

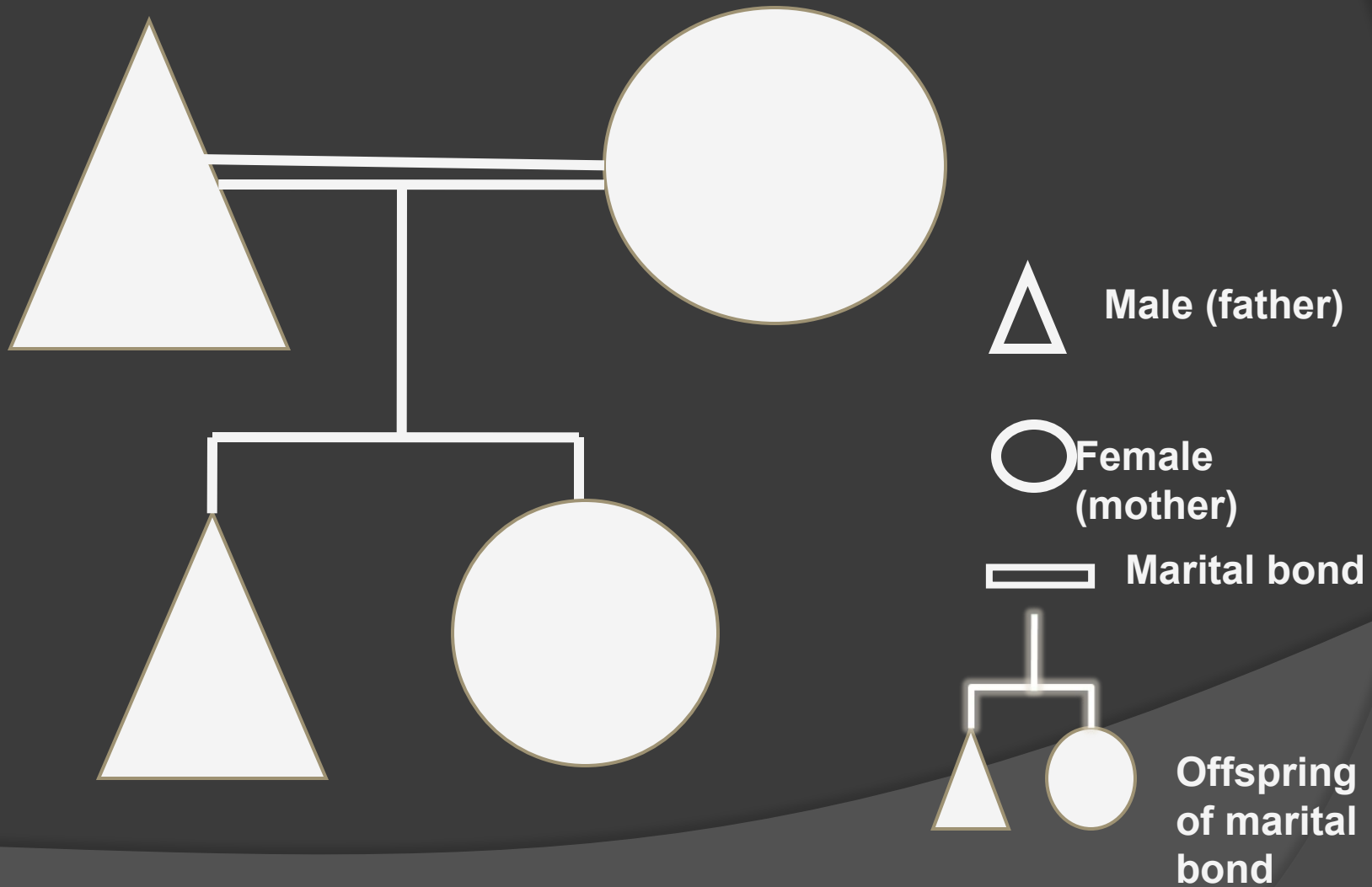
**Forms of social life:  
Interaction. Groups.**

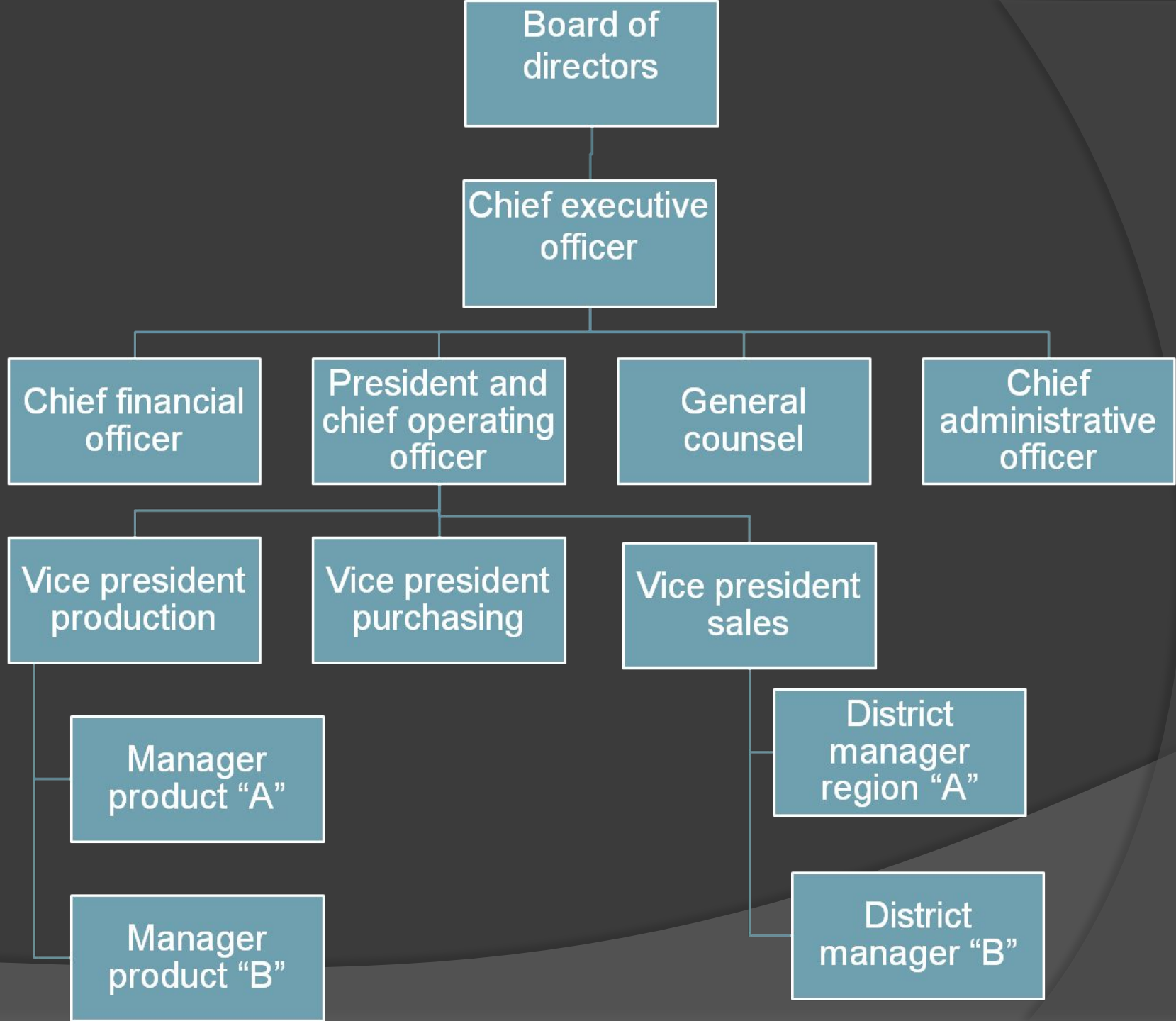
# **LECTURE #4**

# **Social structures**

- ◎ The way the people of any society relate to each other and organize their social lives is not random but patterned.**
- ◎ Social structures are regular patterns of interaction and persistent social relationships.**
- ◎ At a societal level, structures often reflect distributions of wealth, power, or authority,**
- ◎ Structures can also be described along ethnic or racial lines.**

# The structure of a typical family





# Social structures

- ◎ Because social structures are created by people, they can change over time.
- ◎ But structures tend to have some persistence, and when sociologists speak of social structures they are talking about patterns of interaction and social relationships that persist over time.
- ◎ Included would be the major social structures found in societies, for they generally do not change rapidly.

# Interaction

- ◎ **Interaction between individuals is a complex process, but people do it with ease in their everyday lives.**
- ◎ **Although interaction has a creative and spontaneous dimension, it is patterned to some degree by cultural values and social norms.**

- ◎ Patterns of behavior are also produced by the **statuses** and **roles** that people occupy.

# **Status and role**

- ◎ **A status is a socially recognized position in a social system.**
- ◎ **A role is the behavior generally expected of one who occupies a particular status.**



# An ascribed and achieved statuses

- ◎ **An ascribed status** is one into which individuals move or are placed, irrespective of their efforts or capacities (e.g., male or female, young or old, black or white, son or daughter etc.)
- ◎ **An achieved status** is one that people acquire through their own efforts (e.g., college graduate, getting married, having children, becoming an astronaut, or even becoming a bank robber etc.)

# A master status

- ① A master status refers to a position so important that it dominates and overrides all other statuses, but for the person and all other people (e.g., an AIDS Victim).
- ② More commonly in our society, a master status is related to one's occupation (e.g., a Supreme Court Justice, a nun, a major league baseball player, or an opera singer etc.)

- **Statuses are positions, and roles are the expected behaviors for a person occupying that position.**

# Role-making

- ◎ **However, statuses and roles can always be modified and changed over time, through the continuing actions and interactions of people.**
- ◎ **People do not simply conform to a rigid set of role expectations; they also actively modify their roles. This ability of individuals to modify their own roles has been called role-making.**

# Dyads and Triads

- ① When two people engage in interaction it is called a **dyad**.
- ① When a third person is introduced into the interaction it is called a **triad**.
- ① Both dyads and triads involve interaction, and both can be seen as groups.
- ① The triad is a much more complicated social arrangement.

# Social groups

- ◎ A group may be defined as a relatively small number of people who **interact** with one another over time and thereby **establish patterns** of interaction, a group **identity**, and **rules or norms** governing behavior.

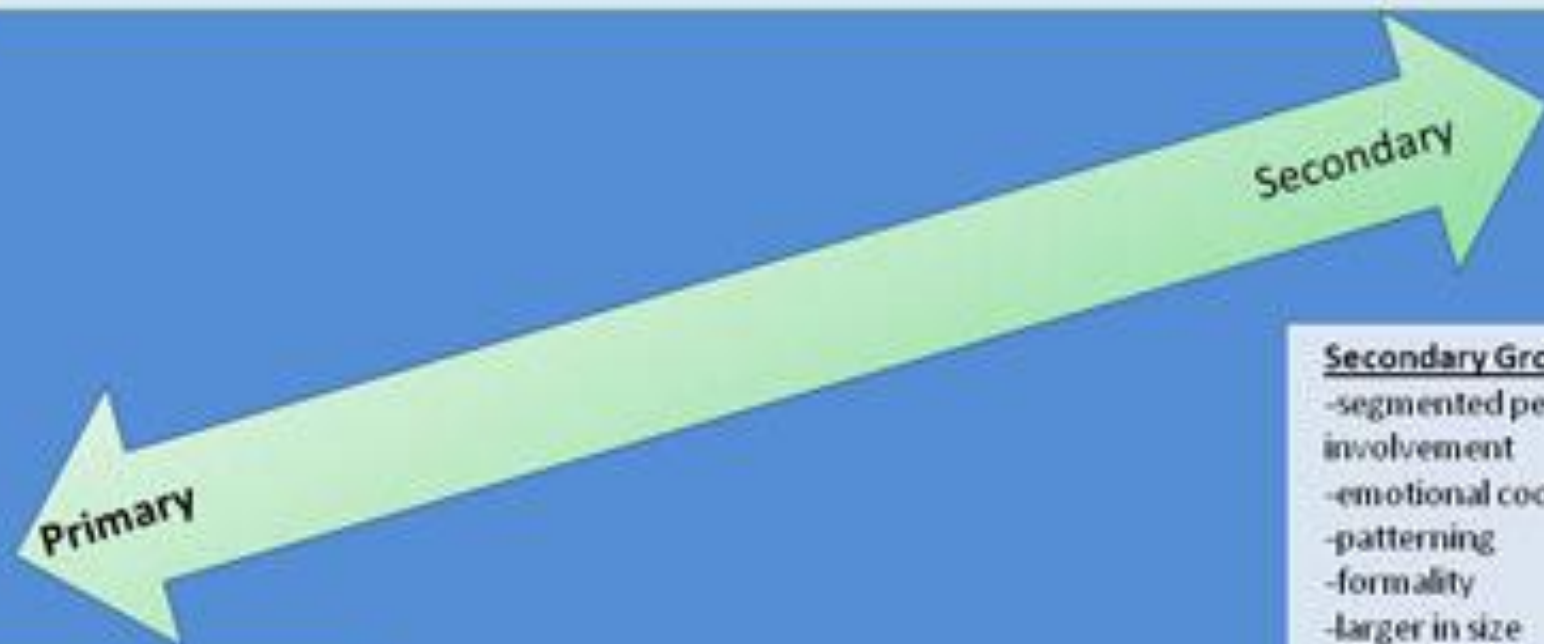
- ◎ **A larger entity such as a society (e.g., Kazakhstan society) differs from a group in that all the members of a society cannot possibly interact with each other because of their large number.**
- ◎ **Several people who meet briefly on an elevator are not a group**

# *In-Groups and Out-Groups*

- ⦿ An **in-group** is one that members are involved in and with which they identify,
- ⦿ an **out-group** is one to which outsiders belong (e.g., groups of youths - typically labeled *gangs*) .



# PRIMARY vs. SECONDARY GROUPS



## Primary Groups

- total personality involvement
- emotional warmth
- spontaneity
- informality
- smaller in size
- valued as an end

## Secondary Groups\*

- segmented personality involvement
- emotional coolness
- patterning
- formality
- larger in size
- valued as means to an end

\*More People In The Group,  
Typically Means More  
Secondary-like Relationships

**Primary groups** are intimate, face-to-face groups (are typically small and close-knit)

- ◎ The relationships among the members are very personal.
- ◎ They strongly identify with each other as well as with the group as a whole.
- ◎ As a result of the closeness of the relationships, the primary group often has a profound effect on its members (e.g., the family, play groups of children, and neighborhood or community groups).

***Secondary groups*** are larger and more impersonal

- ◎ Members do not know each other as intimately or completely as do the members of a primary group.
- ◎ Members' ties to a secondary group are typically weaker than the ties to primary groups. Secondary groups have a less profound impact on members.
- ◎ They are usually formed for a specific purpose, and the members rarely interact with each other outside of the activities that are oriented toward the group goal.

# *Reference groups*

- ◎ **are any groups that a person takes into account when evaluating his or her actions or characteristics. As humans we are always trying to evaluate ourselves and our behavior.**
  - A study of American adults has shown that membership in different religious groups influences attitudes toward premarital sex, birth control, and abortion.
- ◎ **A person will likely have a number of reference groups, and those groups will probably change over time.**

# ***Group Conformity***

- ◎ **Experimental studies have shown that people tend to conform to the ways of groups they are in. (The Sherif Experiment, The Asch Experiment, The Milgram Experiment).**