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CSS 2016 question. Historical development of criminology as a scientific discipline

Is criminology a science and how social science is different from science.

Criminology is often categorized as a social science. Social sciences encompass a range of academic disciplines that focus on the study of human behaviour, societies, and interactions. Criminology, as a subset of social science, specifically investigates crime, criminal behaviour, the criminal justice system, and related phenomena. While social sciences like criminology employ scientific methods and approaches, there can be distinctions between the natural or physical sciences and the social sciences.

Here's a brief comparison between social science and natural science, along with references for further reading:

Social Science: Social sciences study human behaviour, societies, cultures, institutions, and their interactions. Criminology is a prime example of a social science that applies scientific methods to understand and explain criminal behaviour, its causes, and societal responses. Social sciences often deal with complex and variable subjects, which can make experimentation and prediction more challenging than in the natural sciences.

Natural Science: Natural sciences focus on the study of the natural world, including physical and biological phenomena. These sciences seek to uncover underlying laws and principles that govern the natural world. Fields like physics, chemistry, biology, and astronomy are considered natural sciences. Natural sciences often involve controlled experiments and aim for reproducibility and predictability.

References:

1. Social Science:

- Ritzer, G., & Stepnisky, J. (2017). *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Sociology*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Macionis, J. J., & Plummer, K. (2017). *Sociology: A Global Introduction*. Pearson.

2. Natural Science:

- Feynman, R. P., Leighton, R. B., & Sands, M. L. (2011). *The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Vol. I: The New Millennium Edition: Mainly Mechanics, Radiation, and Heat*. Basic Books.

- Campbell, N. A., Reece, J. B., Urry, L. A., Cain, M. L., Wasserman, S. A., Minorsky, P. V., & Jackson, R. B. (2017). *Biology*. Pearson.

In summary, criminology is considered a social science that employs scientific methods to study criminal behaviour and related topics. While both social sciences and natural sciences involve scientific inquiry, they focus on different aspects of the world—human behaviour and societies in the case of social sciences, and the natural world and its physical and biological processes in the case of natural sciences.

Historical development of criminology as a science discipline

1. **Classical School (18th Century):**

- Cesare Beccaria's "On Crimes and Punishments" (1764): Beccaria's work laid the foundation for the Classical School of criminology, emphasizing rationality, free will, and proportionate punishment. [Reference: Beccaria, C. (1764). *On Crimes and Punishments*.]
- Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism: Bentham's utilitarian philosophy contributed to the idea of deterrence and the need for punishment to outweigh the benefits of criminal behavior.

2. **Positivist School (19th Century):**

- Cesare Lombroso's "Criminal Man" (1876): Lombroso is considered the father of positivist criminology, introducing the idea of the "born criminal" based on physical traits and biological factors. [Reference: Lombroso, C. (1876). *Criminal Man*.]
- Enrico Ferri and Raffaele Garofalo: These scholars expanded on Lombroso's ideas and introduced concepts like social and psychological factors influencing criminal behavior.

3. **Chicago School and Sociological Criminology (Early 20th Century):**

- Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess: Leading figures of the Chicago School, they emphasized the role of social and environmental factors in shaping criminal behavior and urban crime patterns.
- Shaw and McKay's "Social Disorganization Theory" (1942): This theory, derived from the Chicago School, focused on how neighborhood characteristics influence crime rates. [Reference: Shaw, C. R., & McKay, H. D. (1942). *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*.]

4. **Strain Theory and Social Learning Theory (Mid-20th Century):**

- Robert K. Merton's Strain Theory: Merton's work highlighted the role of societal pressures and the disconnection between socially approved goals and legitimate means in causing crime.
- Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association Theory: Sutherland's theory emphasized the influence of peer groups and social interactions on the learning of criminal behavior.

5. **Labeling Theory and Critical Criminology (Late 20th Century):**

- Howard Becker's "Outsiders" (1963): Becker's work introduced labeling theory, which focused on how societal reactions and labels contribute to the development of criminal identities. [Reference: Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders*.]
- Marxist Criminology: Scholars like Richard Quinney examined the relationship between capitalism, inequality, and crime.

6. **Contemporary Developments and Interdisciplinary Approaches:**

- Feminist Criminology: Feminist perspectives critiqued traditional criminology for neglecting gender issues and explored how societal patriarchy influences crime and justice.
- Rational Choice Theory: This theory, derived from economics, examines how individuals make decisions to engage in criminal behavior based on perceived benefits and costs.
- Biosocial and Neurocriminology: Incorporating biology and neuroscience, researchers explore the interplay between genetic, neurological, and environmental factors in criminal behavior.

7. **Globalization and Comparative Criminology:**

- Contemporary criminology has increasingly focused on studying crime in a global context, acknowledging the impact of transnational crime, migration, and cultural variations.

8. **Technological Advancements and Cybercriminology:**

- The digital age has led to the emergence of cybercriminology, which studies crimes committed using digital technologies.

References for these developments and concepts can be found in various criminology textbooks, academic journals, and research papers specific to each area of study.