# REFERENCE GROUP (SOCIOLOGY)

A reference group is a group of people whose norms influence a person's behaviors. We use the group as a 'frame of reference' to make behavioral decisions.

# DEFINITION

The concept of reference groups gives us a lens through which we can understand how group norms influence our behaviors. It demonstrates that we tend to want emulate the behaviors of the groups we identify with or aspire toward (our 'in groups'), and avoid behaviors of the groups with which we do not identify (our 'out groups').

# EXAMPLES

- Membership Reference Groups:
   Groups with which we feel
   affiliation, so we try to uphold their
   norms and behaviors.
- Aspirational Reference Groups: Groups we aspire to be part of, so we emulate their behaviors and norms.
- Dissociative Reference Groups:
   Groups a person wants to ensure they are not associated with.

# **Reference Groups**

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