

Types of social groups

[Sociology](#)



TYPES OF GROUPS Categories, Aggregates, and Groups Social Category - people who share a social characteristic, such as a taxpayer, a woman, or a college student. Social Aggregate - people who happen to be at the same place at the same time, such as students waiting in line for concert tickets. ● A group is sometimes confused with a social category and a social aggregate. Although neither categories nor aggregates are groups, some of their members may form groups by interacting regularly, sharing ways of thinking and feeling, taking one another's behavior into an account, and having some common goals. Primary Group → is composed of people who are emotionally close, know one another well, and seek one another's company. The members of a primary group have a "we" feeling and enjoy being together. It is the most important setting for socialization. Charles Horton Cooley, one of the founders of symbolic interactionism, coined the term primary group. Cooley observed that the family, neighborhood, and childhood socialization are primary because they are the first groups an infant experience. Conditions that promote the development of primary groups: ● Small group sized. Members of a small group are more likely to develop primary relationships and close emotional ties than members of large groups. ● Face-to-face contact. Primary relationships occur more easily when interaction is face-to-face. People who can see each other and who can experience nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and touch are much more likely to develop close ties. ● Continuous contact. The probability of developing a primary relationship also increases with prolonged contact. ● Proper social environment. The social environment in which interaction occurs also affects the development of primary relationships. If individuals are expected to relate to one another strictly on

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the basis of status or role, primary relationships are unlikely to develop.

Functions of primary groups: 1. Primary groups provide emotional support through caring, personal, and intimate relationships. 2. Primary groups contribute to the socialization process. 3. Primary groups promote conformity and contribute to social control. Secondary Groups → exists to accomplish a specific purpose. It is impersonal and goal oriented; it involves only a segment of its members' lives. Secondary relationships - impersonal interactions involving only limited parts of their personality. The purpose of the group is to accomplish a task, not to enrich friendships. If friendship becomes more important than the task, a secondary group may become ineffective. · Many secondary groups are settings for primary relationships. Members of a work group may relate to one another in a manner that is personal, demonstrate genuine concern for one another as total personalities, and have relationships that are fulfilling in themselves. Similarly, members of a primary group occasionally engage in secondary interaction. Reference Groups ® A group that is used as a standard against which we compare or evaluate ourselves to acquire attitudes, values, beliefs, and norms. Reference groups influence self-esteem and behavior.