

# Soc 300 summaries of the week 4 readings from developing world

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Ethni The following is a summary of the discussion of ethni found in readings from “ Developing World”. Although it is difficult to precisely define ethnicity, most analysts agree that it is a social construction describing a group of people who recognize themselves as distinct fro others through real or imagined common history, traditions and values. However this does not mean that they are necessarily homogeneous or politically united. An ethnic group may be divided by class, ideology and religion. Nevertheless there is a subjective group consciousness which unites the group more powerful than the divisive forces. Some ethnic groups have classifications imposed on them from outsiders. While ethnic groups provide comfort to strangers in a new country, they also maintain barriers with other ethnic groups, especially if they are based on religious, tribal and racial distinctions. Nations are rarely homogeneous providing less potential for conflict internationally but more domestically. Sometimes the lack of a home state exacerbates the risk for conflict, especially if the ethnic group considers itself politically and economically powerless.

Nationality refers to a population with its’ own language, culture, history and geographical home. An ethnic group within a nation must maintain its’ own language to remain politically salient. For many divers reasons an ethnic group within a nation may wish to separate from the host nation and set up its’ own state. For example, in Spain the Basque Nationalists pursued separation when democratization elevated hopes for autonomy and the economy deteriorated.

Hardelman uses the term tribe to describe sub-national groups that share a collective identity based on language, common lineage and possibly religion.

Intertribal conflict has ravaged much of Africa. Violence may also be ignited in military coups involving officers of different ethnicities and foreign intervention may exacerbate conflict.

While race may coincide with an ethnicity it is not necessarily so. There may be several ethnicities within a race because of differing cultural backgrounds. Racial groups set themselves apart from others only in multicultural settings.