

LMS ID

40519

Criminology

DAY: Amjad Ali

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Q Critically analyze the biological theories of criminality.

Introduction :

Biological theories were first presented by Cesare Lombroso in 1880s. He by his observations, physical features of people and historical factors of some crimes concluded that there is link between biological characteristics or genetics and criminality. He presented physical features of a criminal and used the term atavistic man for criminals. Later his theories were supported by theorists like William Sheldon who further described how ^{level of} obesity hinders or encourage a person when doing deviant acts. Theories of Lombroso ~~was~~ opened door to the studies of biology and genetic characteristics.

of criminals. However many theorists rejected Lombroso's ideas saying that Environment also have its impact in shaping the behaviour of a person.

Physical characteristics of atavistic man:

According to Lombroso a person with flat or upturned nose is most likely to be a criminal. He described criminal having big jaws and long hands. He even said that mongolian people are likely to be criminals.

William Sheldon's theory on how physical fitness plays role in criminality.

William Sheldon categorized into three categories.

1- **Endomorph**: He is fat and a chubby person. less active and very less likely to commit violent crimes. Although he can commit unnoticed or small deviant acts.

2- **Mesomorph**: He is described as tall, physically fit, having aesthetic body. He is most likely to commit violent crimes.

3- **Ectomorph**: He is described as very thin and skinny. There are very less chances that he will commit according to Sheldon.

Criticism:

Lombroso's and Sheldon's theories are based upon observation. Both lack scientific evidences and proper sampling

procedures to support their theories. Furthermore, Lombroso's theories also give a sense of racism. It targets some underprivileged ethnicities which is a very dangerous thing. However it can be said that these theories opened doors for research in field of genetics.

Genetic Theories

These theories were presented by theorists like Mednick and Huchington who were inspired by Cesare Lombroso.

Genetic theories are divided into three theories.

(i) Twin theory (ii) XY chrom-
-osome theory (iii) Adoption
theory.

(i) Twin theory: It says that ~~twin~~ monozygotic twin who share 100% of

genetics do similar type of criminal acts than the dizygotic twins who share 50% of genetics.

(ii) XYY Chromosome (supermale theory):

According to genetic theorist a person having XYY chromosome is considered a supermale and he is more likely to commit violent crimes.

(iii) Adoption theory: This theory suggests that if a person's ~~par~~ biological parents are criminals and he is doing deviant acts when living his adoptive parents. Then genetics are playing role in it.

Criticism:

All of these theories are ignoring the idea of environment factors, schooling,

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social circle of a person. ~~at~~
Two one person can be differ-
-ent from his or her twin if
given different environment.
The behaviour of teachers
at school, the behaviour of
parent at home shape person-
-ality of an individual.
Adoptive parents can also be
criminals just like biological
one. It can make person
^{commit} deviant acts.

Neurophysiological theories:

These theories were supported by
theorists like Lec Ellis.

According to these theories
shape of a person's brain
or head can tell ~~not~~ whether
he is criminal or not.
It says that person having
long frontal lobe is more
likely to be a criminal.

Furthermore these theories also suggest that person having high testosterone level and low serotonin level is more likely to commit violent crimes.

Criticism:

Persons neurophysiological characteristics get shaped by its personal experiences, traumas, depressions and some societal factors. Furthermore the presence of biochemical substance also get changed from environment to environment. These things do not make conclude that a person is either a criminal or not.

Conclusion:

Biological theories initiated by Lombroso and

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supported by theorists like Gal
Sheldon and Lee Ellis can
link with some events. But
they can not fully justify
that biological factors shape
person's behaviour. These theories
can open door to study of
genetic but can't make someone
criminal. Biological theories
are based on observations of
Lombroso and other theorists.
However they lack environ-
mental factors which play main
role in shaping character
of a person. A person can
behave differently from his
ancestors if he is given
different environment
from them.