

Howard s becker



Howard Becker SOC 101: Introduction to Sociology Professor Smith March 4, 2012 Howard S. Becker Howard Becker was a famous American sociologist. He made several contributions in the fields of occupations, education, deviance and art and made several studies in those fields. He particularly made several studies in the field of social deviance and occupations. Most of studies went into the interactions between criminal people and regular people.

Many of these studies included the criminal minds of these people, relationship between them and regular society, and how society viewed them. Howard Saul Becker was born on April 18, 1928 in Chicago, Illinois (Bernard, 2012). He studied sociology at the University of Chicago and he was hooked eventually getting his Ph. D. in it as well and then used his knowledge to teach future sociologists and complete his studies, which were funded by Northwestern University.

While teaching and working at the university he also published several books but his most famous was *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*, which was published in 1963. He also wrote several other books that helped develop the sociology field even more which included *Writing for Social Scientists* in 1986 and *Tricks of the Trade* in 1998 (Bernard, 2012). He is now currently retired in California and continues to write articles for the field of sociology. Becker did several experiments with the criminal minds where he watched their behavior calling it deviance.

He views deviance as the “ creation of social groups and not the quality of some act or behavior and criticizes other theories of deviance for accepting

the existence of deviance and by doing so, accept the values of the majority within the social group and by studying the act of the individual is unimportant because deviance is simply rule breaking behavior that is labeled deviant by persons in positions of power (Becker, 1963). " What Becker means is that people are deviant or break rules not just because they want to but are inclined to do so because of their surroundings such as the social group they are a part of such as gangs or people who disagree with certain rules of society. He realized it wasn't very important to study the individual themselves but to study their mind to why they break rules. People that were in power such as the police or other types of law enforcement called it deviant because these people were/are in the position to make rules so those who don't/didn't follow the rules are defiant. Many people grow up knowing right from wrong and most to choose to do right. This also teaches us to follow the rules or break them.

Most people follow the rules but to those select few who don't see themselves as a different sect of society these include petty thieves and low-grade criminals. Becker uses the term " outsider" to describe " a labeled rule-breaker or deviant that accepts the label attached to them and view themselves as different from ' mainstream' society and may consider themselves more ' outside' than others similarly labeled but at the same time deviant outsiders might view those rule making or abiding members of society as being the outsiders of their social group (1963). "

This means that the relationship between those that break the rules and those that follow the rules place great strain on our society. To those that follow the rules and work hard to do right usually get the bill for those who

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are rule breakers. For example, the United States taxpayers are responsible for paying for prisons and to take care of those in prison because they decided to break the rules or the billions of dollars the United States spends to stop the amount of drugs coming into this country illegally. Now we obviously need a prison system and a way to stop illegal drugs into the country but at what cost?

The U. S. taxpayer is also responsible for the healthcare and other systems that illegal immigrants take granted for and they get the bill. As we can see this relationship has no benefits and one side isn't equal to another such as a marriage would be between two people. Society does little to nothing to help itself either. Criminal activity happens all around us yet we still leave valuables in our cars, leave the doors unlocked, or let our children roam free and then wonder why someone breaks into our car or house and demand law enforcement fix the problem.

Certain areas of the United States have higher crimes than other parts such as the south has more crimes rates than the north and the city of Washington D. C. has the highest crime rate in all the country (Vissing, 2011). What we don't realize that if we have a little common sense such as lock doors or keep our valuables tucked away we can prevent petty crimes and at the same time save our taxpayer money. Society views deviants are just that, those that defy the rules that were set in place for a reason or purpose such as safety or as legal guidance.

We view criminals as if they are lost but if we taught them the right ways maybe we can help reverse some of the problems. There are some crimes

though that even criminals themselves don't like such as child rapist, molesters, or others that commit sexual crimes. These are some of the most serious offenders and even when they are in prison they get treated like dirt and even murders look down on them. Society though has given some people a bad name even though they don't deserve it such as people who have a lot of tattoos or piercings.

Society sees these people that maybe criminals because what they see on television or in movies. People also assume that every person with dreadlocks is automatically a pot smoker. We give these people titles because that is what we are taught from a young age or again it's what we see on screens instead of getting to know the people for who they really are. Maybe the person with all the tattoos just likes them or the person with dreadlocks comes from a Jamaican family where it is custom to have hair like that.

I believe that Becker and I are similar because I agree with how he sees deviance. I believe people that grow up in bad neighborhoods or rough parts of town are going to be the ones that commit crimes. People for the most part who grow up in crime stay in crime themselves. Times are hard especially with the economy in the dumps, which can make the situation even worse. I think we need to help ourselves before we spend billions to help other countries around the world. We have our own problems and we need to fix them first before we fix everyone else's. Plus it wouldn't hurt to lend a neighbor down the street a helping hand either. In conclusion, Howard Becker was a famous sociologist who studied the deviant behavior of criminals. He found that most people become criminals because they either

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grow up in crime, bad groups or when they disagree with the rules. We the taxpayers are handed the bills when people commit crimes because prisons can't pay for themselves but what we don't realize is most of the crimes committed are preventable.

We need to help our society and lend a helping hand when we can because you can never judge a book by its cover. References Becker. H. (1963).

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