

Social concepts and social interactions

Sociology



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A society or group will provide different rules on status and role. Sometimes, if people from different groups meet, conflicts and friction may occur.

Practically, they are imposing on each other different expectations. One person from a group (say, an American) may focus on achieved status or upward social mobility, while another like the Japanese will respect seniority. Many more can be said or examples can be drawn, but suffice it to say the status and role are important social and cultural variables to be considered.

Primary and Secondary Groups

Charles H. Cooley coined these terms in the early part of the 20th century.

Primary groups are those where a person experiences intimate face-to-face interactions. These include most the family, playgroup, and community; in contrast, secondary groups are those which foster impersonal and cold interactions. If a person moves residence quite frequently, each community effectively become a secondary group for that person (Primary Groups, 2006).

For each person, the effect of his or her primary groups and secondary groups would go a long way of determining how he or she will interact with people of different upbringing. But, we can extend this concept to social and ethnic groups. Each member of such groups will more than likely experience similar patterns in their primary and social groups. Cultural differences account for this.

For example, Asians value collectivism. From the standpoint of Sociology, the family as their single most important primary group will more bond and knitted. The Asian family will more likely teach the children the value of collective effort, and shun selfishness. Something similar could be said of Western, individualistic families. Whenever self-reliance is valued, a person

will more than likely to improve his or her status, and not necessarily seek the help of others.