

Groups

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover the topic of social groups, through the definition and discussion of:

1. Social Groups
 - a. Primary Groups
 - b. Secondary Groups

1. SOCIAL GROUPS

Groups are a basic part of society and social life, and of particular interest to sociological study.

People belong to many **social groups** of all different levels at the same time. A social group is simply a collection of two or more people who regularly interact with each other for some purpose.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** Couples, family, friends, business associates, coworkers, or lifestyle groups like activist groups, environmental groups, or even your neighborhood church, are all social groups that are part of an individual's regular interactions.

There are two kinds of social groups:

- Primary groups
- Secondary groups



TERM TO KNOW

Social Groups

Any collection of two or more people who regularly interact with each other for some purpose.

1a. Primary Groups

Primary groups are smaller social groups whose members share intimate and lasting personal connections. Primary groups comprise your immediate family and friends, and are characterized by what sociologists call strong ties.

You're bound together by loyalty and emotional connection--you can't go out and replace your brother in the same way that you can replace a coworker. Primary groups are the very first form of human group contact and

interaction, which is why they are called primary. You first experience the family, and then the friends.

Primary groups provide your ideas of right or wrong, your attitudes and behaviors, your worldview and outlook.

🔗 **EXAMPLE** Whether a person is religious or not, or conservative versus liberal, is often shaped in his or her very first primary group contact.



TERM TO KNOW

Primary Groups

A smaller social group whose members share intimate, lasting personal connections.

1b. Secondary Groups

Secondary groups are larger, more impersonal collections of people who join together for a purpose or goal. These are people that you don't know as well as the people in your primary groups. Secondary groups are characterized not by strong ties, but by what sociologists call weak ties, meaning you have little emotional connection and personal knowledge of the other person beyond a vague group affinity.

The following represent secondary groups--people you see occasionally, whose faces are familiar to you, but you don't really know that much about them.

- A group of people you play soccer with once a month
- A class for a lecture that you have
- People who work in your company

You're still united in a way, because you share a group affinity, but in the event that the unifying circumstance is dissolved--soccer league or class ends, change of job, etc.--that secondary group also dissolves.



TERM TO KNOW

Secondary Groups

A larger and more impersonal social group that joins together for a specific purpose or goal.



SUMMARY

Today you learned about **social groups**, including **primary and secondary groups**.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



TERMS TO KNOW

Primary Groups

A smaller social group whose members share intimate, lasting personal connections.

Secondary Groups

A larger and more impersonal social group that joins together for a specific purpose or goal.

Social Groups

Any collection of two or more people who regularly interact with each other for some purpose.