

SOC 347

CHARON, CHAPTER 6

WHY CAN'T EVERYONE BE JUST  
LIKE US?

# Learning Objectives

- Values & value judgments
- Culture
- Ethnocentrism
- Oppression, ideology & social conflict
- Functions & costs of ethnocentrism

# Questions

- Why is there war?
- Why do we think we are right?
- Why is tolerance so difficult?
- Who has the best values?

# Society Governed By Rules

1. Rules are enforced
2. Rules take different forms
3. Rules are frequently not neutral
4. Power and rules interact
5. Rules can be inconsistent
6. Rules can change

# Why can't everyone be just like us?

- Human differences
- Values
- Ethnocentrism
- Social interaction
- Social histories

# Values

**Values**—standards of desirability, goodness, and beauty—a value judgment (what should exist)

Standards by which we judge our own acts and that of others

# Origin of Values

- Assumptions
- Self-evident
- Socially constructed
- Provided by God

# Value Commitments

- what we think life should be like
- what goals people ought to seek
- what is required or forbidden
- what is honorable and shameful
- what is beautiful and ugly

# Effects of Value Judgments

- ours is always better
- Some should be punished or promoted
- Some should die or live happily ever after
- leads to ethnocentrism
- separate and unequal policies

# Sociological Analysis of values

- preferences
- belief that our values are true and right
- truth of values are difficult to prove
- value judgments are not provable facts

# American Values

1. Freedom
2. Prosperity
3. Efficiency
4. Fairness
5. Democracy

# Disagreements

1. What is meant by each of these values
2. how to assess the actual performance of social institutions
3. How to prioritize different values
4. How much things could really be improved

# Ethnocentrism

- truth, values, and norms specific to culture
- judging what others think
- assumption that one's own culture is right
- limits interaction with others
- creates the comfort zone
- develops the stranger phenomenon

# Reasons for Ethnocentrism

- social interaction
- loyalty to the group
- socialization
- the creation of deviance
- domination and oppression
- social conflict

# Effects

- prejudice, stereotypes, scapegoats, racism
- anti-miscegenation practices
- denial of individuality
- discrimination
- Segregation
- Inhumane practices
- Domination and oppression

# Domination and Oppression

- Transatlantic slave trade
- Genocide of native Americans
- Extermination of Jews in Germany
- Easier to exploit “savages”
- Use of scripture to justifying conquest
- Creating an ideology of subjugation as necessary for civilization
- Where oppression exists—ethnocentrism is encouraged

# Human Differences

- Social interaction from birth within groups
- Different Social histories
- social patterns
- Social problems

# Benefits of Diversity

- encourages understanding the universe
- encourages self interrogation
- diversity brings alternatives
- provides new solutions to problems
- provides new meanings
- teaches us to respect differences
- teaches humility

# Conclusion

- We are reluctant to give up what we have in order to become “like them.”
- Human differences are not necessarily bad
- We can never have a world where all agree