

21A.218  
Anthropology  
Identity and Difference  
Class #8

## The Process of Constructing Difference as Deviance

### Moral Enterprise: Creating Categories of Deviance:

1. How a set of activities or behaviors is socially (collectively) defined has a direct impact on whether and in what ways it received public and policy attention.
2. The most important factor influencing formation of social policy agendas is how the power to define harm is distributed among different constituencies. "Agenda setting" is a term used for the political process in which policy makers set priorities. They do not always (often) give top priority to the most objectively harmful problems.
3. The definition of harm is often a product of moral entrepreneurship and moral crusades.
  - a. Legislating morality, moral entrepreneurs, and moral crusades: Moral entrepreneurs are those who attempt to create new rules by convincing, persuading, 'selling' a particular morality and definition of the situation (and the persons).
  - b. Moral crusading can serve symbolic or instrumental functions:
    - instrumental function: attempt to influence and shape behavior
    - symbolic function: attempt to declare or express what is right, independent of behavioral effect; consequence for status rather than behavior per se
  - c. Varieties of deviant behavior in terms of symbolic status; whether a crusade is launched may depend on perception of the deviant and what is threatened;
    - repentant deviant: strengthens the norm
    - cynical deviant: gets around the norm
    - sick deviant; violation is irrelevant, non-responsible
    - enemy deviant: denies legitimacy of the norm

example: prohibition

d. Conditions for successful moral crusade

need to define cause as a social problem (harmful, general affects all)  
align cause with existing values already recognized  
form coalitions, enlist aid of other groups

example, smoking

4. Other examples

Reefer Madness  
Vagrancy in 14th century  
Child Abuse  
Drug control exercise