



Cultural misunderstanding:

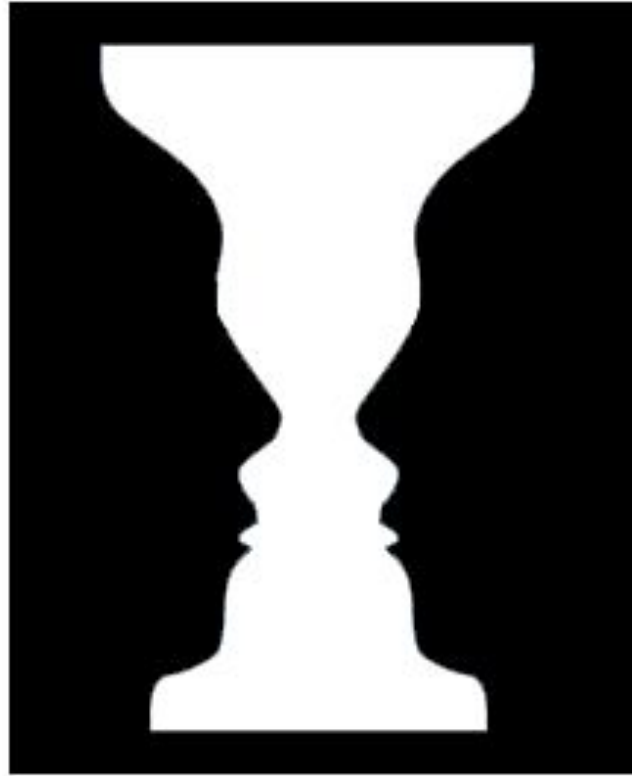
1) Ethnocentrism

2) Cultural identity

Perceptions: what do you see?



Some sample visual perception





This picture of an old lady...



and this picture of a pretty princess...

We tend to discount any perceptions that don't conform to our beliefs.

Understanding Ethnocentrism

- Humans create cultures that determine “right” ways to do things
- The “right” way to do things in one culture might be different in a different culture
- There is no problem if one never leaves his or her own culture; everyone knows

Intercultural Encounters

- Problems only come up when one encounters someone who is not from their own culture and there is no longer a shared assumption about the “right” way.
- Intercultural communication is needed to judge others from a different point of view and not hold people from different cultures to the same expectation

ETHNOCENTRISM

- IN JAPAN PEOPLE EAT WITH CHOPSTICKS, IN INDIA WITH FINGERS AND IN FRANCE WITH METAL OR PLASTIC UTENSILS.
- **Which is more correct than others?**
- THE MUSLIM HAS ONE GOD, THE BUDHIST HAS NO GODS AND THE HINDU HAS MANY.
- **Which is more correct than others?**
- IN PART OF AFGHANISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA WOMEN COVER THEIR FACES WITH VEILS BUT IN TURKEY OR IN THE USA DO NOT.
- **Which is more correct than others?**
- AMERICANS SAY THAT DRIVING ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD IS THE 'WRONG SIDE' & THAT THE RIGHT SIDE IS THE 'CORRECT SIDE'
- **Is this Correct?**

**ETHNOCENTRISM IS
A VERY
"ANYTHING YOU CAN
DO, WE CAN DO IT
BETTER"
POINT OF VIEW
CONCERNING
ETHNICITY.**



DEFINITION

- ETHNOCENTRISM DERIVES FROM THE GREEK WORD FOR PEOPLE, ETHNOS
- AND ENGLISH WORD, CENTER.
- A COMMON IDIOM FOR ETHNOCENTRISM IS “TUNNEL VISION.”

WHAT *IS* ETHNOCENTRISM?

- THE TERM WAS COINED BY AMERICAN YALE PROFESSOR, WILLIAM GRAHAM SUMNER
- SUMNER DEFINED ETHNOCENTRISM AS:
- "[THE] VIEW OF THINGS IN WHICH ONE'S GROUP IS THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING,
- BOASTS ITSELF SUPERIOR,
- LOOKS WITH CONTEMPT ON OUTSIDERS AND
- OTHERS ARE SCALED AND RATED WITH REFERENCE TO IT. "

CHARACTERISTICS

AN INDIVIDUAL WITH AN ETHNOCENTRIC VIEW:

- FEELS PROUD, SUPERIOR ABOUT IN-GROUP
- THINKS IN-GROUP NORMS ARE UNIVERSAL
- IDENTIFIES STRONGLY WITH IN-GROUP ETHNICITY, CULTURE, ETC.
- VIEWS ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, SOCIAL EVENTS FROM THE POINT OF THEIR IN-GROUP
- DEFINES THEIR CULTURE ELEMENTS AS 'CORRECT' & 'NATURAL'
- REJECTS OUT-GROUP ETHNICITIES, CULTURES, ETC.
- FEELS LIKE OTHER ETHNICITIES & CULTURES ARE INFERIOR
- DEFINES OTHER CULTURE'S ELEMENTS AS 'INCORRECT' & 'UNNATURAL'

THE PROBLEM WITH ETHNOCENTRISM?

- ***ETHNOCENTRISM LEADS TO
MISUNDERSTANDING OTHERS.***

WE FALSELY DISTORT WHAT IS MEANINGFUL
AND FUNCTIONAL TO OTHER PEOPLES
THROUGH OUR OWN TINTED GLASSES.
WE SEE THEIR WAYS IN TERMS OF OUR LIFE
EXPERIENCE, NOT THEIR CONTEXT.

ETHNOCENTRISM EXAMPLES

go back
to AFRICA



go back to
MEXICO



Mmm. perfect! Really.
no cuisine is as
good as ours.



**Her belief that her cuisine is the best
is a classic example of ethnocentrism.**

- Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own way of life or culture is both superior to that of others and the most normal way of living for all human beings.
- An ethnocentrism attitude is also based on the assumption that a person's own culture can be used as a basis for measuring and evaluating behavior in other cultures.
- Thus the practice of monogamy (marriage of one man to one woman) is assumed by many people in the world to be the best and most normal form of marriage.
- Other forms of marriage may be evaluated as inferior, abnormal, weird, strange, or immoral.

**WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT
WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND !**

**WE AREN'T AWARE THAT
WE CAN DEVELOP
MORE VALID UNDERSTANDINGS
ABOUT
HOW OTHERS EXPERIENCE LIFE.**

ETHNOCENTRISM

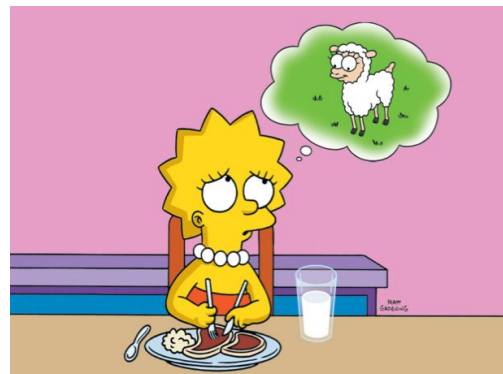
EVERYBODY IS *ETHNOCENTRIC*,
AS ALL OF US AROUND THE WORLD
ASSUME THINGS ABOUT OTHER
PEOPLE'S WAYS.

THE QUESTION IS WHY ARE WE
ETHNOCENTRIC?

ETHNOCENTRISM

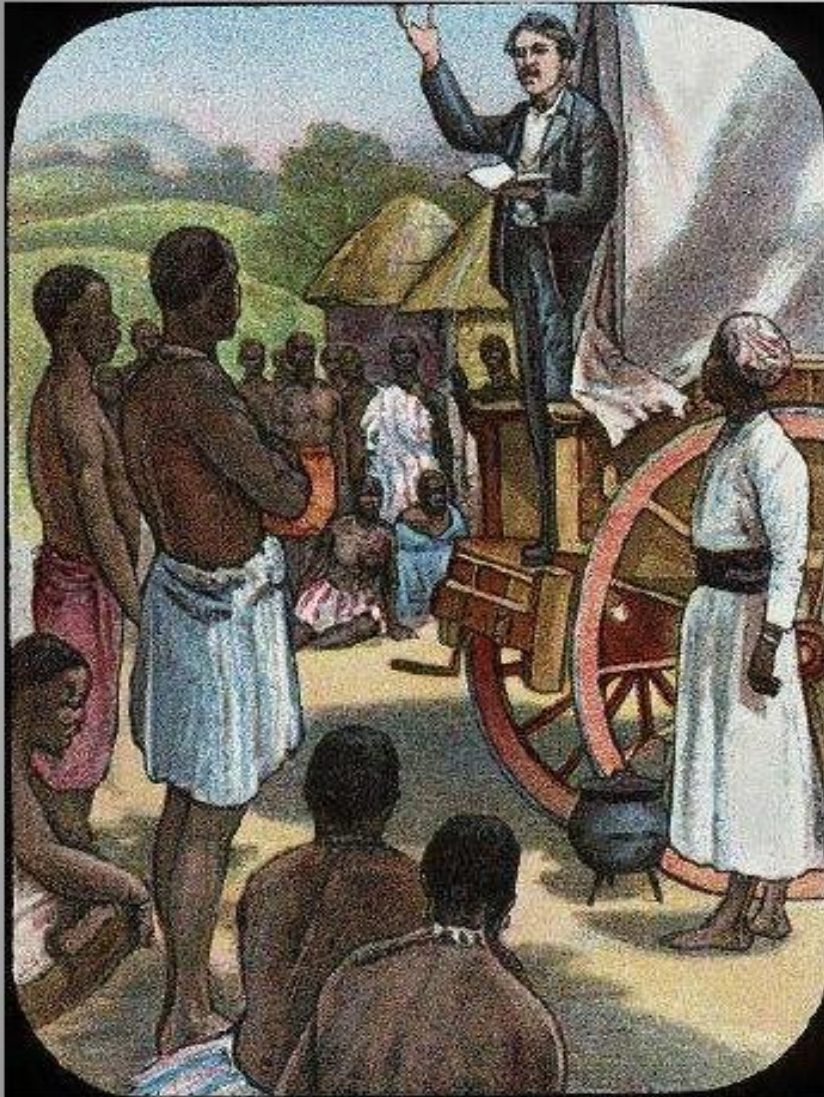


- IT IS FOUND IN EVERY CULTURE, PEOPLE REGARD THEIR CULTURE AS SUPERIOR.
- LANGUAGES
- MAPS
- MYTHS AND FOLKTALES
- PROVERBS
- FOOD



PROVERBS

- I'm White and You're Not. (Proverb of White American)
- Mamma li Turchi (Anneciğim, Türkler geliyor!). (Proverb of Italians)
- May God protect us from the devil and the Turks. (Proverb of Kurdish)
- There is no language like the Irish for soothing and quieting. (Proverb of Irish)



Ethnocentrism

- My culture is the most **IMPORTANT** culture in the world
- My culture's beliefs are the most **VALID**

EFFECTS

- CREATES THE FEELING THAT ONE'S OWN CULTURE IS SUPERIOR TO OTHER GROUPS' CULTURES.
- MOVES ONE TO CRITICIZE, SUBORDINATE, UNDERMINE, AND DEVELOP CONFLICTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS.
- ETHNOCENTRIC FEELINGS CAN EVEN CAUSE AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP TO FEAR FOR THEIR OWN EXISTENCE.
- RATHER NATURALLY, ETHNOCENTRIC BEHAVIOR MAY REFLECT PERSONAL, UNRESOLVED ISSUES.
- **XENOPHOBIA:** A FEAR OR HATRED OF PERSONS OF A DIFFERENT RACE, OR DIFFERENT ETHNIC OR NATIONAL ORIGIN

EXPRESSION OF ETHNOCENTRISM

- Ethnocentrism may manifest itself in attitudes of superiority or sometimes hostility.
- Violence, discrimination, and verbal aggressiveness are other means whereby ethnocentrism may be expressed
- VIOLENCE
- DISCRIMINATION
- VERBAL AGGRESSIVENESS

EXTREME EFFECTS OF ETHNOCENTRISM

- RACISM
- COLONIALISM
- ETHNIC CLEANSING

‘WE SHOULD CONTROL OUR BIAS TO
BUILD BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF
OTHERS’

Overcoming ethnocentrism

- Ethnocentrism is “a universal tendency for any people to put its own culture and society in a central position of priority and worth” (Keesing, 1965)
- Ethnocentrism becomes an everlasting / steady window through which people of a cultural group interprets and judges all other cultures
- Danger is “our way is the right way”
- Ethnocentrism is universal and can be met in all groups or societies.
- it can also have negative effects such as :
 - not being able to empathize with other groups or persons,
 - not being able to see the other’s point of view.

American Ethnocentrism

Examples:

- Accents:
- Ethnocentric Americans may say that another person has an accent, implying that the other person speaks different, strange, & un-American
- Legal Age of Alcohol Consumption:
- the US has a higher drinking age of most other countries & does not emulate (copy) other countries by lowering the legal age because they think it is the best age for a person to be able to start consuming alcohol

American Ethnocentrism

Examples:

Capitalism vs. Communism:

- for years, the US has fought to end communism because they believe capitalism trumps all

Driving:

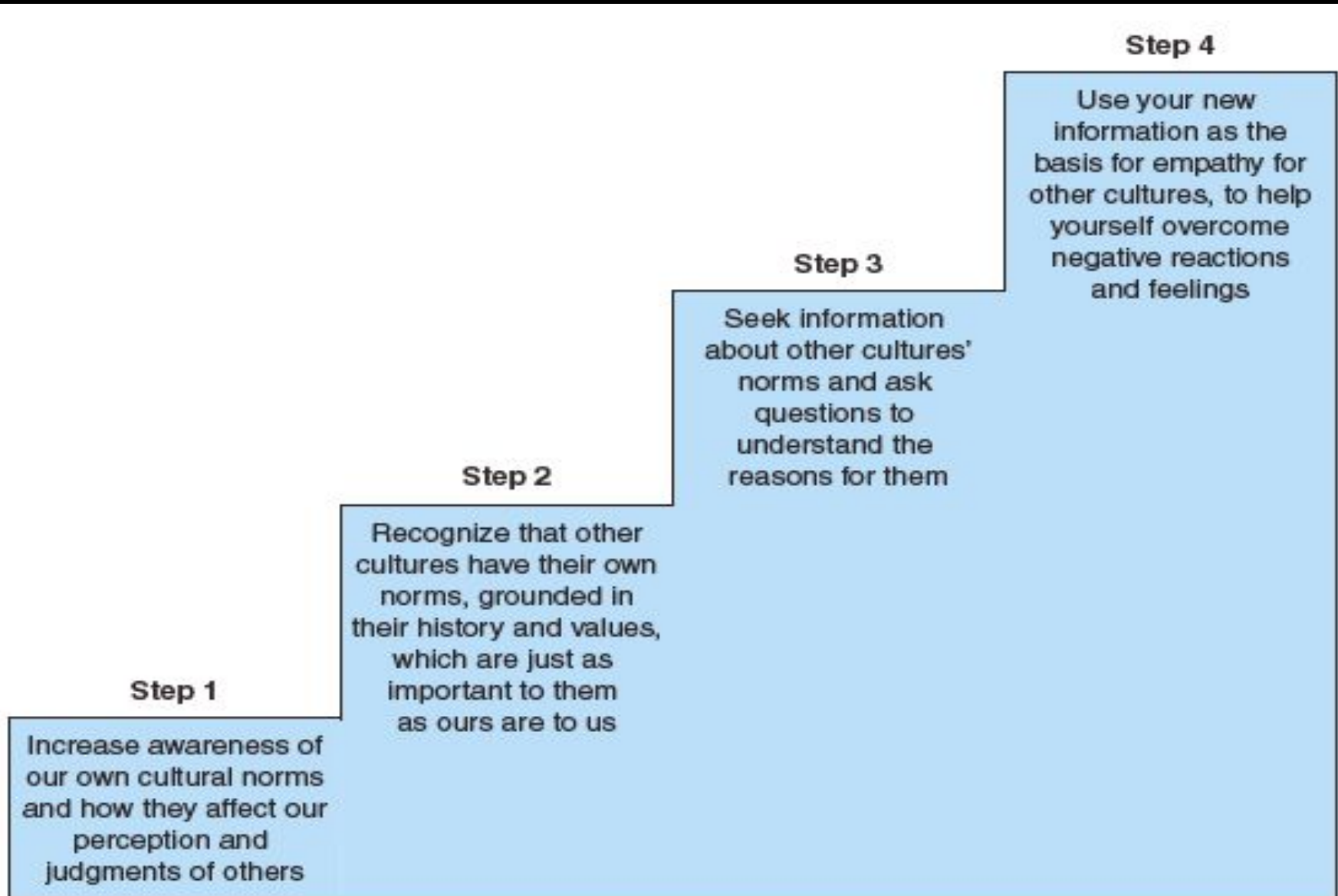
- Ethnocentric Americans say that driving on the left side of the road is the 'wrong side' & that the right side is the 'correct side'

Developing cultural sensitivity



- Recognise that your beliefs and actions may be different to others - not necessarily better
- Accept that each person has a right to their beliefs, and they feel as strongly about them
- Be open to finding out about the traditions, beliefs and practices of others

Steps to Flexible Ethnocentrism



Becoming More Flexibly Ethnocentric

- The key to avoiding the negative outcome of ethnocentrism lies in an *awareness* of personal ethnocentrism.
- The next step involves *recognition* of the rules, beliefs, and behaviors of other cultures.
- The third step involves learning about other cultures' specific beliefs and norms.
- The final step in becoming flexibly ethnocentric is to build an ever-broadening perspective from which to draw when meeting others.



- ETHNOCENTRIC VIEWS LEAD TO STEREOTYPING
- STEREOTYPE: GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHEREBY WE ATTRIBUTE A DEFINED SET OF CHARACTERISTICS TO THIS GROUP; CAN BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE

Stereotypes

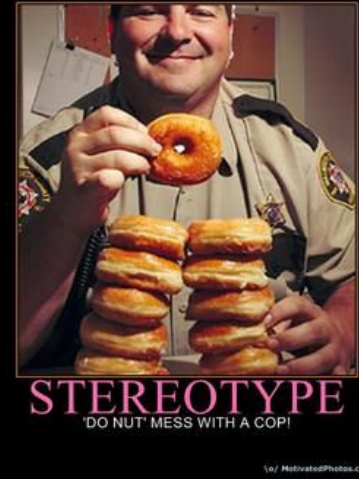
- All rap artists are uneducated, or all rappers are “thugs”.
- True or false?



ETHNOCENTRIC STREOTYPES

EXTREME EXAMPLES:

- ❑ AMERICANS ARE OBESE & UNEDUCATED
- ❑ CANADIANS SAY 'EH'
- ❑ RICH PEOPLE ARE SNOBBY & MEMBERS OF COUNTRY CLUBS
- ❑ ASIANS ARE GENIUSES & BAD DRIVERS
- ❑ ENGLISH PEOPLE DRINK TEA & HAVE BAD TEETH
- ❑ WOMEN ARE BAD DRIVERS & EMOTIONAL
- ❑ MEN ARE STRONG & SMARTER THAN WOMEN



Cultural Identity

What is it? It is identity or feeling of belonging to a group.

It is part of a person's self-conception and self-perception. How a person sees himself?

In this way, cultural identity is both characteristic of the individual but also of the culturally identical group of members sharing the same cultural identity.



CULTURAL Identity

is the holistic
combination of

**national, political,
cultural, religious,
and family factors**

which shape up
one's identity.

Nationality

- The country that you were born in, and the country that you currently live in. Your nationality determines your cultural identity because you usually assimilate to the culture of the country that you live in. For example: American Jews and Italians assimilated from their former cultures into the mainstream American culture when they immigrated to the USA.

Ethnicity

Your ethnicity is what race and culture you are.

- it is very important to your cultural identity, because you usually have the culture of your ethnicity.
- Your ethnicity also sometimes determines how you look, though not always, because most ethnicities have universal looks: for example there are both white and brown Uzbeks.

Religion

Your religion is the God that you worship and follow.

- It helps determine what values you have as a person.
- Religions have also helped to shape culture.
- Christianity has influenced culture greatly in Europe and in the Americas, and Islam has in the Middle East.

Social Class

- How much money you have, and how it benefits your life in society.
- Middle classes are in between rich and poor, and successful societies have large middle classes that close the gap between rich and poor.
- Upper classes are the rich people in the society.

Generation

- Your generation is all the people that are alive and living at the same time as you are. The general gap for a generation is 30 years, at which time the previous generation has grown up, become adults and begun to have children of their own. Generations are usually part of the general culture that they are born in: for example, most teenagers today own phones and are obsessed with taking selfies and social media.