

Social Interaction and Social Structure Part II

In reality, there is no such thing as absolute freedom.
The rules of social interaction determine one's
freedom.

Eraldo Banovac



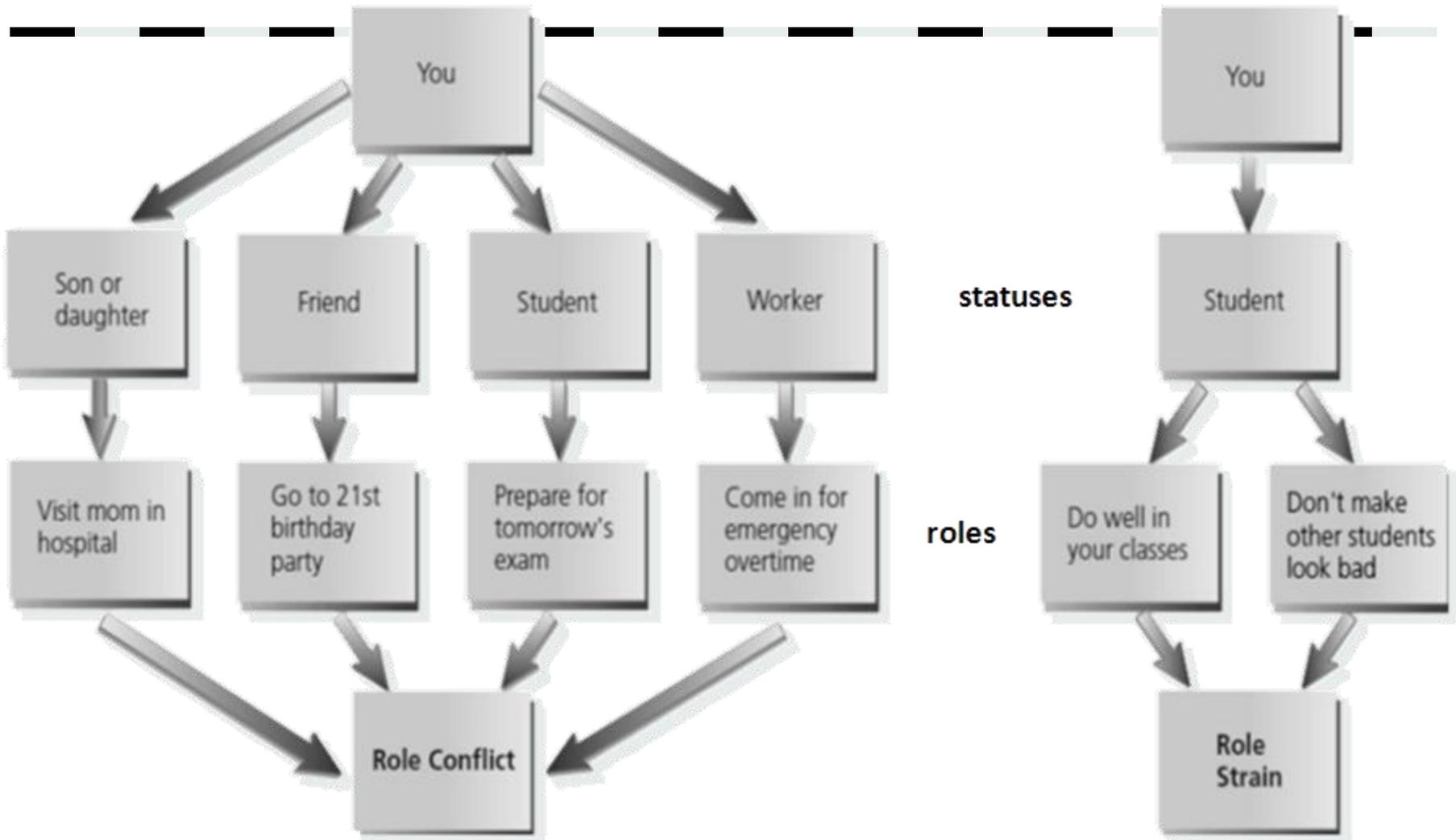
Elements of Social Structure: Social Role



- **role conflict:** conflict between or among the social roles corresponding to two or more social statuses in one individual
- **role strain:** difficulties that arise when the same social status imposes conflicting social role demands and expectations
- **role expectations:** scripts or shared expectations for behavior that are linked to each part of a social role
- **role ambiguity:** Norms for a specific social role are vague, unclear and ill-defined. Actors disagree on social role expectations, not because there is conflict but because expectations are unclear.

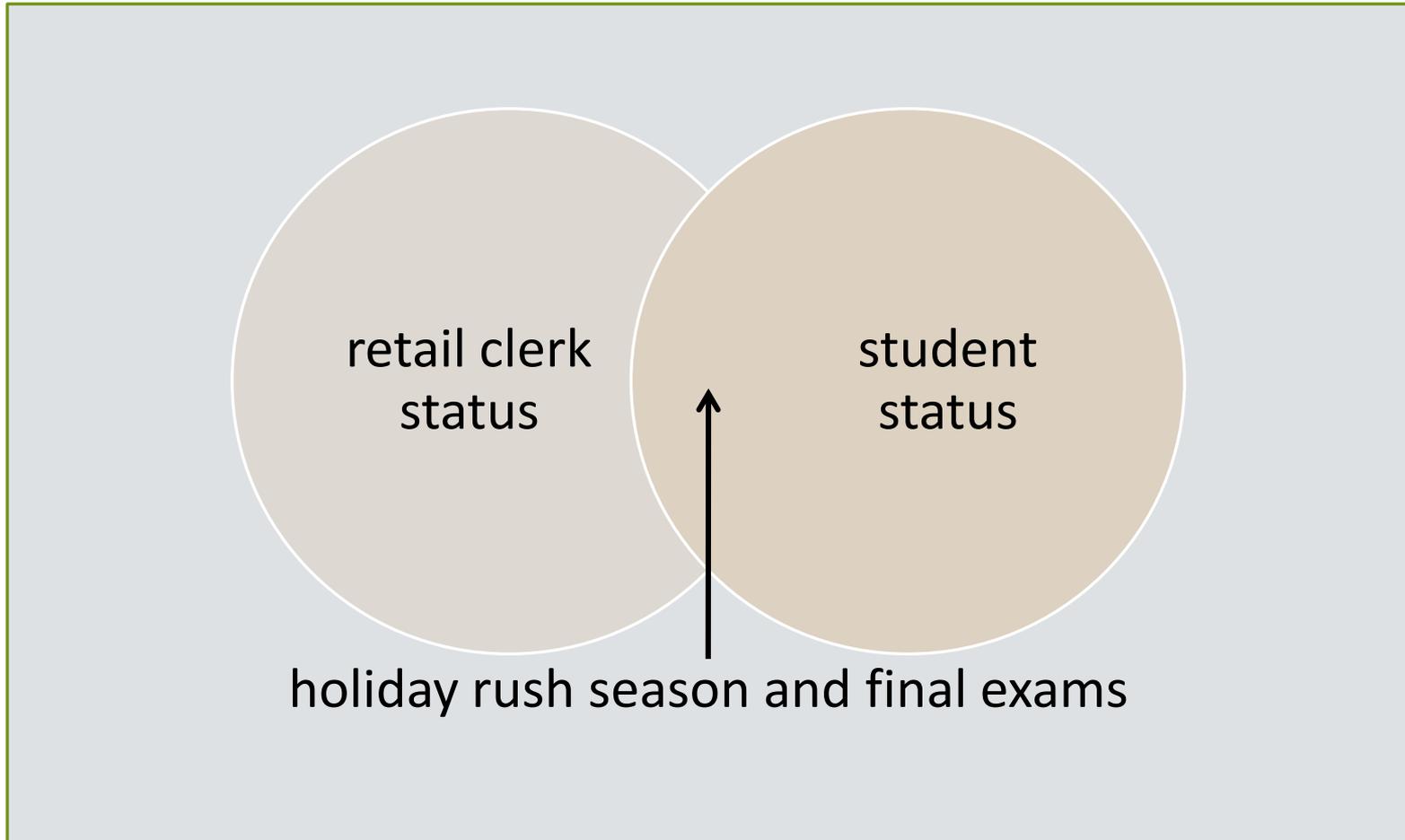


Elements of Social Structure: Social Role



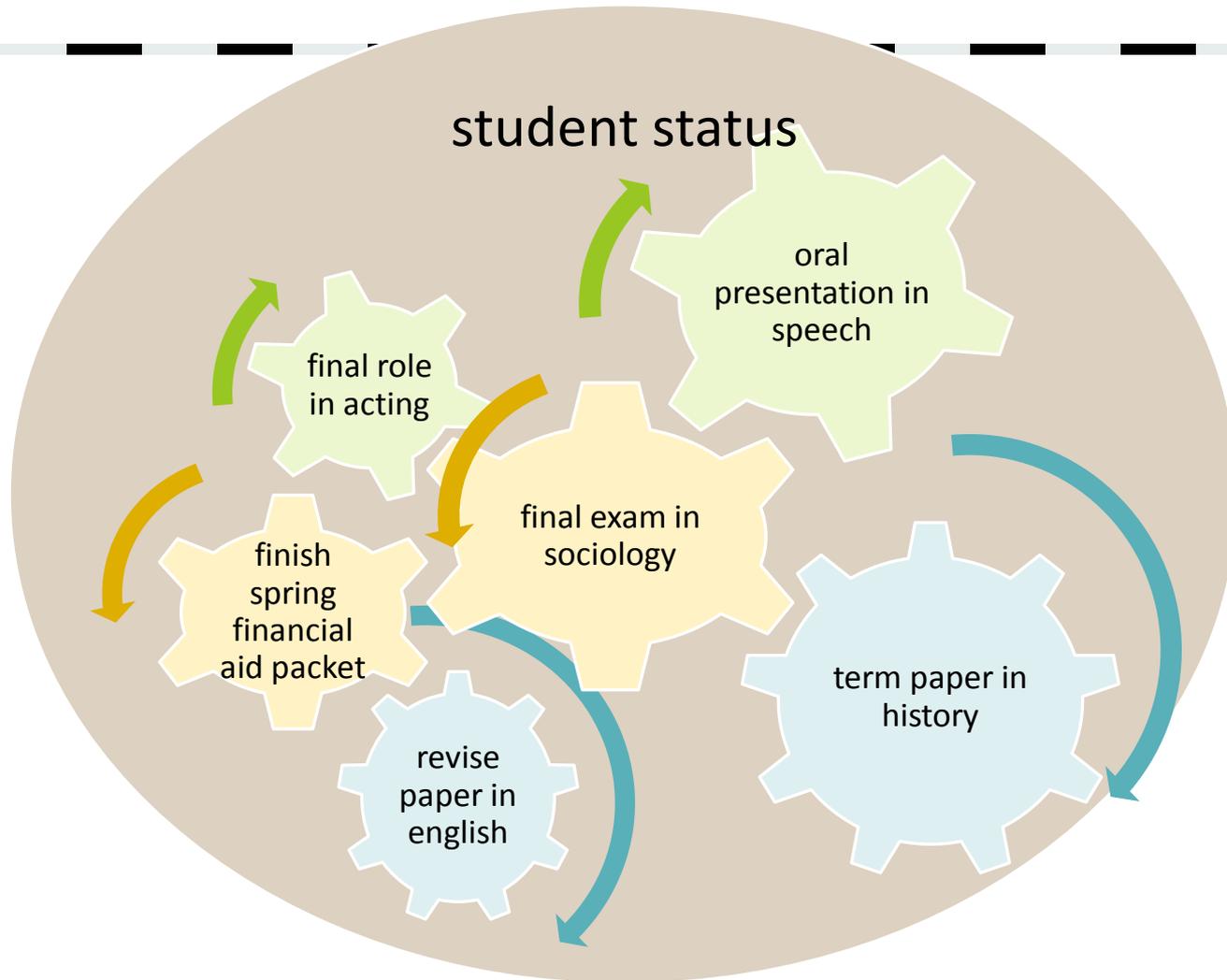


Elements of Social Structure: Role Conflict



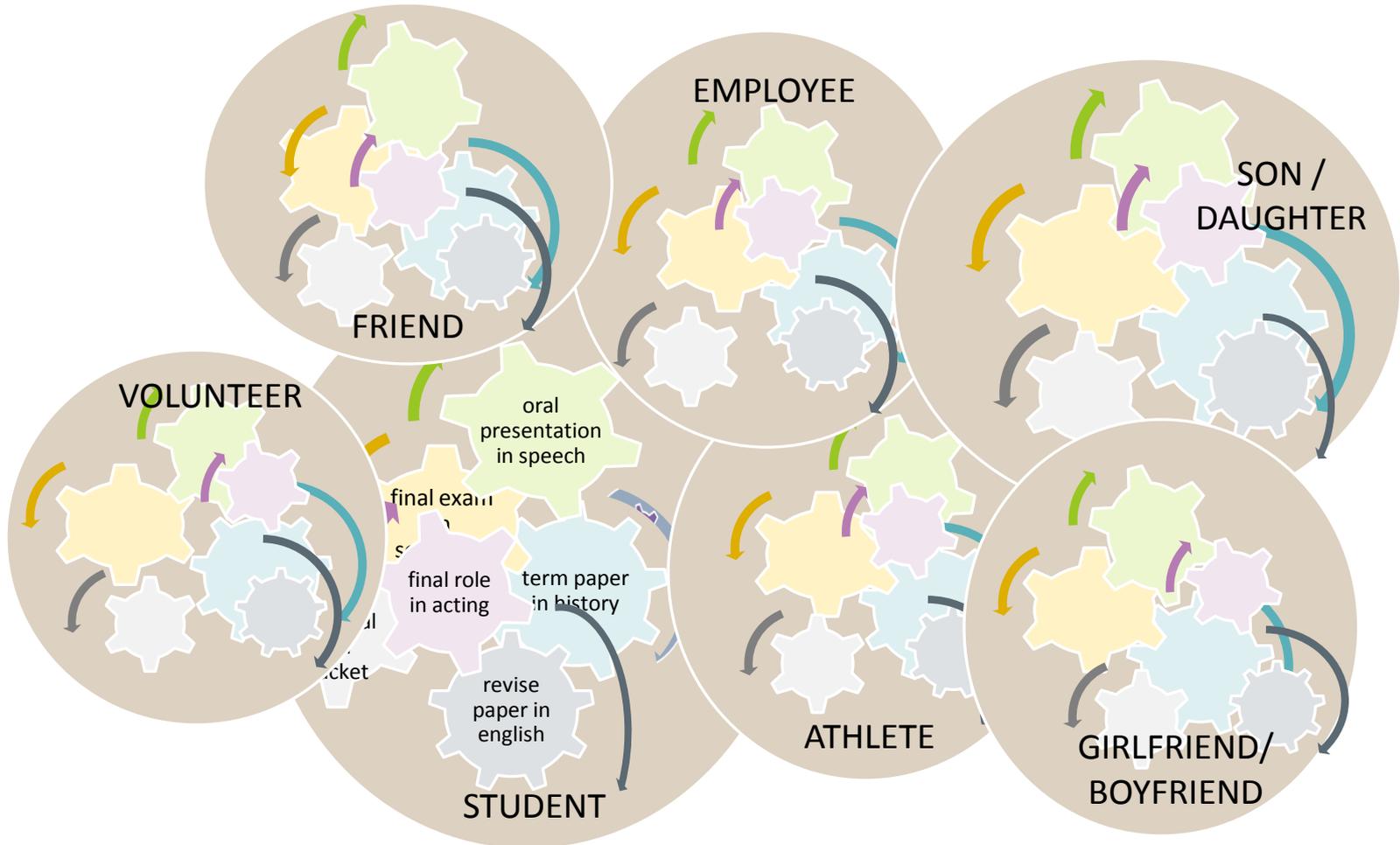


Elements of Social Structure: Role Strain



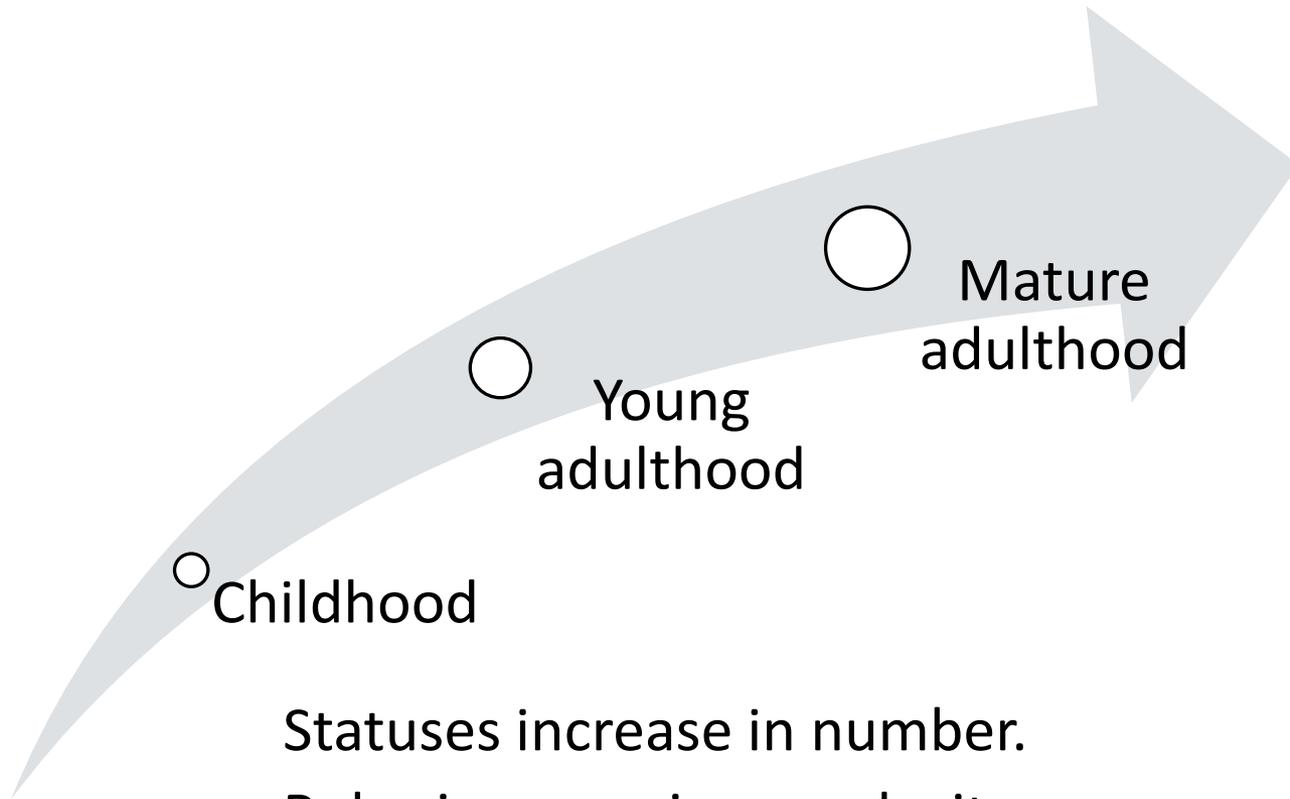


Elements of Social Structure: Role Strain and Role Conflict





Statuses and Roles over the Life Cycle



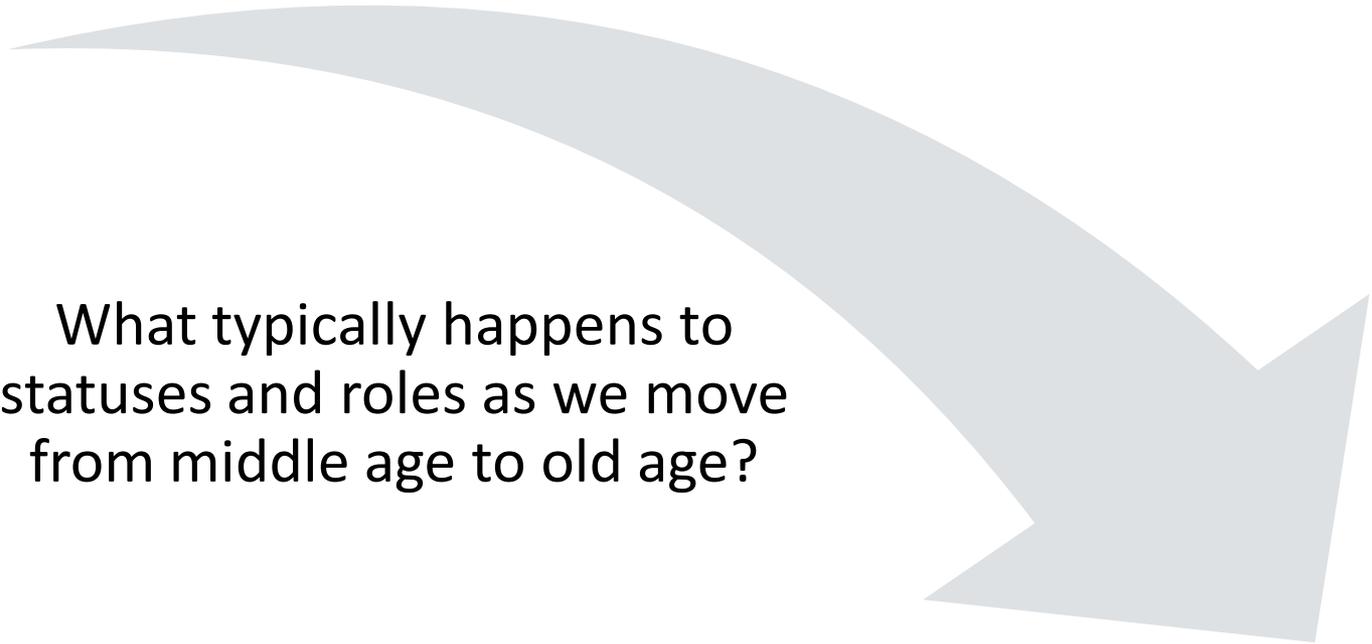
Statuses increase in number.
Roles increase in complexity.



Statuses and Roles over the Life Cycle



What typically happens to statuses and roles as we move from middle age to old age?





Elements of Social Structure: Social Groups

- ...any number of people with similar norms, values and expectations who interact with each other on a regular basis ... Much of our behavior takes place within social groups and is influenced by the norms and sanctions established by them.
- People around the world create social groups based on two broad criteria: **kinship identity** and **non-kinship factors**.
- Which of these is most important depends greatly on the scale of the society.
- As societies grow in size, non-kinship factors usually become increasingly important and kinship identity less crucial.



Elements of Social Structure: Social Groups

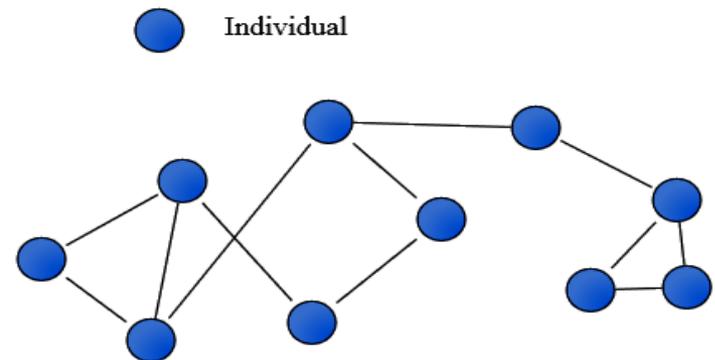
- Every society is composed of many groups in which daily social interaction takes place.
- Social group membership gives us a set of **statuses** (our relative social position within a group) and **roles** (the part our society expects us to play in a given status) that allow people to know what to expect from each other. They make us more predictable.
- **ingroup**: any group or category to which people feel they belong ... ingroup virtues
- **outgroup**: those people who do not belong to a specific ingroup ... outgroup vices





Elements of Social Structure: Social Groups

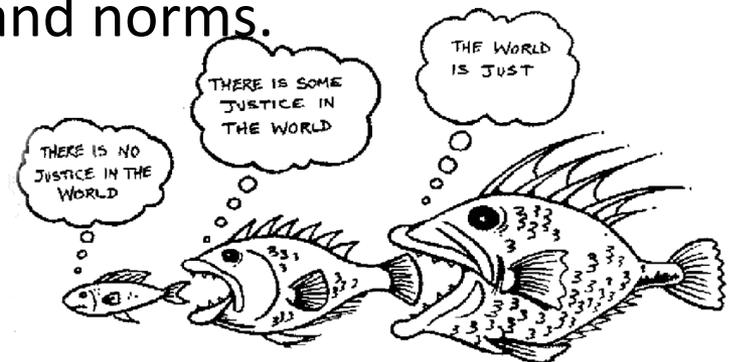
- **social network**: series of social relationships that links a person directly to others and indirectly links him/her to still more people ... Individuals in groups are connected to each other by social relationships.
- **networking**: involvement in social network ... valuable skill when job-hunting
- We can now maintain social networks electronically with advances in technology.





Elements of Social Structure: Social Groups

- **dominant social group:** group of people in a society with greater power, privileges and social status ... controls the value system and rewards in a particular society
- **subordinate social group:** minority group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than do the members of a dominant social group
- One of the crucial aspects of the relationship between dominant and subordinate social groups is the ability of the dominant social group to set values and norms.





Elements of Social Structure: Social Groups

- Sociologists call any group that individuals use as a standard for evaluating themselves and their own behavior a **reference group**.
- Reference groups have two basic purposes.
 - They serve a normative function by setting and enforcing standards of conduct and belief.
 - Reference groups may help the process of anticipatory socialization.





Elements of Social Structure: Social Group Functions

- All social groups have functions.
- The functions of different social groups may overlap and are likely to be interrelated in complex ways.
- Any social group is likely to have multiple functions, some of which are more obvious than others.
 - **manifest functions**: those that are obvious and easily discovered even by strangers
 - **latent functions**: those that are less apparent and more difficult to uncover





Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View

- Social institutions affect our everyday behavior.
- Social behavior is conditioned by roles and statuses.
- Erving Goffman
 - **dramaturgy**: The elements of human interactions are dependent upon time, place and audience. An individual presents him/herself to another based on cultural values, norms and beliefs. The goal of this carefully conducted performance of self is acceptance from the audience. If the actor succeeds, the audience will view the actor as he/she wants to be viewed.



Goffman



Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View



- Goffman
 - **impression management**: alter presentation of self to create distinctive appearances and satisfy particular audiences
 - **front stage**: the individual's performance and expressive equipment, which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion and defines the situation for observers
 - Our role performances on the front stage often call for **teamwork** (collaboration of two or more people to manage impressions jointly) and **face-saving behavior** (techniques used to salvage a performance that is not working).



Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View

- Goffman
 - **back stage**: the performer can relax, drop his/her front, forgo speaking lines, step out of character and please only him/herself
 - **sign-vehicles**: the devices used by people - social setting, appearance, manner - to communicate information about themselves
 - role performance
 - role strain between and within roles
- **We become the roles we play.**



Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View



PRESENTATION OF SELF

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT

Expressing certain information in order to impress certain ideas upon an audience during social interaction

FRONT STAGE



DRAMATIC INTERACTION

PROPS

SIGNS

GIVE OFF

GIVE

B
A
R
R
I
E
R

BACKSTAGE

INFORMAL TALK

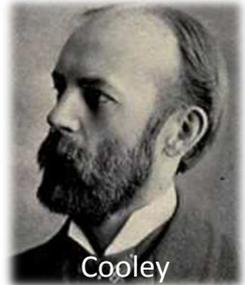
RELAXED ROLE





Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View

- Charles Horton Cooley's primary and secondary social groups
 - **primary social group**: a small group characterized by intimate, face-to-face association and cooperation ... plays a pivotal role both in the socialization process and in the development of social roles and statuses ... can be instrumental in a person's day-to-day existence ... individuals identify closely with primary groups
 - **secondary social group**: a formal, impersonal group in which there is little social intimacy or mutual understanding ... often emerges in the workplace among those who share special understandings about their occupation



Cooley



Elements of Social Structure: Symbolic Interactionist View

- The distinction between primary and secondary social groups is not always clear-cut. For example, a social club may become so large and impersonal that it no longer functions as a primary group.

PRIMARY GROUP	SECONDARY GROUP
Relationships are ends in themselves	Relationships are viewed as <i>means to an end</i> (e.g. money)
Tend to be small in size; intimate association	Tend to be larger in size
Personal or individual qualities are most important	Your status, rather than personal attributes are most important
The family is typically the first and the most enduring source of influence on the individual	The most important secondary group is the formal organization (e.g. bureaucracy)



Elements of Social Structure: Structural Functionalist View

- major tasks (**functional prerequisites**) a society or group must accomplish if it is to survive
 - preserving order
 - providing and maintaining a sense of purpose
 - replacing personnel
 - teaching new recruits
 - producing and distributing goods and services



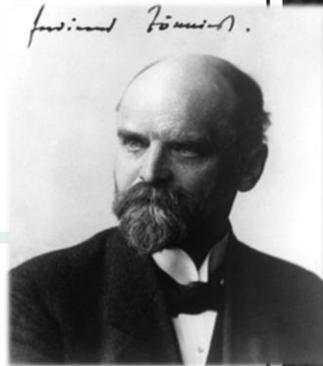
Elements of Social Structure: Structural Functionalist View

- **Émile Durkheim's** mechanical and organic solidarity
 - **mechanical solidarity:** collective consciousness that emphasizes group solidarity, implying that all individuals perform the same tasks ... the social cohesiveness of small, undifferentiated societies
 - **organic solidarity:** collective consciousness that hinges on the need a society's members have for one another ... the social cohesiveness of societies differentiated by a relatively complex division of labor





Elements of Social Structure: Structural Functionalist View



- Ferdinand Tönnies' *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*
 - *gemeinschaft* (guh-MINE-shoft): small community in which people have similar backgrounds and life experiences ... social ties can be categorized as belonging to personal social interactions, and the roles, values and beliefs based on such interactions
 - *gesellschaft* (guh-ZELL-shoft): large society in which people are strangers and feel little in common with other community residents ... social ties can be categorized as belonging to indirect interactions, and the impersonal roles, formal values and beliefs based on such interactions



Elements of Social Structure: Structural Functionalist View

Gemeinschaft

Rural life typifies this form.

People share a feeling of community that results from their similar backgrounds and life experiences.

Social interactions, including negotiations, are intimate and familiar.

People maintain a spirit of cooperation and unity of will.

Tasks and personal relationships cannot be separated.

People place little emphasis on individual privacy.

Informal social control predominates.

People are not very tolerant of deviance.

Emphasis is on ascribed statuses.

Social change is relatively limited.

Gesellschaft

Urban life typifies this form.

People have little sense of commonality. Their differences appear more striking than their similarities.

Social interactions, including negotiations, are likely to be impersonal and task-specific.

Self-interest dominates.

The task being performed is paramount; relationships are subordinate.

Privacy is valued.

Formal social control is evident.

People are more tolerant of deviance.

Emphasis is on achieved statuses.

Social change is very evident, even within a generation.



Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

- Social groups are organized to meet basic social needs but the outcome is not necessarily efficient and desirable.
- The present organization of social institutions is no accident.
- Major social groups help maintain privileges of most powerful individuals and groups within society, while contributing to the powerlessness of others.
- Social groups have an inherently conservative nature, making change unlikely.
- Social groups operate in gendered and racist environments.



Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

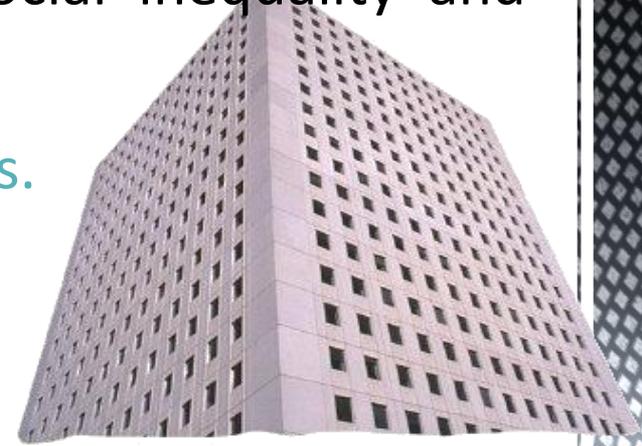


- **Gerhard Lenski's** sociocultural evolution approach
 - ...process of change and development in human societies resulting from growth in their stores of cultural information
 - views human societies as undergoing change according to a dominant pattern
- Society's level of **technology** (cultural information about how to use the material resources of the environment to satisfy human needs and desires) is critical to the way it is organized.
- Technology controls the number of people that can be supported.



Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

- Through technology, societies evolve, change and survive. The more information (or knowledge) a society has, the more advanced it will become.
- Complex societies can be more productive but have more inequality. Advances in the technology of communication translate into advances in a society's economic system and political system, distribution of goods, social inequality and other spheres of social life.
- Lenski broke the level of societies into types.





Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

- preindustrial societies
 - **hunting-and-gathering society**: people rely on whatever foods and fibers are readily available ... composed of small, widely dispersed and nomadic groups
 - **horticultural society**: uses technological innovations like the plow for dramatic increases in food production ... people plant seeds and crops ... less nomadic
 - **agrarian/pastoral society**: primarily engaged in production of food/livestock





Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

- **industrial society**: depends on mechanization to produce goods and services ... relies on inventions and energy sources ... changes the function of the family as a self-sufficient unit ... distinct religious, political, economic systems emerge
- **postindustrial society**: economic system is engaged primarily in the processing and control of information ... Information processing and other service work gradually replaces industrial production.
- **postmodern society**: technologically sophisticated society preoccupied with consumer goods and media images



Elements of Social Structure: Conflict View

Societal Type	First Appearance	Characteristics
Hunting-and-gathering	Beginning of human life	Nomadic; reliance on readily available food and fibers
Horticultural	About 10,000 to 12,000 years ago	More settled; development of agriculture and limited technology
Agrarian	About 5,000 years ago	Larger, more stable settlements; improved technology, increased crop yields, and specialization of labor
Industrial	1760–1850	Reliance on mechanical power and new sources of energy; centralized workplaces; economic interdependence; formal education
Postindustrial	1960s	Reliance on services, especially the processing and control of information; expanded middle class
Postmodern	Latter 1970s	High technology; mass consumption of consumer goods and media images; cross-cultural integration



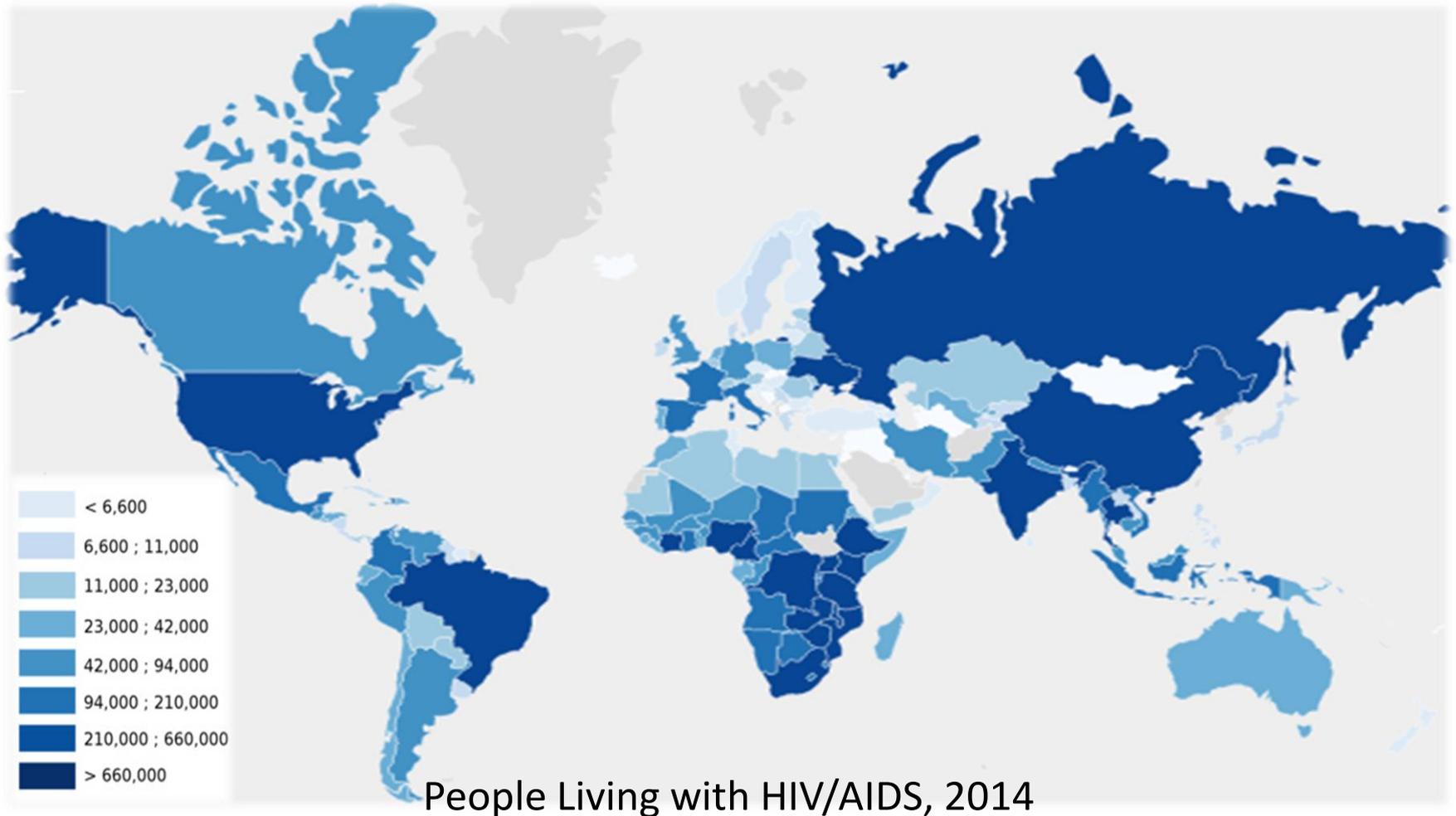
Social Structure and Social Policy: The AIDS Crisis

- **issue:** While there are encouraging new therapies developed to treat AIDS, there is currently no way to eradicate AIDS by medical means. How can people be protected and whose responsibility is it?
- **setting:** AIDS is on the increase, with an estimated 36 million people infected and over 2 million dying annually ... Not evenly distributed, with developing nations of sub-Saharan Africa facing greatest challenge.





Social Structure and Social Policy: The AIDS Crisis





Social Structure and Social Policy: The AIDS Crisis

- **sociological insights**

- A dramatic crisis like the AIDS epidemic is likely to bring about certain transformations in a society's social structure, prompting the creation of new social networks to care for the ill and educate the healthy.
- **interactionist perspective:** Widely forecast that AIDS would lead to a more conservative sexual climate. Also concerned about the impact of AIDS treatment on the daily lives of those stricken with the disease.
- **functionalist perspective:** If established social groups cannot meet a crucial need, new social networks are likely to emerge to fill that function.



Social Structure and Social Policy: The AIDS Crisis

- sociological insights
 - **conflict perspective**: Policymakers were slow to respond to the AIDS crisis because those in high-risk groups (gays and IV drug users) were comparatively powerless.
 - **policy initiatives**: AIDS has struck all societies but not all nations can respond in the same manner. The high cost of drug treatment has generated intensive worldwide pressure on major pharmaceutical companies to lower prices. Cultural practices may prevent people from dealing with the AIDS epidemic realistically.





The End

