

What is your position on nature vs nurture debate in criminology? CSS-2020

INTRODUCTION

Over the ages, nature vs nurture debate remained the topic of discussion.

The advocates of nature debate consider criminality, crime and criminal behaviour as innate. They consider that a person who commits crime is born with criminal tendencies and later in his/her life those tendencies dominates and force that person to commit crime. While the advocates of nurture debate consider crime and criminal behaviour as a consequence of the social setting, in which that person is brought up. So, for them criminal tendencies are acquired by the social surroundings, family, environment, peer groups etc. A person first learns from the environment and later reproduces it and becomes a criminal. Over the period of time, various theories emerged,

few favouring nature while other favouring nurture debate.

Nature

- ↳ Innate, Inborn
- ↳ Support criminal behaviours are inborn

Nurture

- ↳ Acquire from society
- ↳ Support criminal behaviours as acquired from society.

THEORIES ADVOCATING NATURE DEBATE IN CRIMINOLOGY

Following major theories support nature debate in criminology:

1 Biological Theories

- a- Atavism by Cesare Lombroso
- b- Somatotypology by William Sheldon
- c- Chromosomal makeup as XY

2 Psychological Theories

- a- Cognitive Theory.

Atavism By Lombroso:

Lombroso gave the theory of Atavism which states that criminals are savages which lack behind in the process of evolution as compared to normal citizens of a state.

Lombroso in his book "Criminal Man" published in 1880 studied criminals on the basis of physiological traits and concluded that criminals are physiologically and biologically different from non-criminals.

He used **phenology** and **physiogenomy** as techniques to study criminals, by studying the skull size and facial features of criminals and non criminals respectively.

CHARACTERISTICS OF AN ATAVISTIC MAN

- ↳ Having large and deformed skull
- ↳ Asymmetrical face
- ↳ Large and protruded jaws and chin
- ↳ 3mm more toe gap than non-criminal
- ↳ Abnormal arm length
- ↳ Flat lip, defected eyes etc.

SOMATOTYPOLGY BY SHELDON

William Sheldon's theory of Somatotypology also supports nature debate in criminal behaviour. He explained criminal tendencies in individuals on the basis of somatotype also known as body type.

Sheldon explain three types of body build ups and then explained which biological make up is more likely to commit crime.

Ectomorphs: Such individuals are tall, thin and intellectual and according to him are least likely to commit crime.

Mesomorphs: Such individuals have muscular and athletic appearance. They are violent and aggressive and according to Sheldon, they are more likely to commit crime.

Endomorphs: Such individuals are heavy

weight and lethargic. According to Sheldon they are unlikely to commit violent crimes but can commit less heinous crimes.

XYY Chromosomal Syndrome:

A normal human has 23 pairs of chromosomes (46 in total) while for the sexual makeup 23 pair is responsible

XX → Female

XY → Male.

While a Scottish study observed the biological makeup of some criminals and found that they have an extra chromosome.

XYY → Supermale.

They are more violent and more likely to commit crimes.

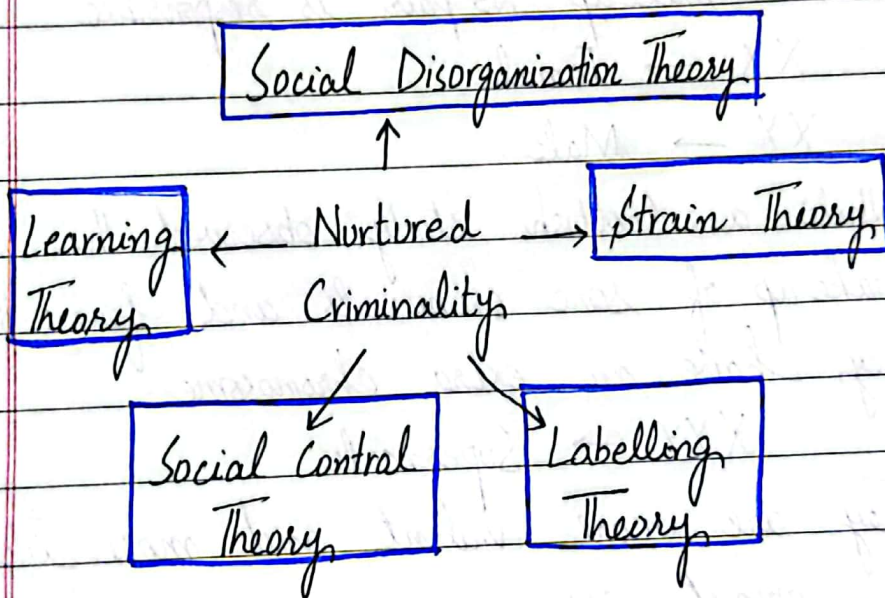
Cognitive Theory:

The proponents of this theory relates criminality with flawed or less developed thinking process. Their minds are not fully developed

to reason properly so they commit crime.

THEORIES ADVOCATING NURTURE DEBATE IN CRIMINOLOGY

Following theories support nurture debate in criminology:



All the above mentioned theories see crime, criminality and criminal behaviour through sociological perspective and consider criminal tendencies acquired from different social settings.

Social Disorganization Theory

Clifford Shaw and Henry D. McKay developed social disorganization theory, and as the name indicates it proposes that disorganization in the society leads towards criminal behaviours. This theory describes the ecological differences in the nature of crime based on structural and cultural factors shaping the order of society.

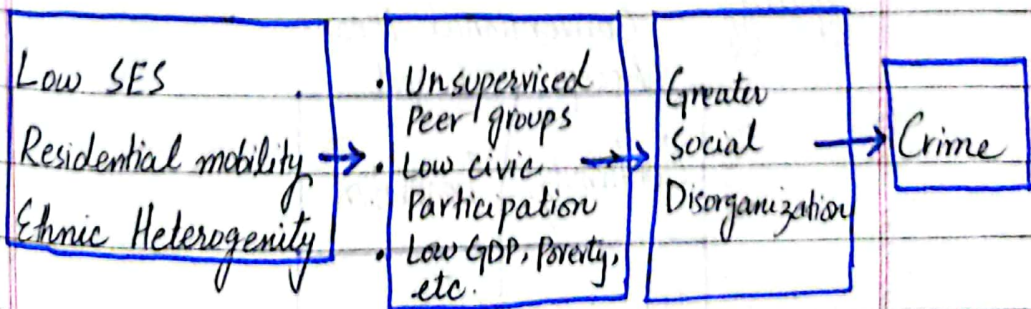
According to this theory, there are three major factors that provoke criminal behaviour

a - Low Socio-economic Status

b - Ethnic Heterogeneity

c - Residential mobility

If a society contains these factors at large the chances of crime is more.



Strain Theory

Presented by Emile Durkheim and advanced by Merton and Cohen, explain strain theory by focusing on socially and economically deprived classes of society. These problems make those individuals more and more deprived and humiliated causing an anomie society; a society where social norms, customs and values are frequently broken due to social disorder. In such societies the ratio of crimes is much higher because the individuals are unable to meet their desire through conventional, fair means so they choose an unconventional and unfair mean i.e. crime to meet their desires. Robert K. Merton explains it as deviance typology.

		Conventional Means		
		Accept	Reject	
Cultural Goals	Accept	Conformity	Innovation	
	Reject	Ritualism	Retreatism	Through New Means
				Rebellion

Social Control Theory:

As the name indicates social control theory gives absence of social control as the reason behind crime. The more the social control, less will be the crime rate and vice versa. It states that crime is committed by choice when societal obligations are weak and it is not innate in humans. It explains factors of social control whose presence leads to lesser crime rate.

Social Control Through

Direct Factors	Indirect Factors	Internal Factors	Satisfaction Factors
↳ Family	↳ Society	↳ Religion	↳ Economic
↳ peer groups	↳ Job	↳ Conscience	↳ Stability
↳ Parents	↳ Social Circle		

If these needs are fulfilled people tilt less towards criminality and vice versa

Social Learning Theory

Learning theory presented by Albert Bandura explain criminal behaviour as learned from society. He states the learning is a cognitive process and what an individual sees in his/her surrounding, has a greater impact on him and he learn to act in a similar way. So, crime is a learned behaviour and it be learned through:

- 1 Family,
- 2 Social models and peers
- 3 Symbolic modeling, i.e. T.V, social media

This theory is more applicable on juveniles who are under the process of learning.

Learning Process

- 1- Attention
- 2- Retention
- 3- Production
- 4- Motivation

Labelling Theory:

This theory states that after a primary deviance the individual is labelled by the society in that specific way, and then that individual starts behaving in the same way in which he is labelled by the society.

This advocates that juveniles should not be sent to jail and smoothes the way for parole and probation.

Labelling Process

Primary Deviance → Labelling → Self fulfillment
 Becomes ← Secondary →
 Criminal Deviance

Analysis On Nature Vs Nurture Debate:

Eventhough, the nature vs nurture debate on crime, criminality, and criminal behaviour is old enough but nature debate has less relevance in the

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Date: _____

modern days. Nurture theories explain crime and criminal behaviour through sociological perspective which holds its relevance now a days as it is more appropriate, logical and sane. Moreover, if we see through islamic perspective, God has created humans as intellectual, reasonable, logical and supreme over all other creature. So, it cannot create its supreme creature with criminal tendencies but human acquire it from surrounding over the period of time. So, Nurture debate has more relevance in the modern world and it explains crime, criminality and criminal behaviour in more logical way.

Conclusion

In the nutshell, criminologists have explained two different perspectives on crime and criminal behaviour. Crime has always remained the part of human societies and methods to study them evolved over the year. Both biological and social factors contribute to crime in a society.