

Toren, Christina (1990) *Making Sense of Hierarchy. Cognition as Social Process in Fiji*. Houndsmills, UK: Palgrave-Macmillan

This book takes an interesting look at the hierarchy of Fijian society where everything in the society is arranged into hierarchal levels of "*I cake*," or honored, and "*I ra*", or "less-honored." People arrange themselves in the society according to this hierarchal status. Toren explores what it is that groups people into these categories and examines how things like rank, seniority, gender and other areas determine status in the society.

This ranking of the society begins to take place in children's lives during school where physical space, and where one sits in social settings, begins to be determined by rank in the society. The book takes an interesting look at how social space and physical space in the society are both real and intertwined. The kava ceremony is one excellent example of how this takes place.

The kava ceremony is central to Fijian life. However, different members of the society drink the kava in different ways. For example, lower members of the society assume different postures when drinking the kava than that of higher members. This and other social situations show the importance of rank in the society.

One of Toren's central arguments in the book is that children often are more rational and literal than adults. That "cognitive development" for early childhood to adulthood is not some inevitable march to greater sophistication and rationality. On the contrary, supernatural and customary beliefs, prejudices and so forth may actually reduce an adult's rationality vis-à-vis a child's in a particular domain.

The book is an interesting case study of how children fit into the social hierarchy of a society which places great importance on it.