



How Claims Spread: Cross-National Diffusion of Social Problems (Social Problems and Social Issues)

Joel Best

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Best's anthology examines for the first time how diverse social issues--road rage, the metric system, gun control, and abortion are among those included--migrate across national boundaries, modifying themselves from place to place as a result of different claims, claimsmakers, and policy responses. This unique collection, assembled from new research by an international group of social problems scholars, will fill a gap in undergraduate and graduate level studies in the constructionist analyses of social problems, as well as in political science, public policy, and criminology.

Claims concerning one social problem often influence those about another: claimsmakers borrow rhetoric and tactics from one another. In some cases, experienced claimsmakers join efforts to call attention to other social problems: compelling images (e.g., the threatened child or random violence) link claims about different problems and reactions to one set of claims.

These case studies describe very different processes, ranging from deliberate attempts to disseminate social problem claims to developments that were more inadvertent, from successes in which social problem constructions spread to new countries to failures in which claims were sown, but failed to take root. They are intended to suggest that the diffusion of social problems is neither simple nor automatic.

Joel Best is professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, University of Delaware. He has served as an editorial advisor for Aldine that has produced fifty titles.

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