

Ethnic group: A collectivity of people who perceive themselves as sharing patterns of normative behavior, or culture, and who form part of a larger population, interacting with other groups within the framework of a state.

Primordialist view: the false notion that ethnicity is ascribed, permanent, natural, has existed since time immemorial. (“blood & mud”)

Constructivist view: the view that most anthropologists now hold that ethnicity is constantly re-enlivened and re-invented by human agents through their interactions with other groups and with the state. Ethnic groups include a host of people who do not necessarily share full genealogical background or origin in a common place.

Ethnic groups are not survivals from an earlier age, but forms of social life that are capable of renewing and transforming. Groups engage in an *on-going process of identity formation*. Ethnic boundaries persist despite the flow of people across them.

Ethnic distinctions do not depend on the absence of social interaction, but are vitalized by social relations across such boundaries.

► Identity is self-conscious; no groups are isolated
Ethnic groups are often political or economic interest groups: members seek some advantage or right that is conferred through membership in a group.

**There is great interest in the “ethnic boundary”--the criteria that differentiate groups from one another. It’s the boundary that matters more than the cultural “stuff” within the group.