

HOWARD BECKER

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- 1958 "Culture Case Study and Greek History". American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, October.
- 1956 Man in Reciprocity: Introductory Lectures on Culture, Society and Personality New York: F. A. Praeger.
- 1957 "Current Sacred-Secular Theory", Modern Sociological Theory ed. by Howard Becker and Alvin Boxkoff. New York: Dryden Press.
- 1945 "Interpretive Sociology and Constructed Typology", Twentieth Century Sociology ed. by Georges Gurvitch and W. E. Moore. N. Y.: Philosophical Library.

I. Typologies: Becker is concerned with sociological theory, particularly with typologies. By typologies he does not mean a simple classification.

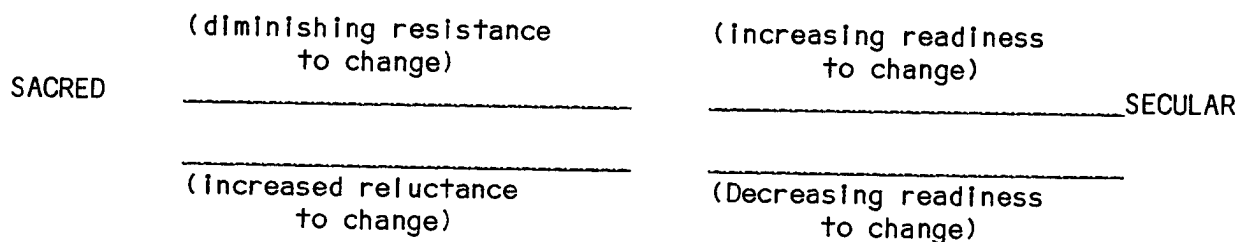
1. Typologies must be differentiated from:
 - natural classes: These are based essentially on distinctions found in the phenomena themselves.
 - hypotheses: These are ideas linking classes in casual relationships.
 - variables: These are characteristics or qualities that can be measured in objects.
 - theories: deduced sets of related laws which have been verified by testing hypotheses.
 - models: these are broad conceptual schema fitting together theories and laws into a inclusive logical structure.
2. Typologies are mental constructs, cognitive categories created by the analyst in order to organize his data. They are often based on several factors:
 - the combination of a cluster of characteristics used to define the types.
 - types are ideal forms and not generally empirically observable forms.
 - characteristics used to define a type are generally thought to be related to each other in certain specified ways.
 - types on the first level are used to describe complex phenomena and to organize them into a matrix. Then they may suggest explanatory hypotheses that can be empirically tested.
 - types themselves need to be tested empirically to determine their "fit" with experience.
 - Becker sees typology as viewing processes, rather than defining specific static points. We can generally say something is moving from this pole to that, rather than fix its specific place on a continuum.

3. Becker notes three kinds of types:
 - a) extreme types. In these the analyst defines a continuum by defining the end points. In some forms this takes a simple dichotomy with no continuum implicit between them. Becker specializes in continuums. Examples are; folk-urban, gemeinschaft-gesellschaft, charismatic-organizational.
 - b) Configurational concepts and types are essentially descriptive. They provide a division of the domain into certain configurations, with no single dimension implied.
 - c) Determinative systems are essentially explanatory. these are sets of interrelated propositions that are subject to empirical verification.

II. Culture, Society and Personality: Becker makes a sharp distinction between these three. The relationship between them he calls "sociation" and includes both associational and dissociational relationships.

1. Culture: everything that man has made by hand or tongue.
2. Society: a collection of persons who interact in ongoing social systems.
3. Personality: all the consequences of culture and society that when absorbed can be viewed as forming particular specimens of our species.

III. The Sacred and Secular Continuum: Becker has most completely worked out his theory of typology in the sacred and secular continuum. These represent ideal polar types, not empirically observed individuals or societies. They, therefore, are applicable to the analysis of societies and of individuals.



<u>Value clusters:</u>	Holy	Loyalistic	Intimate	Moralistic	Fitting	Appropriate	Pursuant	Consequent	Comfortable	Thrilling
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- Holy: Values imputed to the supernatural, therefore they have an absolute nature and are hard to change.
- Loyalistic: Allegiance and patriotism to race, class, party, country, etc.
- Intimacy: Ties to family, friends, mates etc.
- Moralistic: Moral laws forbidding or prescribing certain personal parts of behavior.
- Fitting: Good form and bad, decent vs. vulgar, etc.
- Appropriate: What is appropriate in a given situation.

Pursuant: Change seen as desirable, action is pursuant of a principle. Therefore there is a recognition of certain general absolutes, but the implications are worked out in a changing framework.

Consequent: Unlimited expedience. A priori values are increasingly rejected as binding. As both ends and means become completely unprincipled, the final stage of secularity is reached.

Comfort: Value only in self comfort, hence an egocentric, unstable state.

Thrill: Merger of means and end, and an uncritical desire for new thrills to give excitement.

Note: Sacred is not a value in itself but a certain kind of orientation towards values, namely that changing them is bad or wrong. There is a reluctance to change value orientation. Secularism is an attitude towards values that is willing to accept and initiate change and to explore new behavior.

People are willing to die as martyrs and to kill for the sake of preserving their values in the realm of the holy. They are also careless of life and willing to sacrifice life for thrill in the realm of Thrill. Therefore the two ends meet in a disregard for life in favor of other priorities.

Goals:

SACRED:	<u>Security:</u> High stress on security. Economic traditionalism and use of apprenticeships. Material objects often have sacred identity.	<u>New Experience:</u> Pursuant of SACRED: new ways of action, new friends, experiences and relationships. Competitive, highly specialized and skilled. Dependence on the written word for communication.
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Response: This distributed between both more equally, but in sacred sector tends to be nonrational and tradition. Tendancy to stress interior responses among members and an isolated, sacred society. Each act considered unique. In Secular sector a decline in importance of kin ties and their reduction to elementary nuclear forms.

Recognition: In sacred zone tendency to ascribed status, in secular to achieve.

Note: These are the four basic goals Becker recognizes for all human activity.

SACRED

SECULAR

Types of Societies:

Proverbial Societies-Prescriptive Societies-Principal Societies - Normless Societies

Proverbial societies: Traditional and nonrational. Given to proverbs and credal responses to unique situations. They are traditional responses and may be self contradictory. The old and traditional are valued for their own sake. Can kill or be martyred for sake of values.

Prescriptive societies: These value intimacy and moralisms. They are often ruled by laws and codified moral systems. There is, however, some stress on rationality and rationalization of behavior in terms of larger systems.

Principal Societies: Evaluation in terms of general principles which are held as sacred or fixed. In practice there may be changes in principles as a result of changes in their applications. There is a tendency towards limited expediency and a high degree of categorization.

Normless Societies: Affective and irrational. Values favor free and easy state of affairs. Dedication to emotional gratification makes this state often counterrational. Expression of in terms of mass spectatoritis, and meaningless murders. Individual whim valued over group norms. Often has an element of self destruction in it. What appears as ceremonial is really anti-ceremonial for it can be changed with no sense of loss.

Institutions

Cult - - - - Sect - - - - Denomination - - - - Ecclesia

<p>Sect and Cult: Withdrawal from the world Exclusive membership Radicalism of a sort Non-compromising ethics Little ecclesiastical hierarchy Non resistance valued highly Lower class adherents</p>	<p>Denomination and Ecclesia: Supports and identifies with world's Inst. Inclusive membership Conservatism Adaptive ethics Elaborate hierarchy Militant as the degree the society is Middle and Upper class adherents</p>
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Means End

<p>Means and End Sacred</p>	<p>End (principles, etc.)</p>	<p>Means is the end</p>
<p>Means</p>		

Communication and Boundaries

<p>1. Communication limited. Primarily nonliterate forms such as memorization. Little storage of inform.</p> <p>2. High boundary maintenance. - ethnocentrism</p> <p>3. Visinal isolation; leads to fixation of motor habits. Little outside contact.</p>	<p>1. Communication extended; travel, mass communication, printed word, radio, etc. Vast storage of information.</p> <p>2. Low or no boundary maintenance. Ego-centrism, happiness oriented.</p> <p>3. Vicinal: accessibility: high degree of movement, transportation, trade with</p>
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| <p>4. Social isolation: based on habitual relationships. Fixation on in-group and out-group.</p> <p>5. Mental isolation: illiteracy.</p> | <p>4. Social accessibility, social, religious or moral barriers, unrestricted competition.</p> <p>5. Mental accessibility: Common education and high literacy. No language barrier.</p> |
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SACRED

SECULAR

Controls:

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| <p>1. Minimum of physical force; maximum on informal control.</p> <p>2. Gossip is important and also ostracism from the group.</p> <p>3. Unwritten understandings, personal agreements.</p> <p>4. Concern primarily with social order and maintenance of this order. Little stress on guilt and punishment for their own sake, or for an abstract sense of justice.</p> <p>5. Child rearing by families and is considered sacred in character.</p> | <p>1. Minimum of informal control. High on use of force, detention, etc.</p> <p>2. Little ostracism and gossip - has little power since people do not fear groups.</p> <p>3. Formal legal contracts, written agreements dependence on legal formalities.</p> <p>4. Concern with finding the guilty and punishing them. Stress on the GUILT - PUNISHMENT equation. Concept of justice is high.</p> <p>5. Child rearing by secular agencies such as schools and churches.</p> |
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Personality Contrasts:

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| <p>1. Integrated personalities. A basic homogeneity underlying various roles. There are fewer roles and members can play practically the whole range of those available. Everyone is doing virtually the same thing as everyone else, thereby reinforcing social integration.</p> <p>2. Sacred stranger: Habituated to nothing but the concrete and personal.</p> | <p>1. Divided and fragmented personalities. Split into different roles that do not necessarily overlap. Division of life into private/public; work/recreation dichotomies. Highly specialized roles offer an individual an almost unlimited set of alternatives, but a person can play only a few since he is forced to specialize. He learns little of other roles. Integration comes by meshings and interlinkings.</p> <p>2. Secular stranger: habituated to abstraction. Equally at home everywhere, but not very much at home anywhere.</p> |
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Sanctions:

Holy: threat of heaven & hell.

Loyalty: Death & punishment for treason and disloyalties.

Intimate: Passionate retaliation & contempt for violation.

Principled: Pressure, laws, courts.

C. & Thrilling Withholding of thrills to those who do not participate.

General Characteristics:

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| 1. Everything concrete and personal. No comparison and classification and little abstraction of generalities. | 1. Oriented to abstraction and universalistic thinking. Comparisons, analysis, classification stressed. |
| 2. Tradition and ceremony are important. | 2. Rational criteria and criticism are important. |
| 3. Folkways and mores rule. | 3. Rational laws and rationalized folkways rule, but change readily. |
| 4. Sacred animals and totems. | 4. No sacred animals. |
| 5. Economically self sufficient societies. Little specialization of labor. No cities or towns. No strangers to raise questions and criticize. Community production and consumption. | 5. Economically based on trade and a world wide dependency. Highly specialized labor. Urban oriented. All in a sense are strangers. Metropolitan consumption based society. |
| 6. Property communally owned. | 6. Property individually owned. |
| 7. Verbal agreements. | 7. Written agreements and contracts. |
| 8. Kinship: Large family affective, supernatural, institutionalized/particularistic | 8. Small nuclear family naturalistic, rationalistic/universalistic |