeble-mindedness itself explain the problem? What role does intelligence play in social behavior?

John is twelve years old. He is in the fourth grade, which is beyond his mental capacity, though he is the oldest in his grade. He cannot do the problems that the younger boys solve readily. His reading is an annoyance to both teachers and pupils, and likewise to himself. He has frequently been reported for truancy, and there are two instances of stealing to his discredit. This is a typical history. Before he goes to court, a psychologist finds his intelligence quotient is 70. He is labeled mentally inferior. The question arises, is John delinquent because he is subnormal? Can we blame his mental inferiority for his delinquencies? In this connection we are immediately confronted with the query: if John were in some other social situation than in his grade at school, would he be delinquent? We have a gross discrepancy between John as an individual with limited intelligence on the one hand and the demands of intellectual requirements of fourth grade on the other. The supply of intelligence cannot fill the demand. John cannot do the tasks required of him. Accordingly he is confronted with a continuous series of social disapprobations. He, an individual with strong desires to win social approval and recognition, is incapable of fulfilling the requirements. Now, it is well known that all organisms and all human individuals always behave in such a way as to promote their own individual welfare. John instinctively recognizes that the school situation is out of harmony with his own welfare. He evades it as an amoeba would withdraw from an acid. He truants and thus restores his sense of equilibrium. He needs to set himself up in the eyes of his boy friends. He steals a bicycle, some money. Intellectually he knows this is wrong, but he achieves thereby a feeling of well-being and equality. It is his own individuality

working for his own welfare, solving his own problem. The difficulty comes when the social order arises and punishes him because it has been offended by his behavior.

Here is the situation: John's delinquencies arose because of the discrepancy between his ability to adjust himself and the requirements that social custom and order demanded of him.

Peter is in the subnormal room. There is no difficulty in his ability to meet the requirements of school tasks. But on the school ground he wants to play ball with the fellows his own age. He can play ball too. But the boys call him "Dummy" and "Crazy." Peter then becomes a bully and a constant fighter. Here too we have a discrepancy. It is between Peter's mental inferiority in school work and the recognized standards of mentality defended by the other boys of the school. Peter is compelled to achieve recognition and he resorts to physical prowess, on which basis he can compete. It is the natural defense of his own welfare.

Mary is a feeble-minded girl of eighteen. She has all of the bodily development and urges of any girl of her life age. She sees other girls and boys invited to social affairs to which she is not asked. There is here the same discrepancy between her mentality and the higher mentality of her community. The result of sex delinquency is not surprising. It is Mary working out her own individual welfare. Not gaining satisfaction in the usually acceptable modes of behavior, she yields to the socially unacceptable. I venture to say that intelligence has very little to do with her delinquency. She realizes it is not proper, but once this form of behavior is established, it is as difficult for her to break up the habit as it is for girls of high-grade intelligence.

We emphasize this idea of a discrepancy between the individual limitations and the requirements of social order because it is an aid in the explanation of behavior problems in general. We cannot expect the feeble-minded or subnormal to meet the social and intellectual requirements which have been developed for the average individuals. If the social demands and stresses are too great for his limitations, we must expect behavior that will offend the social order. When the feeble-minded are placed in situations where the requirements are at their own level they respond with behavior that is acceptable. This point has been amply proven by the efforts of many social workers. Likewise we cannot expect individuals whose conditions of health, education, training, economic status, and social intercourse are so limited as to produce a serious discrepancy with the demands of social order to conform at all times with the accepted requirements of social behavior. Any child, whose interests, whose likes and dislikes, whose personality are discrepant to the interests and personalities of the parent, becomes a behavior problem. The school boy whose physical development is below the requirements of his classmates and who becomes branded a "sissy," seeks his gratification in extravagant behavior that becomes an annoyance to the school. The adolescent whose sex drives are not satisfied in acceptable directions of interests and activities, frequently becomes a sex delinquent. Thus, the child who feels himself inadequate in meeting the demands of intellectual, social and physical requirements, strives to accomplish his own individual welfare, and in so doing, often comes in conflict with the rules of the game.

The part that intelligence plays in social behavior is not as great as we have been led to believe. The superior or average child who develops delinquent

tendencies knows full well that his behavior is objectionable. But he continues, and it appears that his intelligence and judgment is inhibited just as our own behavior is frequently so unintelligible. This holds true for the feeble-minded. It does not require a high order of intelligence to distinguish between what is socially "right" or "wrong." Ask any feeble-minded child, barring the very low-grade imbeciles and idiots who are institutional charges, if this or that activity is right or wrong, and he will answer you correctly. Intelligence then becomes only one factor in this whole determination of behavior. It may determine the type of delinquency. It may direct one individual to forgery and another to larceny. It is a tool for the delinquent. The high-grade offender may use his intelligence in working out his delinquent schemes, and the low-grade simply performs on a lower level.

We indicated before that the mentally handicapped child is somewhat more likely to become delinquent than one of average mentality. The reason for this is not inherent in the fact that he is mentally inferior. Rather, it is because the greater discrepancy between his limitations of adjustment and the requirements of his social group provide more opportunities for difficulties in adjustment.

There is one further point regarding the problem. Do feeble-minded and subnormal children respond to efforts of training in socially acceptable behavior? Is it possible to establish socially acceptable habits in them? The evidence at present is entirely in the affirmative, but there are two points to be remembered. First, it requires a longer period of training to establish such habits in the feeble-minded individual in comparison with the non-feeble-minded of the same life age. But the significant thing is that these habits can be established. The second point is even more important. Once habits of conduct are established in the mentally inferior, they are more difficult to alter. This, in terms of social control, means that when unacceptable habits are established in feeble-minded and subnormal children, the problem of reeducation is more difficult. On the other hand, if we can get these handicapped children early enough, it is quite possible to establish acceptable habits, and we can turn these children into profitable economic positions with an assurance that their social behavior will remain acceptable under usual conditions. This has provided a hopeful measure of treatment for such handicapped children.

In the clinic the treatment of mentally inferior children has not been unsuccessful. Often they are more amenable to treatment than the superior child, possibly because the social forces that operate in their lives are more controllable.

The burden of this paper is to indicate that the generally supposed relationship between delinquency and mental deficiency does not exist, that the feeble-minded individual is not delinquent merely because he is feeble-minded; that the establishment of inferiority in a delinquent does not explain or solve the problem, but that it is dependent on other conditioning factors, and that feeble-minded and subnormal children are trainable in socially acceptable behavior. These facts, we hope, will lend encouragement in the treatment of the defective delinquent.