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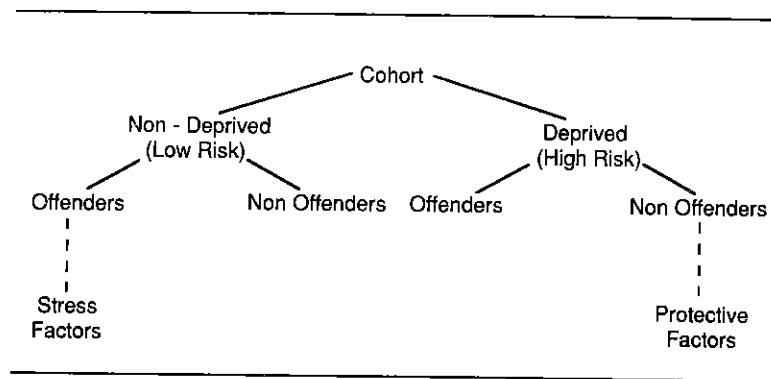
15 Non-deprived but delinquent: deprived but resilient

Introduction

Many youths from 'high-risk' backgrounds do not become delinquent while a small proportion of those from low-risk backgrounds do so (Rutter and Giller, 1983) and no theory of criminality can be complete without attempting to account for those who have slipped the hypothetical net. In so far as we are prepared to accept that criminality does have causal origins, we must accept that certain factors, which we term 'protective', serve to counter motivation to crime despite a high-risk background and, second, that certain other stress factors heighten criminal potential despite a non-deprived environment. Here we examine both 'protective' and stress factors (Kolvin *et al.*, 1988b).

Methodology

We divided our cohort into sub-groups (Figure 15.1). In the non-deprived group we tried to identify stress factors which discriminated between individuals who did and who did not become delinquent. Factors were then sought in the deprived group which helped to explain the resilience of those who did not offend. These are protective factors. An important question was whether protective factors operated across the spectrum of deprivation. We tried also to ascertain whether the two kinds of factors operated in a similar way in both boys and girls, but the low incidence of female delinquency confined us to a study of protective factors and prevented a study of sex differences in vulnerability to stress. Finally, we tried to discover if these factors remained potent over time (Werner, 1985) or changed in significance as the child developed. For these purposes, data have been drawn from the children's records at five, 10 and 15 years.



Note: Girls: Studied protective factors only.
Boys: Studied stress and protective factors.

Figure 15.1 Division of cohort into sub-groups

The first five years

Stress factors (Table 15.1)

By the time the boys were five years old, a small number of factors had already emerged in the non-deprived group which presaged later delinquency. The main ones were a relative decrease in personal territory, and 40 per cent of eventual delinquents in this group had experienced lesser personal 'space' (not of sufficient severity to be included as overcrowded according to our definition) as against 18 per cent of non-delinquents; mother relatively young at marriage (29 per cent as against 11 per cent); and the breadwinner being in semi-skilled/unskilled work or unemployed (33 per cent as against 18 per cent). They also showed relatively poor physical growth at three years of age.

Protective factors (Table 15.2)

Turning now to protective factors at age five, first the absence of specific deprivations against a background of general deprivation as reflected by less overcrowding and smaller family size, giving rise to greater living space, proved

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- Good mothering
- Semi-skilled occupation (father)
- Persons per room: 1.6 or more
- Ordinal position: 3rd or later
- Poor maternal health at child's birth
- Family size when child 5: 3 or less
- Parent unemployed
- Height at 3 years > 36ins
- Mother's youth at marriage (under 20)
- Neonatal injuries

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Table 15.1 Males: fifth-year and earlier – stress factors in the non-deprived; protective factors in the deprived

	Non-Deprived (Score Zero)				Deprived (Score One or More)			
	Non-offenders		Offenders		Non-offenders		Offenders	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
Good mothering	NA		NA		68	111	46	85**
Semi-skilled occupation (father)	18	191	33	40*	50	111	61	85
Persons per room: 1.6 or more	18	191	40	40**	59	111	75	84*
Ordinal position: 3rd or later	15	191	23	40	26	111	51	85**
Poor maternal health at child's birth	8	190	8	40	18	111	32	4*
Family size when child 5: 3 or less	93	191	90	40	75	111	44	85**
Parent unemployed	NA		NA		23	111	40	85*
Height at 3 years > 36ins	56	156	31	29*	42	60	22	50*
Mother's youth at marriage (under 20)	11	189	29	38**	21	106	38	81**
Neonatal injuries	28	162	19	36	23	95	38	73*

*5% level of significance (two tailed)

**1% level of significance

to be important protectors. Second, 68 per cent of non-delinquents had had the benefit of good mothering against 46 per cent of delinquents in the deprived group; or of good maternal health (82 per cent against 68 per cent); good care of the children and home (93 per cent against 76 per cent); employment of the breadwinner (77 per cent against 60 per cent). But other factors were also identified. Being elder-born appears to mitigate the effects of underprivilege; 49 per cent of the deprived group who became delinquent were first- or second-born as opposed to 74 per cent of those who remained crime-free. There is also an undeniable statistical link with early physical development, the absence of a medical history (including relative absence of neonatal complications), fewer hospital outpatient attendances, and fewer accidents. All of these probably reflect a more

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Protective Factors

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favourable standard of child-rearing. The above simple statistics do not adequately reflect the relationship at the extremes of deprivation, offending and accidents. The rate of three or more accidents by five years is 8 per cent in non-offenders and 27 per cent in offenders; and the rate of hospital outpatient visits is 59 per cent and 77 per cent respectively. Thus, while there is no relationship in the non-deprived, among the multiply deprived there is a highly significant relationship between presence or absence of offending and frequency of accidents to year 5 ($p < .01$). Further, in the case of males, 18 per cent of non-offenders and 49 per cent of offenders had had one or more accidents by five years ($p < .02$).

Among the females, the protective factors (Table 15.2) identified by age five were smaller in number than for their male counterparts but nevertheless important. A secure socioeconomic status of the breadwinner appeared to act as a bulwark against criminal activity as did a healthy mother and an accident-free early childhood. All of these factors may in turn reflect better care of the child. Another significant factor was dryness at night. Possibly this represented earlier biological maturation.

Table 15.2 *Females: fifth-year protective factors in the deprived*

	Non-Delinquent		Delinquent	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
Skilled employment	46	150	16	19
No social dependency	93	150	68	19*
No accidents before age 5	57	150	21	19**
Good maternal health	84	148	58	19
No bedwetting	73	132	42	19

*5% level of significance

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Stress factors (Tables 15.3 and 15.4)

By the age of 10, many more factors concerning the children's interaction with their social and school environments were measurable and the emergent stress factors seem to cover the whole range of a child's activities outside the family. They were of four main types: physical, temperamental, intellectual, and attitudinal. Although factors operative at age five did not cease to be significant, others became more prominent. School proved a major source of stress factors and the data all pointed to the conclusion that the scholastic underachiever, hostile to education, is more likely than the achiever to offend against the law. Further, the proportion of potential law-abiders exhibiting good concentration was more than three times the proportion of nascent delinquents doing so. A similar pattern occurred with those who were reliable in class. There was also a marked difference in abilities; intelligence and educational achievements in the core educational subjects differed considerably between the groups. Even by 10 years hostility to education and authority was apparent in 62 per cent of those who would become delinquent, against 35 per cent of non-delinquent. Whether a symptom or cause of antisocial behaviour, this was startling.

Protective factors

The converse of the above findings, that a good school career blunted the propensity to crime for children from deprived backgrounds was borne out by our findings. The proportion of the non-delinquent deprived group who performed well scholastically, concentrated in class, showed persistence and reliability or whose IQ was average or higher varied from between twice and five times that of the delinquent deprived. This is well demonstrated by the fact that only 16 per cent of the deprived delinquent group had an arithmetic quotient of 100 or above as against 56 per cent of non-delinquents. Good parental supervision also had an ameliorative effect; 28 per cent of delinquents, but only 10 per cent of non-delinquents, had been poorly supervised. Whereas 76 per cent of deprived children who later stayed out of trouble belonged to youth clubs, only 55 per cent of those who later

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Delinquent	Total 'n'
6	19
58	19*
21	19**
58	19
42	19

Table 15.3 *Stress and protective factors in boys 10 and 11 years*

	Stress Factors in Non-Deprived				Protective Factors in Deprived			
	Non-delinquent		Delinquent		Non-delinquent		Delinquent	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
Poor supervision	1	187	0	38	10	104	28	74*
Negative attitude to the police	35	158	62	34**	43	92	41	59
Membership of youth club	79	159	69	35	76	91	55	60**
Good reading	41	133	29	34	23	87	13	62
Good spelling	42	134	24	34	26	87	5	62**
Good reliability	69	134	41	34	61	87	29	62**
Good concentration	33	133	9	34	17	87	5	62
Poor persistence	24	133	38	34	31	87	61**	62**
Arithmetic quotient 100+	74	160	57	37	56	91	16**	67**

*5% level of significance

**1% level of significance

Table 15.4 *Females: tenth year protective factors in the deprived*

	Non-Delinquent		Delinquent	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
No loss of father	81	139	61	18*
Adequate supervision	93	139	72	18**
Good reliability	58	120	29	17*
Adequate sociability	92	120	71	17*

*5% level of significance

**1% level of significance

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offended were members. This suggests that identification with positive peer group activities afforded some protection.

Protective factors seemed even more effective in the multiply deprived group as seen in relation to achievements during the 11-plus examination, particularly the arithmetic quotient, and in reading and spelling as assessed by class teachers. A good reliability rating in the classroom was moderately protective. The majority of those who stayed out of trouble were members of youth clubs (72 per cent) as against the minority of those who did not (41 per cent). Absence of developmental delays, such as speech problems, was also moderately protective.

No less important were the protective factors in girls (Table 15.4). Twenty-eight per cent of the eventual delinquents experienced poor supervision as against 7 per cent of non-delinquents. The natural father was still present in only 61 per cent of the delinquent group against 81 per cent of non-delinquents. The future delinquent was also nearly twice as likely to be unreliable in the classroom and three times as likely to be unsociable as her non-delinquent contemporary.

The fifteenth year (Table 15.5)

As might have been expected, school factors operating *stressfully* at 10 years continued to do so five years later — particularly low intelligence, poor concentration, persistence and attitude to schoolwork. Not surprisingly therefore, only 36 per cent of the future delinquents expressed a desire to stay at school beyond the minimum school-leaving age against 61 per cent of the non-delinquents. What is more, the families' interest in maintaining contact with the school seemed to reflect their offspring's achievements there: 83 per cent of non-delinquent children had parents whose interest in their school career extended to maintaining contact, whereas only 48 per cent of the delinquent group had such parents. Only 32 per cent of the delinquent group as against 61 per cent of the non-delinquent group had fathers with an effective personality. The emergent stress factors at this age reflect a new-found discovery of a sense of independence, and the results of that discovery are now just as indicative of anti-social behaviour as intellectual and educational data; 43 per cent of those from non-deprived homes who became, or who were already, delinquent were missing at least one school day

Factors in deprived		
Delinquent	Delinquent	Total
%	%	'n'
4	28	74*
2	41	59
1	55	60**
7	13	62
7	5	62**
7	29	62**
7	5	62
7	61**	62**
1	16**	67**

Delinquent	
%	Total 'n'
51	18*
72	18**
29	17*
71	17*

Table 15.5 *Males fifteenth year: stress and protective factors*

	Non-Deprived				Deprived (One or more criteria)			
	Non-delinquent		Delinquent		Non-delinquent		Delinquent	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
Mill Hill Vocabulary good	81	125	46	28**	52	73	34	44**
Reading poor	8	139	22	32*	24	82	45	65**
Concentration poor	30	140	56	32	48	80	75	61*
Persistence good	67	140	47	32*	54	80	25	61**
Hostile attitude to school	24	140	59	32**	38**	80	64	61**
Less than 90% school attendance	13	135	43	28**	39	80	61	59**
Willing to stay at school after 15	61	160	36	36**	34	93	25	72
Family interest in school	83	130	48	29**	55	74	27	60**
Youth joins family activities	70	161	45	39**	34	90	21	68
Father's effective personality	61	162	32	37**	26	94	14	74

*5% level of significance

**1% level of significance

Table 15.6 *Females fifteenth year: protective factors (deprived group only)*

	Non-Delinquent		Delinquent	
	%	Total 'n'	%	Total 'n'
Height > 58ins at 13 years	70	130	42	19*
Concentration poor	46	123	78	18**
Persistence poor	56	123	72	18*
Hostile attitude to school	41	123	67	18*
Willing to stay at school	20	117	0	17**
Family interest in school	54	112	27	15**
Father always present	57	150	21	19**

*5% level of significance

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in 10, as against only 13 per cent of those who did not become delinquent; 59 per cent of delinquents, as against 24 per cent of non-delinquents, had a hostile attitude to schoolwork. Furthermore, while only 45 per cent of the delinquent group participated in family activities, 70 per cent of the non-delinquent group did so.

A similar series of factors proved to be protective in the case of the deprived, and once again the factors reflecting positive motivation and attitude, particularly willingness to continue at school, good school attendance and attitude to schoolwork were prominent discriminators. One finding representative of the degree of protection afforded by positive temperamental factors was that while only one-quarter of the delinquent group concentrated well in class, over half of the non-delinquent group did so. Good intelligence and educational achievements and a positive family interest were powerful protectors. A few of these were also protective at the extremes of deprivation.

There was a smaller set of protective factors for girls (Table 15.6) and four of these were good concentration and persistence in class; non-hostile attitude to school; willingness to stay on at school; and a family that maintained contact with the school (which applied also to boys). The constant presence of the natural father was a powerful protector and, in the non-delinquent group, 57 per cent of fathers were always present against 21 per cent in the delinquent group. A new factor emerged of good growth at 13 years which seemed to complement the criteria of cessation of bedwetting by five years already mentioned.

Deprived (more criteria)		
Delinquent Total 'n'	Delinquent %	Total 'n'
73	34	44**
82	45	65**
80	75	61*
80	25	61**
80	64	61**
80	61	59**
93	25	72
74	27	60**
90	21	68
94	14	74

Factors

Delinquent	
%	Total 'n'
42	19*
78	18**
72	18*
67	18*
0	17**
27	15**
21	19**