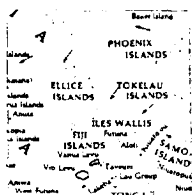
# HIERARCHY IN THE WORLD OF FIJIAN CHILDREN





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**This article argues that children in Rakiraki, Fiji, develop assumptions about social relations and styles of interaction in playing with other children which are different from those favored in adult life. Childhood experiences shape attitudes about gender and about hierarchy among adults that are at odds with public ideology in Fijian culture. Fijian culture stresses hierarchy based on relative age in which older and wiser people nurture and guide younger and less capable people. Children internalize these ideas but also develop an ambivalence about hierarchy due to tensions between children of different ages. Fijian culture segregates men and women and ranks most men higher than most women, but children play in mixed gender groups where boys and girls interact as equals. This produces a model of male and female equivalence among at least some adult women. (Fiji, play, socialization, gender, hierarchy)**


This essay argues that messages received in childhood from peers in the Fijian village of Rakiraki were significantly different from those received from adults. Experience with peers created an ambivalence about hierarchical relations, and an egalitarian view of gender relations at odds with expectations in adult culture. Furthermore, the impact of these childhood experiences was evident in adults.

There is a growing body of literature which, following Piaget (1965), emphasizes the importance of peers and play in transmitting culture and shaping personality. It is important to examine the messages that children receive through interactions with peers because children are important agents of socialization, both in cultures where children spend long periods of time away from adult supervision and in those where children are responsible for much of the care of younger siblings (Adler and Adler 1998; Best 1983; Corsaro 1985, 1986, 1997; Corsaro and Eder 1990; Eisenhart and Holland 1983; Fine 1987; Foot et al. 1980; Harris 1995; Holland and Eisenhart 1990; Knapp and Knapp 1976; Lancy 1996; Maccoby 1998; Martini 1994; Medrich et al. 1982; Opie and Opie 1969, 1987; Schwartzman 1978; Sluckin 1981; Sutton-Smith 1972, 1981; Thorne 1994; Thorne and Luria 1986; Tuzin 1983, 1987; Weisner 1984; Weisner and Gallimore 1977; Willis 1977; Zukow 1989).

In fact, Harris (1995, 1998) has recently argued that parents affect their children only indirectly by contributing to a general adult culture which is then reinterpreted by a children's culture, which is the primary influence on the developing child. Harris probably overstates her case in arguing that parents have no direct influence on their own children. However, she does provide some compelling evidence for the fact that children are influenced by peers as well as by parents. She points, for instance, to studies showing that bilingual children often prefer the language of their peers to the language spoken by their parents.

It is important to examine children's role in socializing each other because messages children receive from their peers differ from those received from adults. The gap between child culture and adult culture is inevitable because children's




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concerns and experiences are always different from those of adults. In many cultures (including Fiji), children are excluded from many adult activities and spend much of their time away from direct adult supervision (see also Lancy 1996; Martini 1994; Ochs 1988). Corsaro (1985) suggests that children attempt to make sense of the adult world in their play but that their interpretations always differ somewhat from adult views because children's views reflect both their cognitive capacities and their life experiences. An example of the ways that children's distinctive experiences lead them to different conclusions from adults is found in Toren's (1990, 1993) work on perceptions of rank among Fijian children. Toren found that Fijian children had significantly different perceptions of ranking in the community than did adults. In particular, many girls believed that men and women are of equal rank even though the dominant view in adult culture was that most men rank higher than most women. Toren suggests that these distinct views came about because children were picking up on submerged themes in Fijian culture. As well, children had more exposure to contexts such as church services, where there was greater gender equality than others, such as kava-drinking ceremonies, where the unequal ranking of men and women was emphasized. Thus, children's experiences and concerns led them to conclusions about society different from those held by adults.

Furthermore, children's views are not formed individually but are shaped by a peer culture where shared ideas are a mark of group membership and there is pressure on individuals to conform to the group. In fact, a growing sociological literature on childhood in North America emphasizes the autonomy of children's culture (e.g., Adler and Adler 1998; Corsaro 1985, 1986, 1997; Fine 1987; Thorne 1994). Adler and Adler (1998:7) argue that children's play helps prepare them for adult life but also socializes children into a world of childhood with its own norms and expectations. They argue that "children's peer groups create their own culture by selecting and rejecting various aspects of adult culture and making cultural innovations of their own" (Adler and Adler 1998:206). Through peer culture "children not only reproduce but also challenge and transform the world of adults so as to achieve self-control and a measure of autonomy" (Adler and Adler 1998:207).

When children internalize assumptions about their social world and about correct behavior through interaction with peers, they may acquire assumptions about the world of which they are unaware, and which may contradict the messages received directly through adults. Tuzin (1983, 1990) argues that it is important to take into account understandings acquired from other children because these views continue to influence emotional reactions to cultural beliefs and institutions in adulthood (see also Hirschfeld 1988, 1990). Boys among the Ilahita Arapesh of Papua New Guinea tell each other fearsome stories about cult spirits. Even though these boys later learn that stories about cult spirits are just lies designed to frighten women and children, adult males continue to have frightening dreams of cult spirits (Tuzin 1987).

A good example of the influence of peer culture is gender-role socialization. Scholars have argued that North American children learn gendered styles of moral reasoning (Gilligan 1982) and gendered assumptions about social interaction (Lever

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1976, 1978; Maltz and Borker 1983; Tannen 1990) in the course of playing in gender-segregated groups. Tannen (1990), for example, argues that North American males and females may systematically miscommunicate because they are unaware that they have different tacit assumptions about social interaction; men tend to view social groups as hierarchical and interaction as a way to establish relative status, while women prefer to preserve the illusion that everyone is equal. Furthermore, these gender-linked scripts may fly in the face of intentions of at least some parents and teachers who are trying to move away from stereotypical gender roles.

Gender styles developed in peer groups are good examples of the way children's culture may distort themes of adult culture to meet the distinctive needs of children. North American children are sometimes more rigid in their insistence on gender-typed behavior than are the adults around them because children between the ages of three and seven are trying to develop a sense of social competence by categorizing themselves and those around them and mastering the demands of various social roles (see Maccoby 1998). In an attempt to develop a sense of competence North American children pick up on themes in adult culture but exaggerate and rigidify these ideas. Fine (1987:102), for example, argues that preadolescent boys playing Little League baseball socialize each other into stereotypically masculine behavior involving emotional control, sexual bravado, and physical toughness. Fine (1987:102) suggests that while these themes are part of adult culture, "preadolescent male culture represents a transformation of those messages that boys receive from their adult guardians—including messages that adult males don't know they are giving off and in some instances sincerely wish they hadn't." He argues that young boys, in their attempt to become competent social actors, pick up on messages that at least some adults do not consciously wish to pass on. In this way, children learn styles and attitudes that may be invisible to them as adults and that may even contradict consciously held adult views.

Much of the literature documenting an autonomous children's culture, however, draws on studies from North America, where the institutional segregation of adults and children for many hours of the day makes it particularly likely that children will develop their own world. There is a strong tradition in anthropology of studying children's play (e.g., Lancy 1996; Schwartzman 1978; Sutton-Smith 1951, 1953, 1972, 1981; Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg 1961). But most of this literature examines the rules and structures of games and does not analyze behavioral styles of children playing, an important dimension of play as a socializing agent (cf. Goldman 1995, 1998; Goodwin 1991). Furthermore, many studies of children's play in other cultures view games and less structured fantasy play as a means of socialization into adult culture (cf. Schwartzman 1978). Lancy (1996:84-85), for example, says that fantasy role-playing among Kpelle children helps them to rehearse adult roles and relationships. Sutton-Smith (1972) similarly argues that "it" games among North American children help children work through anxieties about, and acquire skills necessary to, the competitive individual achievement demanded in adult culture.

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Here I bring the insights of studies of North American childhood to Fiji. Child-child socialization is particularly important in Polynesia, where children over the age of three spend much of their time in groups of other children, unsupervised by adults (Martini 1994; Ochs 1982, 1988). Adults in many Polynesian societies emphasize the importance of children as socializing agents, saying that adults should not intervene between younger and older siblings because it is important for younger children to respect their older siblings (Martini 1994).[1] Looking at the experience of children with their peers is also important in societies like Fiji because there is a considerable gap between the world of children and the world of adults. Fijian children, for instance, are not expected to follow, or even to understand, a complex system of joking and avoidance relationships that shape adult lives.

In situations where there is a large gap between the principles structuring adult relations and those shaping child relations, children are particularly likely to develop a set of social skills and assumptions about the world that are different from those prevalent among adults. Toren (1990) and Morton (1996) both suggest that strong egalitarian themes co-exist with a more dominant ideology of hierarchy in Fiji and Tonga, respectively. I argue that childhood experience fosters both the ambivalence about hierarchy and egalitarian view of gender relations noted by these two scholars.

## STUDYING CHILDREN IN RAKIRAKI VILLAGE

From August to December 1997, I lived with my husband, Stephen Leavitt, and our son, Jeffrey, who turned three during our stay, in the village of Rakiraki on the island of Viti Levu, Ra Province, Fiji.[2] This four-month stay was the preliminary phase of a planned longer study of peer socialization in Fiji.[3] My family and I lived with the M lineage (Fijian, *mataqali*), which was the chiefly lineage of one of the two clans (*yavusa*) of the village. There were ten children under the age of thirteen in M (five girls, five boys). I observed the seven children living in the M compound who were older than three and observed six children from other mataqali. I kept track of individual children for several days each by observing what they were doing, where they were, and who they were interacting with at hourly intervals, if I was observing them for a whole day, or at 45-minute intervals, if, as I often did with schoolchildren, I was observing the child in after-school hours. I also videotaped children's play and went over the videotapes with a young woman, Tajia, who helped me translate Fijian into English and commented on the children's behavior. Most Rakiraki children over the age of six speak some English and by ten most are semifluent in English. But children (and adults) prefer Fijian in most contexts. While my knowledge of Fijian was rudimentary, I found that dialogue between children was sufficiently simple that going through a videotape of one kind of play (for example, marbles) with Tajia allowed me to understand a great deal of the dialogue in other play of the same kind. I made several videotapes of preschoolers engaged in fantasy play near our house. I also tried to make at least one videotape each of the most popular kinds of games played by older children: marbles, *pani* (a team game

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involving knocking down a pile of cans and rebuilding them), and handstand competitions.

## RANK AND GENDER IN FIJIAN CULTURE

While Fijian parents made an effort to impress upon their children the essential principles structuring Fijian society, they also regarded children as incapable of grasping many of the behavioral prescriptions that shaped adult life. Parents also left children older than three unsupervised by adults for much of the day. I suggest here that both these factors created a gap between the worlds of children and adults and paved the way for an autonomous children's culture.

Fijian social relations are structured by rank, gender, and relative age. Roles based on these divisions are considered to be both complementary and interdependent, on the one hand, and hierarchically organized, on the other (Toren 1990). The yavusa in a region acknowledge the leadership of a regional paramount chief (in the Rakiraki area, the Tui Navitilevu). Within a yavusa, mataqali have specialized functions (as heralds, fishermen, farmers, and so on; only some of these roles are now practiced) and are hierarchically arranged with a chiefly mataqali providing the chief or *liuliu* (literally, first) of the yavusa. Within the mataqali, relationships are structured according to relative age and gender. The eldest member of a sibling set (male or female) is called the *ulu matua* (literally, mature head) and is entitled to respect from his or her younger siblings. So deeply ingrained was the notion of respect for most Fijians that they had difficulty articulating what it entailed. But the common explanation I received was that people should not joke with or tease older siblings and should do as they asked without question. In return elder siblings were expected to be nurturant, granting all requests made by younger siblings, and were expected to follow high standards of moral behavior to serve as a model for younger siblings. This was consistent with ideas about other kinds of rank in society; chiefs and high chiefs were also expected to grant all requests made to them and to meet high standards for correct behavior. Lower-ranking people, in turn, were expected to show respect for those of higher rank.

Morton (1996) and Ochs (1988) show that Tongan and Samoan parents, respectively, impress upon their children that they are the lowest-ranking members of society and so should accommodate the needs and desires of higher-ranking people. Morton (1996) says that Tongan children are discouraged from taking the initiative (even when performing useful household tasks) and are encouraged to passively obey higher-status adults. She also says of common practices such as giving children to other families in adoption that these are "yet [other] instance[s] when [children's] needs and wants are subordinated to those of higher status" (Morton 1996:59).

There were some similar themes in Rakiraki parenting. Children were frequently sent to stay for extended periods with other families even though adults recognized that this was hard for the children concerned. Parents also stressed the importance

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of obedience, saying that disobedience was one of the most frequent kinds of behavior leading to "hidings." On first hearing that I was interested in studying children, one woman volunteered that Fijians were in general less interested in the rights of children than were North Americans, and were more interested in fostering obedience and respect in young people.

But parents contextualized hierarchical relations within an overall view that portrayed higher-status people as ones who nurtured and guided those of lower status. This was apparent, for example, in their approach to relations based on relative age. Parents took relative age very seriously, encouraging children to obey older children and prompting older children to look after younger ones (although I observed relatively little of the sibling caretaking that Ochs [1988] says is the norm in Samoa). One mother emphasized the importance of relative age when asked about how she corrected her children's behavior. She seemed puzzled, but after a moment said that she only corrected the behavior of her eldest child, a girl, since if the oldest behaved properly the good behavior of younger children would follow naturally. In practice, parents did punish younger children (the same woman told me later in the interview that she had given hidings to two of her younger children in the past week); but parents also encouraged children to respect older children by not intervening between older and younger children (as long as the younger was over three) and by encouraging older children to correct younger ones. When two-year-old Merioni, for example, tried to take a toy away from my son Jeffrey (who was not quite three), Merioni's mother told Jeffrey to hit Merioni, saying that she must learn to respect him because he was older. On another occasion, I asked Kavoa, the wife of the chief of the mataqali, to comment on a videotape (described below) in which two four-year-olds were trying to get the toddler Merioni off the foundation of a new kitchen. Kavoa had just been telling me that all Fijians must learn to show respect for all others, a quality which entailed treating everyone as if they were high status by (among other things) softening all requests, so I asked her if the four-year-olds showed proper respect for Merioni. Kavoa said that the older children here were establishing "the beginning of respect" in Merioni by showing her the right way to do things. Again, these views of children reflected a more general philosophy which saw the correct moral state of those at the top of the social hierarchy as essential to the well-being of the community. I heard many times that if the chief and his family behaved well, the whole community would naturally be in order; conversely, when people saw trends of which they disapproved in the community they said that this reflected an immoral chief.

Gender was also an important principle organizing social rules. Ravuvu (1983) says that Fijian girls are socialized to be obedient and to defer to males. In adult life, females are in many ways subservient to males. At mealtimes, the father sits at the high-status end of the table, followed by his sons in descending order of age, while the mother and her daughters sit at the low-status end of the table. Mothers often eat after their husbands have finished. At communal meals, males eat before females.

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Females are also seated in the low-status position at kava circles, and are sometimes excluded from these circles altogether.

Parents, however, did not appear to stress gender stratification with their children. When asked about gender differences between her children, one mother replied laughingly that her son thought that he should be "boss" and his sisters should defer to him. Asked if she agreed with this view, she said without hesitation that her son was wrong: the relationship between siblings as children is determined solely by relative age.

There is also a significant separation of males and females in many spheres of Fijian life. The most striking manifestation of this was the avoidance expected between adult brothers and sisters. People said that strict avoidance (including avoiding common words that contained the opposite-sex sibling/cousin's name) was only practiced between opposite-sex parallel cousins who were the eldest of their sibling sets. But people also said that most individuals naturally came to feel uncomfortable around opposite-sex siblings as they reached adolescence. Kavoa, for example, said that her two youngest children, a teenage boy and girl, seldom spoke to each other and did not even like to be in the same room. I also, however, spoke to several people who said that they had trouble adopting avoidance behavior in adulthood and still did not follow it strictly. In theory, men were also supposed to avoid their younger brothers' (and parallel cousins') wives, and vice versa. In practice, however, these avoidance rules were more likely to be observed by older people and between cousins rather than siblings.

These avoidance relationships lead to segregation of men and women in many contexts since in any group at least some of those present have avoidance relations with each other. This is further complicated by the fact that ı any women are married into Rakiraki from other areas of the country and/or have spent much of their married lives away from the village in urban areas and so do not understand all the genealogical relationships within Rakiraki village. Several women told me that they did not really know all the people they were supposed to avoid, so just generally avoided men whom they did not know. In such conditions, segregating men and women was a practical solution.

As mentioned above, however, children are not expected to practice avoidance and the majority of play episodes that I observed involved boys and girls playing together. In 301 observations of children playing (a sample that included seven girls and six boys), children were observed playing only with children of the same sex 70 times and playing in groups that included children of the opposite sex 193 times (in the 38 remaining observations of play, children were playing alone; in another 122 observations the children were not playing at all). When children listed their friends, they almost invariably named only children of the same sex. But observations revealed that the majority of play was in mixed-sex groups of three children or more, often including siblings and parallel cousins of opposite sexes, and I observed instances (particularly among children under five) of a child preferring an opposite-sex playmate to an available same-sex playmate.

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I suspect that the discrepancy between ideology and practice here resulted from the fact that children were encouraged to stay close to home and so generally did not have enough choice of playmates to segregate by gender. M children, for instance, generally played with each other and with a few children from another (higher-ranking) mataqali who lived in close proximity to the M children. M children, on the other hand, seldom played with children from a lower-ranking mataqali whose compound was within fifty yards of the M compound. The only evidence I had that parents discouraged their children from mixing with lower-ranking lineages was one statement by a grandmother that she encouraged the granddaughter who lived with her to play with either the children of the (high-status) Methodist minister who lived nearby or with the children from the mataqali of the regional paramount chief, the Tui Navitilevu, who also lived nearby. It seems that in general children were encouraged to stay within their own compound and to show respect for other mataqali by not wandering uninvited into their territory. Whatever the source, however, the pattern seemed to be that children played primarily with other children who lived nearby and usually did not have enough choice of companions to segregate by gender.

Cutting across all social roles was a general expectation that individuals should exhibit respect (*vedokai*) in all interactions. On the night when we moved into our M house, for example, Kavoa came over to introduce herself and announced that the most important thing in Fijian culture was respect, a view that others expressed later. Respect involved a consistent attitude of putting the interests of the community above one's personal desires. This included accommodating others, restraining personal impulses, and exhibiting respect for shared norms. One should, for instance, not shout to people from a distance but should show willingness to accommodate them by walking out to them. While people were especially careful to show respect toward those of higher rank, the essence of respect involved treating everyone as if they were of high rank (with the exception of children) by not ordering them around and by showing a willingness to accommodate them. Linguistically, people conveyed respect by inserting softeners in questions and requests even to someone of lower status than themselves. A polite request, for instance, was modified with the softener *mada* (a bit, for now; e.g., *toso mada,* move a bit).

Parents considered it important to teach children to exhibit respect. Children of five and older were told to sit down in the presence of adults (in order to be lower than the adults who ranked higher by virtue of age) and to bend down and say *tulou* (excuse me) when they had to walk past seated adults. Children were also sometimes scolded for playing noisy games on Sunday, when everyone should be quiet out of respect for God and the community (though children did frequently play noisy games on Sunday anyway). However, adults also felt that childhood should be a fun, carefree time and that children lacked the understanding to conform to the full array of respectful behavior expected of adults.

The exception to the general expectations for restraint were joking relationships, which most adults I knew entered into with gusto. Villages and regions of the country

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were paired as *tauvu,* and people from these areas were supposed to engage in bawdy joking. Tajia, a young married woman of M, for example, often took advantage of the fact that she came from Kadavu Island, considered the tauvu of Rakiraki (and the entire Ra Province) in order to rib local people about their totem, the crab. Totemic species are considered in jokes to refer metaphorically to the genitalia of people of the lineage, so Tajia was always making risque crab jokes that invariably went over my head. Cross cousins also had joking relationships, but children did not.

The gap between the world of adults and of children was apparent when they were asked to list their relatives and then to give the kin terms. Children were unable to produce the correct kin term for many relatives, let alone to specify what the relationship with that kind of relative should be like.[4] Mere, a four-year-old girl, called all of her cousins (parallel and cross) who lived nearby (she named no one who did not live in the mataqali compound as kin) either *gone* (literally, child) if they were female, or *tagani* (literally, male) if they were male. She said that her teenage half-brother and -sister were her *momo* (mother's brother) and *nei* (mother's brother's wife). In fact, Fijian kin terms distinguish by relative age and between cross and parallel cousins. Older siblings and parallel cousins are called *tuakaqu* (my elder sibling), while younger siblings and parallel cousins are called *taciqu* (my younger sibling). Mere's six-year-old parallel cousin (MoSiSo), Minroti, correctly produced the terms tuakaqu and taciqu to identify his siblings and half-siblings. But he called one of his older cousins taciqu and incorrectly called one of his cross cousins taciqu (parallel cousin/sibling). This last error was understandable, given that Minroti lived with his mother's family and so, in his experience, his relationship with his cross cousins who lived in the same compound was much like that with his parallel cousins (several of whom also lived in the compound). This error, however, suggests that children's relationships were not much affected by the nature of the genealogical connection between them; children had a tendency to treat other children within the mataqali compound as if they were either siblings or parallel cousins. Kelera, an eight-year-old girl, correctly produced the kin terms for most of her cousins, distinguishing cross cousins from parallel cousins, with the exception of three parallel cousins (MoFaBrDaCh), with whom she played most frequently since they lived in the same mataqali compound and were of a similar age. She mysteriously labeled these three children *karua* (co-wife). Kelera's eight-year-old friend, Buna, also gave the correct kin terms for her siblings and parallel cousins. Significantly, however, she was only able to do so after being corrected by an adult after incorrectly labeling an older sibling with the term for younger sibling. Buna did not list any cross cousins at all as relatives. These examples indicate that many children have a rudimentary understanding of the kin relations which become very important in adult life. Some teenagers and young adults also claimed to be unable to understand the complex system of joking and avoidance relationships.

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## NEGOTIATING RELATIONS BASED ON RELATIVE AGE

Many studies of play emphasize how play helps children to develop an interpretation of (Goldman 1998) and a sense of competence within (Corsaro 1997; Lancy 1996) adult culture. Play is a safe context in which to experiment with new roles and to work through anxieties associated with acquiring a particular culture (Sutton-Smith 1972). Morton (1996) argues that Tongan children, whose primary experience places them at the bottom of the social hierarchy, take advantage of interactions with younger children to take on the dominant role. This allows children both to practice appropriate behavior for those of high status and to develop a sense of competence that compensates for their subordination in most aspects of life. In the process, however, children may exacerbate an ambivalence about hierarchical relations already fostered by harsh physical punishments from parents. Morton (1996) argues that Tongan children vent on younger siblings frustrations generated through interactions with parents.

Fijian children (particularly those between four and six who engaged primarily in fantasy play) also used play as a means to both rehearse social roles based on relative age and to address anxieties that arose from their experience with age stratification. The children seemed to have internalized a model of benevolent wisdom guiding ignorance and foolishness. But, like Morton (1996), I also see a dark side to relations based on relative age. Children often abused their authority to vent aggressions against those younger than themselves. This produced an ambivalence about relations based on hierarchy and a preference for large play groups where relative age was largely ignored.

Children's use of interactions with younger children to assume a dominant role was evident in an interaction involving Mere, the four-year-old girl; her six-year-old parallel cousin (MoSiSo), Minroti, who lived in the same household; Tukana, a four-year-old boy of another mataqali who lived across the street from Mere and was one of her preferred playmates; Merioni, Minroti's cross cousin (MoFaBrSoDa; Merioni was unrelated to Mere since Mere's mother was related to M only through her mother, who had married an M man); and my son Jeffrey, who was then two years and ten months old. I started videotaping when I noticed Mere and Tukana pretending to be soldiers, marching around the compound with sticks slung over their shoulders, shouting, "Left, right, left, right!" But the two children abandoned their play when they noticed that first Merioni and then Jeffrey had climbed onto the foundation of a new kitchen that was being added to a nearby house. The children had been told to stay off the foundation to avoid accidents with the steel reinforcing rods that had been left protruding from the block walls. Tukana and Mere showed their concern with correcting the behavior of younger children when they immediately headed over to get Merioni and Jeffrey off the foundation. Their words also suggested that the two children were practicing assuming the authoritative voice associated with parents and older children:

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Tukana: Come. Go all the way. Here comes Jeffrey. (To Merioni:) Come come go. Here right outside out out out (gets Merioni to the door, but she stops and cries, then turns and goes back in) eee out come out!
Merioni cries and Tukana pushes her out of the foundation. Merioni goes back in.
Tukana: Jeffrey, forbidden. You a baby.
Mere: Jeffrey, forbidden, you are a baby.
Tukana: Yes, baby Jeffrey.

After his father took Jeffrey away, the older children turned their attention to Merioni, trying to get her off the foundation, using language that suggested they were imitating their parents.

Tukana (climbs back onto the foundation): Nine ten eleven twelve thirteen fourteen this! Your (house) your (house) eh yours (hits foundation with a stick as Merioni walks back in) eh yours!
Mere: Quickly!
Tukana (raises stick as if to hit her): Quickly come.
Mere: Come Merioni
Tukana: Quickly. Go to your house.
Mere: Quickly four five you have to be missing from here. Tukana let me see.
Tukana (hits stick on bottles with each number for emphasis and goes over to Merioni in the corner): Two three four five six seven eight nine ten (she) goes?

Here Mere and Tukana showed their concern with relative age. Through play, they rehearsed behavior appropriate to a higher-status person who must keep lower-status people out of trouble. They imitated adult strategies (counting) in trying to get Merioni off the foundation. They implicitly pointed to their own high status by emphasizing the lower status of Jeffrey and Merioni, reminding Jeffrey that the foundation was forbidden to him because he was a baby. Thus play allowed Mere and Tukana both to practice high-status behavior and to gain a sense of social mastery by contrasting their own status, as responsible older children who understood the principles of correct behavior, with that of the younger children, who had to be guided because they did not fully understand their world.

Similar processes were evident in an interaction between Solomoni, a three-year-old boy who was in the middle of an extended visit to his mother's sister; Solomoni's two-year-old cousin (MoSiDa), Merioni; and Winsoni, a five-year-old boy from another mataqali who lived nearby. Solomoni and Winsoni were playing in our house when Merioni (who had a voracious appetite) wandered in and started to eat cheese twists from an open bag sitting on a chair. Winsoni remarked, "Hey, Merioni just came inside and ate cheesies!" Solomoni, who had been put in charge of Merioni by Merioni's mother, told her, "This is not your house, Merioni!" and was echoed by Winsoni, who repeated, "Yes, this is not your house, Merioni!" Here, the older children clearly felt responsible for not only correcting younger children's behavior but also for teaching them about the principles behind correct behavior ("This is not your house" instead of "Don't take the food"). But the two boys' awareness that their role as authoritative elders was a fleeting one became evident a few seconds later when Solomoni turned to Winsoni and said, "Hey, this is not your house either!"

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Whereupon Winsoni returned, "Yeah, this is not your house either!" The two boys laughingly continued this exchange a few more rounds. Here the two boys first experimented with assuming the higher-status role of guardian of correct behavior, then challenged (jokingly) each other's rights to the authoritative role. In this way, they showed that their experiments with the authoritative role masked a more general sense of themselves as the recipients of such guidance. Through play, then, children could both rehearse authoritative roles and gain a sense of social mastery by distancing themselves from younger children with lesser capacities. While Morton (1996) emphasizes the aggressive side of relationships between older and younger children, it was evident that children also took on a nurturant, teaching role toward young children.

Other kinds of interactions, however, suggested another, less benign experience of hierarchy based on age. Tukana and Mere finally succeeded in removing Merioni from the kitchen foundation when all three children noticed Minroti playing in a nearby sandpile and headed over to join him. Tukana and Mere continued at first to celebrate their age-based superiority to Merioni. When the three children first approached the sandpile, for instance, Tukana took a bottle away from Merioni, saying, "Kaka," a baby-talk version of *kakua* (don't). Here he emphasized the distance between himself and Merioni by treating her as a baby whose primitive linguistic abilities required special accommodations on the part of more knowledgeable elders like himself.[5] Tukana and Mere again brought up the issue of relative age a few seconds later when Tukana said, for no apparent reason, "Merioni, don't you know that I am a big person." Mere responded, "Merioni doesn't know that we are the big people." Here again, the older children gain a sense of social mastery by taking on the high-status role relative to Merioni. But Tukana's happy assumption of the position of benevolent authority was soon challenged when Minroti, now the oldest child around, took on the authoritative role, treating Tukana as an irritating baby requiring correction. When Tukana tried to get Merioni off the foundation and threatened to hit her with a stick, Minroti said, "Tukana, don't hit smaller children." Minroti also expressed his irritation with Tukana, muttering, "Copy copy copy" (i.e., copy-cat) when Tukana began to pretend his stick was a truck. Thus in the presence of an older child Tukana's adoption of the status of authoritative elder was called into question. This continued a few seconds later when Merioni tried to take his stick away from him. He resisted and Merioni started to cry, looking to me to help her. Her mother, Tajia, hearing her cry, came around the corner of a nearby house and told Tukana to give the stick to Merioni.

Similar situations, where children assumed an authoritative role with younger children and were relegated back to the baby status either by adults or by older children who took the side of the youngest child occurred many times. In fact, every time an older child withheld something from Merioni in my presence she would look to me for support, showing that she was used to adults intervening on her behalf. Her parents and older children were probably acting on the assumption that very young children like Merioni lacked the ability to fully comprehend correct behavior and that

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older people should accommodate them to keep them happy. Also frequent was a pattern of the oldest children in a group taking the part of the youngest at the expense of children in an intermediate age range. One afternoon, for example, six-year-old Minroti pushed Winsoni, a five-year-old boy from a neighboring mataqali. This provoked Mijeli, a thirteen-year-old boy, to push Minroti. Minroti became even angrier with Winsoni after this, picked up a rock, and threatened to throw it at him, telling him to go home. Mijeli then supported Winsoni again by threatening Minroti with a rock. Winsoni then ran off to hide behind a nearby house, reappearing a few minutes later, at which time Minroti and Winsoni and some other children peacefully started raking leaves. In interactions like this, children learn to get around attempts by those a few years older than themselves to exert their authority, by appealing to even older children. The older children co-operate because they are mature enough to make allowances for young children and because they are more likely to have resentful feelings toward those just a few years younger than themselves.

These patterns develop tension between children and those either a few years older or a few years younger than themselves. Many older children between eight and ten seemed to enjoy looking after children under three, and clearly had the capacity to understand that the younger children's ability to understand correct behavior was limited. But the relationship was less happy between siblings and cousins who were closer in age. The resentment of older children toward younger ones was evident in the way children teased and physically attacked younger children when there was no adult around to intervene. I often saw children taking toys away from Merioni and my son, Jeffrey. Jeffrey was accorded special treatment (at least for the first month of our stay) by local adults, who often told older children to give in to him to keep him happy even when he was making demands that would never have been tolerated in local children. The other children soon began to express their resentment by teasing Jeffrey whenever they could. Mere, for instance, often imitated his whining by saying, "I'm scared, I'm scared" over and over whenever she saw him. Her older cousin (MoSiSo), Judah, would drive Jeffrey to distraction by claiming possession of all of Jeffrey's toys. Judah also sometimes pinched and hit Jeffrey when he thought no adult would see him. Eventually, adults stopped intervening on Jeffrey's behalf, just as they do with local children as they approach the age of three. They expect children who have outgrown babyhood to fend for themselves in the world of children and regard whining as a sign of immaturity or cowardice (and also probably disapproved of Jeffrey's behavior themselves).

While adults operate on a model of mature wisdom benevolently guiding ignorant babyhood, among children relations based on age sometimes degenerate into a starker dominance hierarchy (particularly among boys), with older children using their authority and greater size to dominate younger ones. Judah, an eight-year-old boy, would frequently abuse his authority over his younger brother, Minroti. Once, when playing a marbles game, Minroti was consistently winning because he was a more talented player. Judah became enraged, hitting Minroti on the side of the head every time he made a good shot and telling him he had to move his marble to a less

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desirable position or give Judah another turn. Judah also exercised his authority over the younger children by assuming proprietary rights toward our house and ordering the younger children out whenever he saw them there. He was particularly likely to victimize Minroti in this fashion. While such processes probably occur in all societies, they gain heightened salience in the experience of a child in a society which values hierarchy based on relative age and where parents leave children unsupervised for large amounts of time, relying on older children to guide and protect younger ones. Parents also often do not check the behavior of older children if the younger one involved is over the age of three.

A consequence of the occasional abuse of younger children by older children was that the younger children sometimes began avoiding certain older ones, often their next oldest sibling. Judah was usually to be found around the M complex playing with other M children, while Minroti frequently ranged farther afield (he was unusual in this respect) and played with children across the street. He was generally only found in Judah's vicinity when a large group of children was around, including older children, since Judah did not try to assume control when there were older children around. Judah in turn appeared to avoid the company of his older sister, Marica, who was ten. Whenever Marica appeared she would begin teasing Judah, calling him a *qauri* (homosexual) and ordering him out of our house, just as he ordered younger children out.

Martini (1994), noting similar patterns among Marquesan children, suggests that the overall effect of peer socialization is to stop children from thinking about their individual rights and achievements and instead to think of themselves as part of a group. She witnessed one incident, for example, in which a two-year-old was slapped by her four-year-old sibling for falling off a wall. On another occasion, a boy proudly flying his new kite was reduced to tears by some older boys who pelted it with rocks. Such treatment undoubtedly does teach children not to advertise personal accomplishments or indulge feelings of self-pity.

As Morton (1996) suggests, another result is that children develop a discomfort with hierarchy. Consequently, children between six and ten appeared to try to escape hierarchical relations based on relative age by seeking out large playgroups comprising children from various families. In these groups, an egalitarian spirit prevailed, since the presence of several older children checked the tendency of any one of them to assume the authoritative role in the interaction. One afternoon, for instance, Kelera, an eight-year-old girl, and her friends engaged in one of their favorite activities, comparing their relative skills in cartwheeling and handstanding. The children were playing in a large group which included Kelera, Judah, Minroti, Mere, Solomoni, Merioni, and Kelera's friends, Sera (female, age seven), Buna (female, eight), and Tamana (male, ten). Buna and Tamana lived across the street with the Methodist minister and his wife, their grandparents, while Sera's mother worked for the minister. Buna and Judah (who were both inferior handstanders) soon dropped to the sidelines, but the other children took turns demonstrating new skills

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and challenging the others to attempt these. At one time Kelera inadvertently pushed Tamana over when she was trying to help him. He chased after her and pushed her.

Tamana (chasing Kelera away): Don't a bit.
Kelera: Bad child, eh eh eh.
Sera: Kelera, don't touch my legs, hey man!
Tamana (pushes Sera and goes to do a handstand in the door of the old house): Go away.
Tamana (pushes Kelera, who tries to help him by holding his legs): Go away a bit. I can do it.
Kelera: Wow!
Sera: Come, Kelera. (Kelera helps Sera flip into the house.) Wow!
Tamana: Kelera is trying to do it like this.
Karen (as Jeffrey goes over): Jeffrey too.
Tamana first, then Kelera, then Sera: I'm first!
Sera goes ahead and flips first.

In this interaction, the children showed awareness of relative age. Tamana used the polite softener "mada" when addressing Kelera, but not the younger Sera. Older children also ordered younger children around more than vice versa. A few minutes later, for instance, Tamana did a cartwheel and then called upon the other children in descending order of age to follow him. But Sera, who was only seven, also told eight-year-old Kelera to help her and to move. Kelera also (jokingly) taunted Tamana by calling him a bad child, even though he was two years her elder. None of the children appeared to be concerned with correcting the behavior of younger children. This was apparent when Merioni, who had wandered into the middle of the group, started crying. The children ignored her until Merioni's father came out of his house and demanded to know what had happened, and Minroti answered that Kelera had bumped into Merioni by mistake. After the father disappeared, however, there was no more discussion of the issue. What the children seemed most concerned with was comparing their skill, something they did in a straightforward manner, boasting that they found their own moves easy and that the others could not do the same thing. They also all eagerly claimed the right to go first, regardless of relative age. This was typical of large-group play involving children between the ages of six and ten. In fact, much of children's play cultivates the ability to be an autonomous, competitive equal in a large group. This flies in the face of the overall emphasis on hierarchy, respect, and gender segregation in adult culture.

## GENDER AND RESPECT IN THE WORLD OF CHILDREN

If children's experience with rank was not entirely consistent with adult ideology, their experience of gender relations was even more at odds with the adult world. For children, as most of the above interactions demonstrate, experience suggested that males and females were relatively equal (relative age mattered more) and that they engaged in similar activities. I went to Fiji looking for gender differences in play styles consistent with those observed among North American children but found instead that boys and girls played together, did similar things, and adopted similar

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assertive competitive styles. I suggest that both males and females learned through play to be tough; that is, to be able to defend themselves, to withstand teasing from others, and to tease others in return. When playing competitive games (which were the norm for children between six and ten), for example, children frequently challenged each other, calling each other liars and cheats. They also called boys qauri (homosexual) if they cried and girls babies for similar behavior. Again, this was at odds with an adult culture which emphasized respectful, solicitous behavior toward others.

These patterns were apparent in the large marbles games that often formed among children on their way home from school. Such games generally involved both boys and girls of varying ages. As in the cartwheeling contest described above, while the older children tended to dominate and be the center of attention, they did not assume the authoritative role in the interaction by correcting younger children's behavior. The children argued in a friendly way about who should go first and about who had won, each child trying to promote his or her own skill. Marbles involved each child throwing his or her marble to see who could get closest to the *pilo* (cup), a hole in the ground. The accuracy of the throws determined the order of play. Each player went first for the pilo and then would try to hit other players' marbles to knock them out of the game. A player got to take another shot each time he either hit someone or got into the cup. Children argued over every step of the game. They argued over relative distance from the cup, each child trying to claim an early turn. If a player missed a shot, he or she would frequently argue for the right to take it again, saying that his or her arm had been jostled or some other mishap had occurred. Conversely, if a shot was successful, the victim often argued that the shooter had cheated in some way. Players also often bargained with each other, proposing to bend the rules to their mutual advantage. Dialogue in a marbles game consisted, in short, of many shouts of "Me! Me!" as each child claimed the right to go next, interspersed with "*Lasu! Lasu!*" (liar, liar), as successful players were accused of cheating. Younger and older children, boys and girls, all participated in these debates as relative equals, and children who were both skillful and could stand up for themselves tended to win out. Some of these were girls and some were boys.

## SUBMERGED THEMES IN ADULT CULTURE

Some of the styles and attitudes developed in children's culture carry over into adult life and produce a set of behaviors and dispositions in some ways at odds with public ideology. While people did clearly subscribe to the model of hierarchy based on age and rank, for instance, there were also indications of tensions over this hierarchy. Tensions between brothers appeared to be common. One man remarked that he believed he had been ensorceled by his older brother after building a large house, of which the older brother was jealous. In another mataqali people whispered that all of the younger brothers resented the eldest brother and thought that he abused his authority over them, appropriating group funds to build a house for himself and

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spending all of his time enhancing his own status by associating with the regional paramount chief. The wife of the eldest brother made similar remarks about an older brother who had died, saying that he was lazy and kept all the mataqali money to support his own household. In fact, none of the younger brothers was a permanent resident of the mataqali compound. One worked in another area of Fiji and returned on his vacations to his wife's family instead of his own. He had also left his young son in the care of his wife's family, saying that the children of his own family were too rough. People frequently ribbed this man about trying to be an important man by living among his (relatively impoverished) in-laws, indicating that they were familiar with the pattern of younger brothers resenting their low status in their own families. People also complained about the paramount chief and about mataqali chiefs, saying that they did not do their jobs properly and perhaps even attacked those lower down in society through magic. When one young man developed an infection in his foot, for example, he moved away from his father's compound for several weeks. The wife of one of his cousins said that the young man was afraid of his father and mother, who were angry with him because of a fight over a grandchild. These incidents indicate that people had some ambivalence about hierarchical relations.

Evidence was even stronger for discomfort with gender segregation and stratification. Toren (1990) notes that many married couples fight bitterly for the first few years of their marriage. She suggests that women enter marriage thinking of their husbands as equals and have to be beaten several times before they accept a subservient position (see also Morton 1996). People commented that the first years of marriage were "dangerous" and that couples fought a lot. Men and women seemed not entirely in agreement about the relative position of the genders in society. Kavoa, for instance, seemed to subscribe to a "separate but equal" model (at least for the senior generation) which saw men and women as contributing in different but equally important ways to society.

Just before we left, Kavoa was called upon to preside over the women's side of a large funeral for a young M man. At funerals, men sit at a kava circle receiving gifts of whales' teeth and kava from friends and relatives from surrounding areas. At the same time, women (mostly those past childrearing) sit watch over the body of the deceased and accept gifts of mats and tapa cloths from women of surrounding groups. These mats are distributed to all those who helped with the funeral. Kavoa had been telling us proudly for several days how she planned to divide up the mats in a new way, leaving more for the grieving family than was traditional. However, just before she was to begin her distribution, a delegation from the men of the mataqali appeared with an offering of kava, saying that they wanted to take the mats to distribute together with meat that the men were giving people in thanks. Kavoa later told me that she had been shocked and chagrined by this request, thinking that the men were trying to extend their authority into the women's domain. But she had been unable to refuse a request made with kava. After a few days, her husband told her that it was common and entirely proper for the men to take the mats. The fact that a middle-aged woman such as Kavoa, who had been through hundreds of funerals, was

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under the impression that the senior women were in charge of the mats suggested that in her mind the idea of men and women having separate but equal spheres must have been firmly in place.

Apparently, many older women are intensely involved in a competition for status in a woman's world of mat exchanges that is similar to status competitions between men in a world of exchanges of whales' teeth and kava. Again, this suggests that there are separate and parallel domains for women and men. People said that it was common for older women to congregate at funerals even if they hardly knew the dead person, just to get the mats that would be given to those who had helped with the mourning. Older women ribbed each other about how many mats they had collected at funerals, weddings, and other celebrations. This all suggests that women see themselves as involved in covert battles for prestige, similar to the ones engaged in through male exchanges of whales' teeth.

Finally, it seems that styles of interaction learned in childhood lead to a discomfort with avoidance relations and a tendency to try to convert relations to more egalitarian joking relations whenever possible. The younger women of the mataqali all said that they did not strictly follow avoidance requirements. One young woman said that she had told her husband that she could not avoid his older brother or his father and uncles because she was related to his family and therefore was used to treating them as fathers and brothers instead of as affines. This did not entirely make sense, since sisters should also have decorous and respectful relations with brothers, but did express her discomfort with the idea of avoidance relations. She said that she had told her husband that she could not start avoiding his oldest brother, implying that this would be irrational behavior when she asked him, "What if I was stuck on a desert island with your brother? Would you expect me to avoid him?" The other young wife of the mataqali was from Kadavu Island, considered to be tauvu and therefore in a joking relationship with Rakiraki. She took advantage of this tauvu relationship to joke with people whom she might otherwise have had to treat respectfully. Perhaps people's obvious delight in coming up with any tauvu relationship is linked to their feelings of comfort with this egalitarian, teasing style of interaction that resembles children's interactions with each other.

Could the patterns observed in Rakiraki be the result of an erosion of Fijian culture? The fact that Toren (1990) observed similar patterns in another area of the country some fifteen years earlier suggests that these tensions are indigenous to Fijian culture. She saw a continual tension between two models of Fijian society: one which stresses hierarchy; and another that sees groups and individuals as complementary equals. Having found that many girls felt that women and men were of similar rank, Toren (1990) suggests that Fijians are in fact more comfortable with egalitarian relations. I suggest that these themes are deeply rooted in the experience of children.

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## CONCLUSIONS

Fijian children receive somewhat different messages about gender roles and about roles based on relative age from peers than from parents. Children's peer culture is molded by their distinctive experiences and by their need to attain a sense of competence and understanding of the world, says Corsaro (1997), who also argues that peers often reinforce opposite kinds of behavior from that prescribed by adults because children everywhere try to assert their autonomy and competence by resisting adult control. The Fijian case indicates that these processes are not confined to Western cultures, where children spend much of their time away from parents in schools and daycare facilities. Fijian children also have different experiences from adults because children are excluded from many adult activities, such as kava ceremonies, where the dominant construction of rank and gender is displayed. Adults may unwittingly de-emphasize the importance of gender in their children's lives when they exempt children under ten from such things as the brother-sister avoidance rules, which reinforce gender differences among adults. Furthermore, like American children, Fijian children look to their play with peers to help them work through anxieties engendered by relationships with adults and to develop a sense of competence. In fact, these needs may be even more pressing for Fijian children whose age relegates them to the bottom of the social hierarchy. Children develop a sense of competence through, first, exercising authority over younger siblings, and later by participating in an egalitarian peer culture which allows them to escape the tensions engendered by hierarchy in the rest of their experiences.

Taking into account children's experiences with their peers gives a richer sense of the overall culture by revealing submerged assumptions about society that run counter to the dominant culture. Such an approach builds on an existing literature suggesting that children are active learners who sort through many, sometimes conflicting, messages transmitted through routine patterns of social interaction. Briggs (1998), Heath (1983), Kulick (1992), Ochs (1982, 1988), Schieffelin (1990), Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo (1986), and Whiting and Edwards (1988) argue that much of a child's sense of personhood, of place in community, and ideas about its appropriate behavior are built up through observing and participating in routine kinds of interactions. Samoan mothers, for example, impress upon their children the importance of being observant of and responsive to others by orienting babies so that they always face outward and by instructing young children to greet anyone who comes into sight, especially if that person is of high rank (Ochs 1988). It is important to attend to the messages implicit in such routines because they shape taken-for-granted cultural ideas about relationships and about moral behavior.

Closely observing the experience of children also alerts us to inconsistencies in messages about the social and natural world and thus contributes to an understanding of culture subject to negotiation and reinterpretation. Briggs (1998), for example, argues that Inuit children must develop their own understanding of who they are and how to conduct themselves by puzzling through a series of dilemmas posed by adults.

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Young children, for instance, are frequently asked, "Are you a baby?" In some cases adults portray babyhood as a positive state eliciting affection and indulgence; on other occasions, they associate babyhood with restrictions and disapproval. In all cases, children must figure out for themselves the answer that will win adult approval, and this varies from situation to situation. While the Inuit are extreme in their reliance on such indirect means of socializing children, in all cultures children must sort through messages which are sometimes contradictory.

To date, an excellent literature on socialization in the Pacific (e.g., Barlow 1984; Howard 1970; Kulick 1992; Levy 1973; Morton 1996; Ochs 1988; Ritchie and Ritchie 1979; Schieffelin 1990; Toren 1990; Watson-Gegeo and Gegeo 1986) has focused primarily on relations between children and parents (cf. Goldman 1998; Martini 1994) despite the recognition of the importance of children as socializing agents in the Pacific (e.g., Morton 1996; Ochs 1988). It is clear, however, that peers are an important part of the world of Pacific children, who receive different messages from peers than parents. Kulick (1992) suggests that peer socialization among children has contributed to a shift from a local language, Taiap Mer, to the national lingua franca, Tok Pisin, in Gapun village of Papua New Guinea. Even though adults think it is important for their children to learn Taiap Mer, children generally only speak Tok Pisin, partly because they spend much of their time with peers and older children who are immersed in a school system emphasizing the importance of Tok Pisin. Similarly, Fijian children's experience with their peers paves the way for a submerged egalitarian view of gender at odds with the more visible ideology of male dominance. Thus, appreciating children's experience with their peers enriches our overall understanding of relations based on gender and rank in Fijian society and elsewhere.

Viewing children as active learners making selective use of messages received from adults to make sense of their world may also be important to understanding the development of gender differences across cultures. Research among Western children has shown that they often play in gender-segregated groups and revert to dichotomized gender roles even when adults discourage this (Maccoby 1998; Spiro 1979). It is tempting to attribute these patterns to biologically rooted gender differences in personality that cause children to prefer playmates of the same sex. The Fijian case, however, seems to show that non-Western children do not always emphasize gender to the same extent as their Western counterparts, suggesting that a key factor may be the place of gender as a symbolic category in the experiential world of children. I suggest that children will reinforce dichotomized gender roles in situations where emphasizing such roles helps them to achieve a sense of competence in their world. This may occur even in situations where adults do not consciously promote gender-typed behavior and, conversely, may not occur in some situations when adults do think they are promoting distinct gender roles. The key factor is the place of gender in the experiential world of children. In Fiji, while gender is important in adult life, relations of relative age are more important in the experience of children who spend much of their time with siblings and cousins and relatively little time in larger groups

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where they can segregate by gender. Furthermore, adults feel that children should not have to observe or even understand elaborate gender-based avoidance rules. Thus, unwittingly, adults may de-emphasize the importance of gender for their children. In North America, on the other hand, there is less ideological emphasis on relations based on relative age because parents do not generally rely on older children to take care of younger ones. Furthermore, the common practice of sending young children to daycare centers, where they spend little time with children of different ages, and where they can easily segregate by gender, will increase the importance of gender and decrease the importance of relative age in the lives of children. Ironically, this could have the effect of producing children who stress gender more in their play at the same time that many adults are trying to transcend rigid gender roles. In short, I argue that taking into account the messages children receive from their peers is crucial both to understanding individual cultures and to understanding the acquisition of such concepts as gender roles.

## NOTES

1. Lancy (1996), furthermore, argues that children are important agents of socialization in many preindustrial societies where adults may rely extensively on child caretakers.
2. Funding for research in Rakiraki was provided by a National Science Foundation grant. I thank Stephen Leavitt for helping me to develop my ideas about play and about Fiji.
3. Although our stay in Rakiraki was relatively short, I have confidence in my observations because I was able to benefit from previous rich studies by other anthropologists (particularly Arno 1993; Howard 1970; Levy 1973; Morton 1996; Ravuvu 1983; Ritchie and Ritchie 1979; Toren 1990), which supported my own observations. However, a second and longer research trip will of course add greater depth and subtlety to conclusions that must remain preliminary at this point.
4. Fijian children probably are not unusual in this regard.
5. While Ochs (1988) notes that Samoan parents do not use baby talk, Rakiraki parents did use baby talk to a limited extent.

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