

# Negligent criminology: Alfred Adler's influence on Bernard, Sheldon, and Eleanor Glueck

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## Abstract

We suggest that Bernard, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck routinely applied Alfred Adler's general psychological concepts to specific instances of criminological theory without proper attribution. We offer several levels of support: (1) we contrast the *Freudian terminology* within Bernard Glueck's early writings and Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's influential book *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (1950) with the *Adlerian constructs* of their respective criminological works; (2) we describe the enduring similarity between life-course theory of crime and Adler's original theory; and (3) we speculate as to how this apparent but non-attributed Adlerian influence occurred. Overall, the article exposes a circumstantial evidence of neglect in the criminology literature: Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's silence on Adler's contribution and their own ostracization by mainstream criminology. We conclude that acknowledgment of the Gluecks' contribution and their debt to Adler could continue to reinvigorate criminology today.

## Keywords

Alfred Adler, Bernard Glueck, classical Adlerian psychology, Individual Psychology, life-course criminology, psychological theory of crime

Ever since John Laub discovered the overlooked data for *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (Glueck and Glueck, 1950) in the basement of the Harvard Law School, the trajectory of criminology as a discipline has been shaped by a flurry of significant events.

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Laub's discovery occasioned the reanalysis of the data using advanced statistical techniques, which led to the follow-up longitudinal study of the original delinquents. The reexamination of the data resulted in the publication of seminal works such as *Crime in the Making* (Sampson and Laub, 1993), *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives* (Laub and Sampson, 2003) and other significant works in criminology (for example, Farrington, 2003; Nagin et al., 1995).

Laub and Sampson (1991) are not alone in contending that the intellectual predecessor to current criminological theory can be traced to the works of the husband–wife team, Sheldon (1896–1980) and Eleanor (1898–1972, née Touroff) Glueck. The reanalysis of the Gluecks' data shaped the emergence in the 1990s of the life-course theory of crime, which has become the default paradigm in North American criminology (Cullen, 2011).

Despite the promising direction offered by *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, the Gluecks never attained the professional acknowledgment and standing of Sheldon Glueck's older brother, Bernard Glueck, Sr. (1884–1972). As a forensic psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who worked at New York's Sing Prison, Bernard Glueck had a deep interest in psychopathy and contributed to the professional criminology literature (for example, Glueck, 1918, 1921, 1925, 1939, 1940, 1947 and 1954). He meticulously sought to illuminate both psychopathy and crime by reference to Freudian theory (see Alexander, et al., 1935a, 1935b) and his influence in the early history of criminology is readily acknowledged (Rafter, 1997b). Not so for his younger brother, Sheldon, and his favored student, Eleanor.

Bernard's introduction of the two resulted in a lifelong marriage and a fruitful professional career, but within their early lifetimes found them excluded from the ranks of academia. This article unravels their own participation – and possible collusion with Bernard Glueck – in a 'negligent criminology' that failed to properly credit Adler as the inspiration of their vibrant formulations and respective theorizing.

In the following, our broad focus is incrementally narrowed to the specifics of Adler's influence. We start with the extensive differences between the predominant psychological theory applied to criminology at its inception, that of Sigmund Freud, and contrast the alternative theory of Alfred Adler. Then we turn successively to life-course theory, the specific approach Sheldon and Eleonor Glueck brought to *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency (UJD)*, and then concentrate directly on their 'under the roof' metaphor – showing at each level the striking similarity with Adler's thinking. To conclude these extended discussions, we offer a brief summary of how the infusion of classical Adlerian concepts into contemporary criminology might have occurred and what its implications might include.

## **Freudian terminology, Adlerian constructs**

The early application of the psychoanalytic model to the human sciences was largely due to the innovations of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939). In the late 19th century the physiological and philosophical psychologies (for example, Theodor Fechner, 1801–1887), while helping quantify psychological perceptions, had little applicability to the needs of suffering individuals (Wexberg, 1929). This 'old psychology' was made practically obsolete when the psychoanalytic approach was developed in the first decade of the 20th

century. In Freud's revolutionary thinking, one could finally understand mental illness in terms of the possibility of healing it. The 'new psychology' lent itself to effective application in psychotherapy (Ellenberger, 1970). Alfred Adler (1870–1937) and Carl Jung (1875–1961) were also prominent innovators of the new psychology. Although both Adler and Jung had early career associations with Freud, they differed markedly in their interest in and devotion to Freud. Freud sought out Adler to join his original group in 1902, whereas Jung sought out Freud in 1907 to learn more about psychoanalysis (Ellenberger, 1970). Adler broke from Freud's inner-circle in 1911, Jung in 1914. Freud ([1914] 1957) attempted to vitiate their influence by writing a partly fallacious and highly partisan account (Gay, 1988). Reliably told or not, reception of *The History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement* by the contemporaneous followers of Freud left little question about the preeminence of Freud and his theory in relation to the human sciences – criminology included.

The pattern of deference to Freud in bolstering criminology as a discipline continues to this day. In criminology textbooks, Adler's work is regularly misidentified as a subset of Freudian psychoanalysis. Adler was not a student of Freud; he was respected and esteemed by Freud until their differently developed theories became incompatible and Adler was voted out of Freud's psychoanalytic society (see Nunberg and Federn, 1962–75). Similarly minded colleagues followed Adler and initially formed the Society for Free Psychoanalytic Study – later named the Society for Individual Psychology (Hoffman, 1994).

Distinctions between Freud's and Adler's theories are numerous (for example, Adler, [1931] 2005b). Presented here are just a bare minimum of the broad philosophical differences from their general theories as applied to conceptualizing crime and those who commit it.<sup>1</sup> Freud's psychoanalysis contended that criminology, like other human shortcomings, can be understood from an objective standpoint, believing one could stand outside the human condition and observe the invariable root of criminal activity: 'Generally speaking, our civilization is built up on the suppression of instincts. . . . The man who, in consequence of his unyielding constitution, cannot fall in with this suppression of instinct, becomes a "criminal", and "outlaw", in the face of society. . . .' (Freud, [1924] 1959: 186–7). Freud also believed that differentiating the offender from the non-offender could be accomplished by considering dualistic structures such as the conscious and the unconscious (Freud, [1920] 1959b: 111–12); that crime is a cause–effect affair (Freud, [1916] 1957b: 332–3).

Adler's Individual Psychology posited that criminology can be best understood from a subjective standpoint; that one must understand the life style (that is, unique personality) of the individual offender if one is to understand the motivation for the crime; that differentiating the offender from the non-offender can be accomplished only by considering each individual's context holistically:

'We find the goal of a criminal is always to be superior in a private, personal manner. What he strives for contributes nothing to others. He does not cooperate. . . . The goal of the criminal does not include this usefulness to society which is the most significant aspect of every criminal career.' (Adler, [1930] 2004: 187–8)

These differences demonstrate a paradox present in each of the Gluecks' publications. Surprisingly, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) describe Sheldon and Eleanor as being a-theoretical in *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*. Yet, if one is familiar with Adler's theory, *UJD* applies Freudian nomenclature but illustrates by means of Adlerian examples. All three of the Gluecks used Freudian language – objectivist, dualistic, causal terminology – in their accounts of delinquency, but tended to provide Adlerian illustrations – subjectivist, holistic, goal-oriented constructs – for consideration of criminal motivation and therapeutic intervention within their respective criminological works.

As Adlerian constructs, we can point to the multitude of social variables related to delinquency that served as the foundation for Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's multivariate, social-psychological approach (Laub, 2004). The Gluecks were active in the design of criminal sociology and statistical development, with several successful books in the 1930s (Glueck and Glueck, 1930, 1934a, 1934b). However, Bernard Glueck had applied a social-psychological approach decades earlier. Having led the translation into English of Adler's first major thesis, *The Neurotic Constitution*, in 1917, Bernard Glueck would have been intimately familiar with Adlerian concepts as he completed his 1918 study of prisoners at Sing Sing Prison. Therein he examined personality characteristics, offense type, family history, truancy, and parental disciplinary practices, as well as other factors in his analysis of prisoners. This holistic approach that Bernard Glueck pioneered evidently influenced Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's approach to criminology as well.

Early in his career Bernard Glueck advocated an idiographic approach for understanding criminal involvement, suggesting that 'personality represents the conception of self, the individual's appreciation of his own character' (Glueck B, 1921: 224). This was a far cry from using a nomothetic approach of instinct fulfillment to explain personality development. Furthermore, his attempts at understanding human behavior and motivation – for example his question, 'What is this boy after, what is he trying to achieve by these manifestations of conduct?' (Glueck B, 1925: 57) – bear a stronger resemblance to Adler's future-oriented (teleological) understanding of behavior than to Freud's past-oriented (etiological) psychoanalysis.

There were other specific Adlerian ideas that Glueck utilized in his conceptualizations about delinquents and the importance of child guidance. Describing the attitude displayed by delinquents as 'clinging to baby ways' and the 'difficulty in relinquishing the privileges of infancy' (see Glueck B, 1925: 58) sound like Adlerian-inspired formulations Glueck used throughout his writings. The focus on children feeling entitled is clearly Adlerian, because Freud found the aggressive character traits associated with pampering to be evidence of the ubiquitous Oedipus Complex. And Glueck's circumlocution of Adler's popular notion of pampering (see Adler, [1929] 1997) nonetheless reveals his Adlerian-leaning description. For Adler, objective conditions were not causes for criminal outcome. Rather, the interpretation the person gives to these conditions leads to criminal activity. Hence, Adler associated personality with one's attitude; how one adapts oneself toward the world, others and the problems by which life challenges each person.

It was both in his earlier theorizing about delinquency and in his therapeutic treatment that Bernard Glueck (1925) demonstrated an Adlerian preference. 'We are discovering a more dependable technique,' he emphasized, 'through the study of the child's human and social environment, the home, and the school, and the playground, for harnessing the

child's energies to socially acceptable ways of adaptation' (1925: 55). Glueck was discussing the significance of parental and home environment, school, and social utility, all of which had long been an acknowledged part of Adler's theory (see Adler, [1914] 2003b), while Freud was still pointing to sexual repression and guilt as causal factors in criminal activity (for example, Freud, [1920] 1959b). Twenty-five years later, these same Adlerian social-psychological factors would remain the focus in Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* – newly minted as 'under the roof' factors (1950: 92).

Nevertheless, Bernard Glueck is most well known for his work in the 1930s and beyond. During this period he had wholly abandoned Adlerian constructs. Instead, he devoted himself to expounding a Freudian-inspired, constitutionalist, and instinct-based (even eugenicist if Rafter, 1997a, is to be accepted) theory of behavior, which was of interest to early criminologists but which differed widely from the social-psychological position that he advocated in his earlier writings (see Rafter, 2004, 2005).

Glueck was a devoted follower and advocate of Freud and in his later writings relied exclusively on Freudian terminology when writing about treatment of psychopathology. Rather than locating the stirrings of delinquency in previously acknowledged socio-psychological manifestations, Glueck (1939) turned to intra-psychic, causal factors. Resorting to the use of instincts (for example, life, death, libido) as a way of explaining human behavior, Glueck suggested:

'We might . . . begin with those sources of pleasure and security which are associated with food taking and waste elimination, the oral and anal sources of pleasure and power. The . . . fascination of hard food which has to be chewed . . . has to replace the breast or milk bottle and calls for abandonment of the pleasures associated with them.' (Glueck B, 1939: 215)

Glueck emphasized the significance of the pleasure principle as a primal source of human motivation. Accordingly, an infant would have to substitute these early experienced instinctual joys with different behaviors if the adult would become a law-abiding and socialized citizen.

Such an instinct-based theory of human motivation was consistent with psychoanalysis. Freud maintained that personality is the expression of instinctual drives seeking fulfillment, that the desire to satisfy drives underlies the ego. Instinctual drive fulfillment constituted the primary variable in Freud's theory of personality and determined the unconscious. It is along such lines in relation to the structure and constitution of the unconscious that Freud and Adler differed irreconcilably. Why Bernard Glueck shifted his theories of motivation and crime from an Adlerian social-psychological approach to Freudian instinct-based theory is a question that is perhaps better addressed by the history of psychology rather than the history of criminology.

## **Similarities between life-course criminology and Adler's Individual Psychology**

Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's efforts were central to the emergence of the life-course theory of crime, which posits that crime is best explained by social bonds and processes

that occur throughout the individual's life cycle (Sampson and Laub, 2016). Institutions such as marriage, work, and military service work to attach individuals to social structures while facilitating desistance from crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003). In this framework, crime is not explained using trait-based attributes (for example, low self-control) or social processes (for example, differential association). Rather, within its tenets it considers individuals across their life span, presupposing the capacity for cognitive and behavioral change.

According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), it was the Gluecks who infused a developmental perspective into contemporary criminological theory. Yet Adler had already proposed that crime should be understood across the contours of major life activities: being able to form friendships in adolescence, securing meaningful work in adulthood, and establishing a long-lasting, meaningful relationship through marriage. In this respect, the work of the Gluecks is filled with concepts that are more similar to Adlerian concepts than the prevailing psychoanalytic theory of their day. Their explicit focus on family dynamics as correlated with low self-control, as well as with the personality and temperamental characteristics of delinquents, closely mirrors the observations of Adler, who had died almost 15 years before the Gluecks' major work was published.

The Gluecks also determined the importance of self-control as a differentiating characteristic between delinquent and non-delinquent youths. Adler (for example, [1924] 2003d) theorized that the general feature that separates these two groups was their level of *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* – the feeling of being part of the greater community. This deep and abiding interest in the interests of others, a feeling that others are part of a common effort, is the best assurance that youth will work toward a harmonious future. Although lack of community feeling involves a loss of agency and self-worth, it manifests as activities aimed to disadvantage the other – in a phrase: *lack* of self-control. Thus, Adler approached the puzzle of criminal motivation as if it were a variant of non-criminal behavior: that each individual experiences some level of identification with the interests and needs of fellow humans along with the ability to express it. He understood the relative presence or absence of this feeling-for-others as helping to explain differences in individuals. The personality, he contended, was a unique, creative act of the individual that is shaped by family dynamics, birth order, and the individual's uniquely *creative* organizing principle, what Adler theorized was an unconscious goal. The Gluecks, too, seemed to have a sense of this and examined the variables that resulted in self-control as the predominant trait that could explain criminal and deviant behavior (Glueck and Glueck, 1950, 1956).

Finally, for the Gluecks, family dynamics preceded self-control and constituted the foundation and structure that supported what they considered to be the accurate development of criminology theory. Without an understanding of parental interactions with children, the birth order of the siblings, marital interactions and the like, no theory of delinquent-to-delinquent associations could be understandable. Adler determined, long before any of the Gluecks, that community feeling was first developed – or not – within the family. He suspected that this lack could greatly predispose the active child to seek out a life of crime.

## **Individual Psychology related to *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency***

This section addresses five broad swaths of Adler's theory as they relate to the Gluecks' *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*: inferiority feelings, dynamic development of personality, birth order, the significance of schools, and the three primary tasks of life.

### *Inferiority feelings*

Adler ([1907] 2002a) enshrined inferiority feelings as the basic condition of the human being. Born helpless, individuals rely on parents, family members, and, later, society to guide them safely into taking part in human culture. Far from pathological, the feeling of inferiority spurs the individual to compensate in useful ways that result in benefits to the individual and others. If the compensatory urge is met with success adequate to the problems the individual faces, development will likely be within the norm. If the person is overburdened, the compensation veers from a path of mutual contribution – what Adler called 'the useful side of life' – and finds expression on the 'useless side of life' wherein mutual contribution is avoided. That avoidance of life is witnessed in non-contributive expressions such as neurosis, psychopathology, and criminal activity.

Adler described three overburdening situations that lead to an exaggerated feeling of inferiority: (1) physical handicap and organ inferiority (see Adler, [1907] 2002a); (2) societal influence leading to neglect (see Adler, [1920] 2003c); and (3) family dynamics that include pampering or neglect (see Adler, [1931] 2005c). Adler posited that children with physical handicaps (for example, poor eyesight, defective hearing, rickets) feel overburdened in life and begin to develop the feeling that others should take care of them, to compensate for the child's difficulties.

This notion of inferiority feeling is one of the most frequently and freely applied concepts that other theorists have used without giving Adler credit (Ellenberger, 1970: 643). So, the Gluecks were not alone in their many references to this construct without crediting Adler. For example: 'the frequently mentioned inferiority feelings with their compensatory reaction phenomena may be significant in analyzing the roots of maladjustment and delinquency' (Glueck and Glueck, 1950: 169). Even on a deeper level, however, the Gluecks understood and seemingly operated from the position that the inferiority feeling was part-and-parcel of the human condition.

### *Dynamic development of personality, mental illness, and healing*

Adler posited that personality is a creative process in which we individually fashion a 'style' of life that is mostly formed before the age of five. What he considered an attitude of adaptation begins in infancy, as we compare ourselves to all those more grown than we, who are capable of mobility and greater ease of movement. An infant's experience of its inadequacy and dependence on others embodies its feelings of inferiority and consequently its attitude toward life. Based on such felt-deficiency and lack, individuals attempt, at every developmental level, to move toward competence, mastery, or wholeness.

Adler posited that such initial strivings are largely done in nonconscious ways, not based on objective criteria but on often random, trial-and-error findings that develop into one's subjective *misinterpretation* of how life works. In order to overcome feelings of inferiority, Adler suggested individuals eventually imagine an ideal situation of mastery, a sense of completion. In its relatively completed form, Adler termed this the 'fictional final goal.' Once this imagined goal becomes operative it is consigned to the unconscious, where it can be acted on without the need for rational reflection.

As might be expected, the greater one's inferiority feeling, the stronger felt-need there is to compensate for that sensitivity. Thus, a distorted, overburdening feeling of inferiority is matched by a distorted, unsocial goal of superiority: a self-focused interest in overcoming one's sense of inferiority. The aggressive, unsocial energy involved in meeting such a goal is hidden away from consciousness and from disturbing its advance toward completion. As such it is hardly accessible except through therapeutic intervention. Self-focused ways of overcoming one's feelings of inferiority lead to what are experienced as mental disturbances from the norm – neurosis and/or criminal behavior. The attitude with which an individual moves toward this fictional goal is constitutive of one's personality – healthy or not.

The Gluecks frequently used the concepts in Adler's theory of personality development to explain the temperamental and character structure of their subjects in *UJD*. They noted repeatedly that mothers were too often overprotective of their children. They documented this dynamic as a condition that frequently led to delinquency. Moreover, like Adler, the Gluecks frequently referenced one's *attitude* toward life to reference personality: 'The attitude of the boy toward his parents is a very strong indicator of his personality' (1950: 125).

### *Birth order and the dynamic family*

Despite the similarity of family environment, Adler was fascinated by the vast differences in personality and interaction that were often found in families, large or small. He was equally fascinated by the similarity between birth order position in widely different families, irrespective of patients' class or gender (Adler, [1931] 1992). He observed, for example, that many first-born children take responsibility for household obligations and for younger siblings. He found first-born children more serious than the second-born child – whom he observed was generally light-hearted, easy-going and social. He also observed that the last-born in families tended to be pampered by older siblings and by parents who know it is their last child. Frequently this results in a youngest child who is either especially dependent on others' help or fiercely independent of others.

Adler's observations served to develop a general understanding of several birth order positions, which were quickly popularized and used as simplistic typological constructs by those not familiar with Adler's broader theory. Yet Adler conjectured that birth order was an external influence that each child would interpret for itself and incorporate into its personality. Thus, children whose behavior contrasted to the general birth order expectation were doing so for individual reasons that would be understandable to the observant therapist (Adler, [1931] 1992). Adler saw birth order as a starting point in grasping the general attitude and outlook of an individual. It was not intended as a

predictive system – which it became when appropriated outside Individual Psychology. As helpful as understanding common birth order characteristics was, it became a target for those who derided Adler's Individual Psychology for *not doing* something that it was designed to avoid.

Adler's works on the dynamics of birth order and parenting styles are multifaceted and too numerous to list in detail. Again, he observed that pampering (Adler, [1931] 2005c) and neglect (Adler, [1920] 2003c) were two of the most common situations in childhood that can overburden a young child and increase the chances of discouragement. Pampered children have become accustomed to others serving them, meeting their needs and desires. They typically had not learned to surmount problems by themselves. Often when others do not do what they want, pampered children become resentful and act out in vengeful ways. Neglected children (that is, those hated, abused, maltreated, abandoned) have not experienced an empowering love or cooperation during their formative years. They tend to be distrustful, isolated, and suspicious of people (see Caspi et al., 1994). The absence of encouragement can be used to justify their feelings of entitlement to special treatment because they were not afforded such treatment when they were young. In an Adlerian framework, the discouragement of pampering and neglect converge in the development of personalities low in community feeling. These individuals generally lean toward either neuroticism or criminality – distinguished by their relative activity level. For neglected or pampered children who exhibit a generally low interaction rate with others, a neurosis is the general outcome; whereas, for those neglected or pampered children who exhibit a generally high interaction rate with others, criminality is frequently the outcome (Adler, [1929] 1997).

Adler (1930/2005a) understood that families with other disruptive factors also played a part in forming the personality of children. For instance, the relatively larger size of delinquents' families was perhaps due to the presence of stepsiblings and may be explained by the greater portion of their parents having been divorced and remarried. Consequently, birth order behavior may have been impacted by the parents' choice of marriage partners (see van Schellen et al., 2012), as well as by the disruption of established sibling hierarchies. Such accounts are a focus of Adler's theory, especially in relation to family dynamics, sibling rivalry, and personality development (see Adler [1912] 2003a, [1924] 2003d).

The Gluecks (1950) were similarly sensitive to birth order, and references to it are found throughout *UJD*. For example, they note that 'only children, first children, and youngest children are thought to be especially vulnerable to the development of behavior difficulties, because they receive preferential treatment.' 'It is of interest,' they concluded, 'to see how the delinquents and non-delinquents compared in rank order among their brothers and sisters' (1950: 120).

### *The significance of schools*

The notion that schools are 'testing grounds' and centers for teachers to socialize children received great impetus from Adler and his theory. The historic school reforms of Red Vienna (see Gardner and Stevens, 1992), directed by Carl Furtmüller, one of Adler's closest associates, featured child guidance centers wherein Adler and his colleagues would

provide in vivo assistance to teachers, parents, and children. By implementing presentations based on this successful European experiment, Adler also had a strong impact during his frequent tours of the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. His primary thrust was training children to be independent, to overcome their problems in courageous ways by acting out of interest for others (see Adler, [1930] 2005a). The well-established Adlerian child guidance clinics in Vienna (Furtmüller, [1946] 1964) flourished as Adler toured the US. He gave influential lectures to educators, therapists, and counselors as he treated problematic children in front of audiences. Adler's attention to schools as a re-boot for discouraged youth was being done long before Freudian practitioners Anna Freud (1931) and Erik Erikson (1946) developed their focus on children. For Adlerians, school involvement was understood to be an appraisal of children's preparation for leaving the security of their homes. There the children are often entering a new social milieu where their personalities are tested within new situations. This test of preparedness – their acquired skill level (or lack thereof) – reappears throughout the life-course in the form of choice of friendship, occupation, and marriage partner, which could culminate with their own offspring.

The Gluecks' work regarding delinquency documented the very conditions that Adler's school approach was intended to ameliorate: that delinquents were frequently inattentive, careless, restless, and easily discouraged in relation to their school work when compared with their non-delinquent counterparts. In this way the Gluecks' findings predate those of contemporary criminology: that juvenile delinquents tend to be hyperactive, suffer from conduct problems, possess poor cognitive and executive ability, and score low on intelligence tests (see Bersani et al., 2009; McGloin et al., 2006). The Gluecks agreed that delinquents' failure to meet the responsibilities of school becomes a serious problem because 'they hinder the individual from meeting social responsibilities' (Glueck and Glueck, 1950: 152). The Gluecks were so convinced about the importance of school that they called it 'the first testing-ground set up by society for the child outside the secure atmosphere of the home' (1950: 135). This is precisely Adler's point made in practically his same words (see Adler, [1930] 2006a) – again without attribution. The significance of schools as more objective sites of socialization was echoed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) as well. This social interaction was brought forward by 'the Freudian left' (Robinson, 1969) only years after it was well established in the Adlerian guidance clinics (see Ellenberger, 1970).

### *Solving the three primary tasks of life in a socially interested manner*

Adler ([1929] 1997) did not shy away from referring to his Individual Psychology as a form of philosophical or social psychology. He contended that a person has two primary ways of responding to the question of how to contribute to society: in a socially useful manner or in a socially useless manner. Adler understood self-focused individuals as lacking adequate feeling for the wellbeing of others – what he termed a deficiency in *Gemeinschaftsgefühl*. This socially focused view of individuals involved seeing them holistically, in their most comprehensive setting. As a result, he advocated interpreting people's behavior from within that holistic context. Rather than conceptualizing mental health by the absence of intra-psychic conflict, Adler ([1931] 2005b) was a proponent of examining the relationship between the individual and society. One could be

autonomous, flexible, and devise many ways to solve problems in socially useful ways, or lean on others, become fearful, and adhere to a rigid way of binary thinking while becoming a- or anti-socially self-focused.

As Adler noted, the most common and necessary problems in need of answers are those we humans all face daily and that bind us into a common cause: dividing the labor by which humans sustain themselves on Earth; finding ways to associate with all others in peace; and cooperatively propagating and rearing the species. These three demands made on the individual and the species he referred to as the ‘problems’ (as in a puzzling math problem) or the ‘tasks’ of life: work, friendship, and love.

Adler considered both mental health and criminal behavior holistically, in the context of the entire life cycle. Criminality, neurosis, and psychosis are all contingent upon the individual’s succeeding or failing to succeed at these tasks of life. In Adler’s theoretical framework, an individual moves toward the completion and resolution of benchmarks that are confronted throughout life and which are usually normatively defined, depending on the culture of the individual (Piquero et al., 2010). Adler ([1930]/2006b) was as aware as Erikson (1959) that during adolescence a person works on self-identity and relating to others – including intimate relations (see Moffitt, 1993). Those unable to form healthy relationships tend to gravitate toward other maladjusted youths, which leads to the formation of gangs. Maladjusted youths are not merely motivated by the situation in which they find themselves (see Hoeben and Weerman, 2016). Adler conceptualized delinquency as a life-style characteristic rather than a result of peer association, thus foreshadowing the Glueck–Sutherland debate to emerge later (Laub and Sampson, 1991).

In this way, too, his theory of delinquency preceded and included much of that which the Gluecks’ work documented. In early adulthood, for example, an individual ought to have solved the question of occupation. Adler observed that juveniles frequently matured out of delinquent patterns once they entered adulthood and found employment. This anticipated the model of natural desistance recognized by contemporary criminologists (for example, Geest et al., 2011; Petras et al., 2010).

Another of Adler’s views of criminal behavior was that offenders characteristically take shortcuts rather than earning a living via the development of a contributive occupation. He theorized that individuals best solve the problem of love and sex through monogamous marriage and starting a family as mature adults. Adler considered sexual deviancy and paraphilia as derailed-success in this area. He theorized that neurotics and criminals retreat in the face of the three social tasks of life, rather than facing and overcoming their difficulties in socially useful, cooperative ways. He viewed neurosis and crime as failures in living socially, failures that are uniquely expressed by the individual. Nonetheless, the utility of such a holistic view of life is that it can, for investigative purposes, be demarcated into normative stages based on the age of individuals – a feat that predates the dominant criminological theory by nearly a hundred years.

### **‘Under the roof’ metaphor related to Individual Psychology**

Having offered a more thorough grasp of Adler’s theory and its pervasive influence in the Gluecks’ work, we can focus more specifically on the Glueck’s well-known ‘under

the roof' metaphor to show how their emphasis on family dynamics – and perhaps, by extension, Adlerian thought – is the germ of now-prevalent life-course criminology theory. It was Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck who introduced family dynamics as the 'foundational walls' that hold up the 'roof of criminology theory.' The impact of this representation on contemporary criminology – and the professional censure it brought upon them – can be examined on three levels.

First, the Gluecks' examination of 149 social variables related to delinquency was a foreshadowing of the significant empirical findings to emerge in the 1990s and 2000s. Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck observed that delinquents' parents were more likely to be divorced, had histories of criminality, and engaged in overly punitive or inconsistent discipline (see Mears and Siennick, 2016). The Gluecks also noted that a majority of the mothers of delinquents (64 percent) provided little or no supervision, or delegated those tasks to another child, and families of delinquents participated in significantly less family-involved leisure acts than non-delinquent families (see Hoeben and Weerman, 2016). They remarked that most delinquent families (85 percent) needed help from social services, which arose from the neglect and abuse of their children, in contrast to non-delinquent families (44 percent), and that delinquent families used twice as many social services as non-delinquent families. Overall, the Gluecks rejected unitary causes of criminality and attributed delinquency to multivariate factors under the roof, such as parental supervision, parenting style, and disciplinary practices.

Second, the influence that the Gluecks wielded in criminological knowledge can be seen in one of the most cited and tested theories of crime – Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory. They cited the Gluecks more than 23 times throughout *A General Theory of Crime*. Gottfredson and Hirschi's citations served to buttress the value of longitudinal studies, the family dynamics related to criminality (for example, birth order and parenting style), and the explanatory power of self-control as a construct to account for criminal and non-criminal behaviors (Nieuwebeerta and Piquero, 2008). Moreover, the emergence of self-control as a general theoretical construct to explain the range of forms of criminal and deviant behavior was already embedded in *UJD* as two related measures, which Gottfredson and Hirschi acknowledged. The Gluecks defined self-control as 'the faculty of controlling the discharge and expression of affectivity,' noting that delinquents are not as 'self-controlled' as non-delinquents (Glueck and Glueck, 1950: 237). The Gluecks used self-control as a stable trait. Additionally, they used the construct 'emotional lability' to describe the way emotions burst through without consequences, the way tensions can 'explode.'

Third, and most consequential to Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, their findings challenged two schools of thought in mainstream sociology: the Chicago School's social disorganization theory and Sutherland's differential association theory. They critiqued and tested the assumptions of the Chicago School by illuminating the causes behind persons who do not become delinquent despite living in delinquent areas (see Shaw and McKay, [1942] 1969). This move to subtly swing the social-psychological variables related to delinquency – away from spatial dynamics and social inequality (see Morenoff et al., 2001) and toward family-level variables – shifted the analytical focus *away* from pure social processes and *onto* psychological factors. This underlying psychological presupposition behind the Gluecks' explanations of delinquency pressed against the

intellectual and disciplinary boundaries of the study of crime from sociology to psychology (Laub and Sampson, 1991) and highlighted their rejection of the predominant sociological theory of crime of their time.

The Gluecks also rejected outright the notion that crime is caused by differential association – an intellectual shift that was tantamount to subordinating sociology to psychology. Not the *associational* ‘with whom?’ but the *motivational* ‘why them?’ was what the Gluecks viewed as more pressing for understanding criminality. Why did delinquents hang out with other delinquents in the first place, despite the availability of non-delinquent companions? Consequently, they inverted causal ordering from established sociological canons. Edwin Sutherland’s (1947) explanation for the initial association was, ‘It is not necessary . . . to explain why a person has the associations he has; this certainly involves a complex of many things’ (as cited in Glueck and Glueck, 1950: 168). The Gluecks countered that this ‘complex of many things’ was likely at the *center* of the problem. They argued, ‘Without an explanation of this and many other fundamental facts, the theory of differential association as the basic cause of delinquency is a roof without a house’ (1950: 168). In other words, in the Gluecks’ framework, delinquency at an individual level preceded the association with other delinquents (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990: 234). Or, as the Gluecks were fond of saying, the tendency of birds of a feather to flock together ‘is a much more fundamental fact in any analysis of causation than the theory that accidental differential association of non-delinquents is the basic cause of crime’ (Glueck and Glueck, 1950: 164). Although Sutherland was initially receptive to the idea of multiple-cause accounts of delinquency, he later changed his thinking and began to criticize the work of the Gluecks as a way of solidifying sociological criminology’s disciplinary monopoly on the study of crime (Laub and Sampson, 1991).

It was this rejection by the Gluecks of the predominant sociological theory of crime that led to their banishment from the discipline by one of the most powerful figures in sociology at the time. Sutherland wrote scathing attacks on the Gluecks’ works and thwarted their attempts to secure stable positions in academia (Laub and Sampson, 1991). Consequently, despite their recognition within criminological associations, the Gluecks were never able to secure the coveted academic positions they had hoped for. They were blocked from tenure-track positions in sociology departments across the US, where criminology courses were primarily taught. Moreover, the Gluecks’ titles at Harvard University Law School, equivalent to that of teaching assistant and research associate, reflected their tenuous positions throughout their careers.

In the Gluecks’ view then, sociological theories represented only the outer layer of a much deeper phenomenon at work. They believed Sutherland’s and the Chicago School’s theories failed to clarify the psychological motivations *underlying* theories of crime (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). Psychological schemes of motivation that precede sociological models of crime are evident in the Gluecks’ seminal work. Their psychological leanings, we have argued, most closely follow Adler’s Individual Psychology.

## Discussion and conclusion

This article has examined the notable similarities between Alfred Adler’s theorizing about criminal offenders and Bernard Glueck’s early works and the seminal work of

Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. We have also examined the parallels between life-course criminology and Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. We have argued that acknowledging Adler's theorizing would have been most consistent with the Gluecks' data, analysis, findings, and overall argumentation rather than expressing deference to psychoanalysis to buttress their conclusions.

We believe a case for the Gluecks' 'negligence' has been made plausible. None of the Gluecks acknowledged or cited Adler in their vast body of professional literature, despite their formulations that paralleled his. Rather than cite Adler or apply his nomenclature, the Gluecks continued to use Freudian terminology even while presenting their Adlerian-leaning theory. Perhaps for purposes of professional credibility – perhaps following the older Glueck's example, if not his suggestion – they all positioned their theory within the most acceptable psychological terminology of their day: psychoanalysis. These intentions seem to have been deliberate and successful – almost. The irony of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck's ostracization by the academic criminologists of their day paralleling Adler's ostracization by psychoanalysts (see Freud, [1914] 1957a) is the twinning of what we consider cases of negligent criminology.

As a result of publishing *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck came to occupy in academia what Adlerian theory might consider the position of neglected children: all but banished from criminology and sociological academia of the day. It is as if their refusal to overtly mention Adler, an unpopular theorist, was the same sentence their own professional community visited on them. The Gluecks' challenge of the dominant sociological position ultimately led to their exclusion from major academic standing in the discipline (Laub, 2004).

As the life-course paradigm emerged without direct acknowledgment or awareness of Adler's theory, we wonder what might happen even now if his theory were given belated reconsideration, as the Gluecks' work has been given. Based on his empirical practise, Adler formulated an integrated theory addressing normality, mental illness, and criminality. Adler was already observing that, when teenagers commit crimes, most do it for social reasons, to imitate popular contemporaries and as a way of seeking approval from their peers; that juvenile delinquency wanes as they mature into adult roles when they find stable work, and as they marry and start a family (see Moffitt, 1993). Further, Adler seemed to have recognized and theorized about the social bonds that individuals form *with* significant people and institutions *across* the life-course that indicate continued involvement in, or desisting from, delinquency and crime. He had an empirical approach and a humane method that may still assist and inspire construction of an integrated and holistic theory of crime.

We suggest that this omission and consequent neglect can be rectified through an acknowledgment of Alfred Adler's place in the contemporary accounts of criminology. This acknowledgment could involve incorporating Adler's original ideas and works into the canons and key reading lists of the discipline. As we have noted, the belatedly acknowledged and acclaimed social-psychological approach to crime and delinquency ostensibly pioneered by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck was first constructed by Alfred Adler. We conjecture that it was passed on to them by their mutual mentor, Bernard Glueck.

Since its inception, criminology has been touted as an interdisciplinary field. Giving proper credit to Alfred Adler, one of the most original thinkers in psychology, who attentively theorized about crime and delinquency, exemplifies this multifaceted character of criminology's thought without eroding the legitimacy of the discipline. As they pertain to crime and criminality, his ideas and works have direct implications for the history of criminology and applicability to contemporary criminology. Thus, the creative genealogy of Adler's ideas – some of which we have tried to introduce to the reader – should be recognized as compensation for a (up till now) negligent criminology.

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## Note

1. The German word *Verbercher*, used by both Freud and Adler, carries a negative connotation beyond 'offender' – more along the lines of 'crook,' 'outlaw,' or 'gangster' – and is most frequently rendered 'criminal' in their current English translations.

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