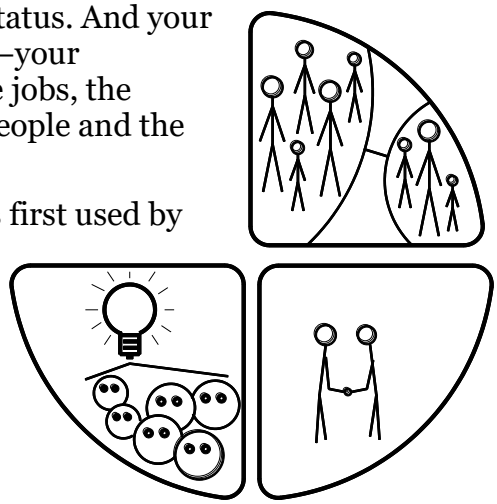
Marion Brady, Howard Brady

8: Status



Almost everything important you do affects your status. And your status affects almost everything important you do—your relationships with family and friends, the available jobs, the money you'll be paid. It affects the way you treat people and the way people treat you.

Exactly what is status? The word is very old. It was first used by Romans to mean "standing." We still use status in much the same way. Today, a person's status is his or her standing or rank in a social group—family group, friendship group, work group, political group, or in a society.

Where does it fit in the Model? First of all, it's an important part of the *structure* of society, so it's a significant subcategory of Demographics. It affects a great many Action Patterns. Most of all, it's a series of Shared Ideas about who's important, who deserves respect, who has authority, who has the power to make decisions affecting others.

People are very sensitive to status. Even the very young usually know who has more and who has less of it in the groups to which they belong.

As you'll discover in this unit, ideas about status vary greatly from one society to another.

The Prince and the Pauper

Status in Samoa

The ***Independent State of Samoa*** (formerly Western Samoa) is a nation in the South Pacific Ocean. It has two main islands—Savai'i and Upolu—and four tiny, nearby islands.

It's located about 4000 km east of northern Australia, and about 1500 km south of the equator. The Samoan people are Polynesian, related to natives of New Zealand and Hawaii, and they've lived on the islands for at least 3000 years. The third main Samoan island, Tutuila, is part of American Samoa (unincorporated U.S. territory), and is located east and a little south of the other main islands.

https://www.ecured.cu/Samoa

There is considerable traffic between Samoa and American Samoa, including intermarriage, and the two cultures differ only slightly.

The population is just over 192,000 (2016 census), and is stable—not significantly increasing or decreasing.

The climate is tropical, and temperatures are constant year round. The islands receive much rain, particularly in the summer months—November through March. Fertile land is limited, but many families raise much of their own food.

Samoan society is complex, with a great deal of emphasis on social relationships within and between extended families. Traditional values are strong, and are carefully maintained by family leaders who have special titles and powers.

http://samoaninfo.wikispaces.com/Family

Investigation: A First Look at Status in Samoa

In Samoa, status is very important, with different degrees of "high" and "low." Almost every relationship, custom, tradition and Action Pattern is affected in some way by Samoa's elaborate status system.

American anthropologist Dr. Bradd Shore first went to what was then Western Samoa as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and taught school there before returning to university. As part of his graduate studies, he went back and studied Samoan society in greater depth. He supplied the information and many of the photographs in this and the next unit.[1],[2]

His first experience in Samoa had much to do with status:

"I'm afraid I don't understand a word you're saying," I said. I was somewhat embarrassed. After three long months of Peace Corps training in Hawaii, I had finally arrived in the Samoan islands. I had been a good language student and was anxious to try out my new Samoan with some real Samoans rather than with tape recorders. Now I had my chance, but I simply couldn't understand anything the old man was saying to me.

"He's asking you to come in and eat something," explained a young Samoan who spoke good English. "He's saying, '*Susu mai, lau susunaga, fai se mea taumafa*.'"*

Now I was really confused. "But I thought that 'come in' in Samoan was *sau*. And we learned that 'to eat' was *'ai*. What are all those other words the old man is saying?"

My friend laughed. "Oh, it would not be polite for him to use those low words for you. You are an important person—a *palangi*, [pah-LAY-ngee] a guest in our country. Most of all, you are a teacher. Therefore we must address you in our special language of status. All high people must be addressed with these special words. Before long, you will learn a lot about our language of status. It is a very important part of the *fa'a Samoa*—our Samoan way of life.

In the next few months I was to learn a lot about the ways Samoans have of dividing up their world into "high" and "low." None of the ideas about status I had brought with me from the United States were very helpful to me here. Samoa, it appeared, had a very different way of looking at status.

*[soo-SOO mah-ee lah-oo soo-SOO-nghah fah-e say Meh-ah TAH-oo-Mah-fah]

(Note similarity with Korean patterns, Unit 6.) ***To what extent does English have a special language of status? Explain.***

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[1] Marion Brady and Howard Brady, *Idea and Action in World Cultures*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J, 1977, Prentice Hall, pp. 207-220, and other selected pages. © Marion Brady and Howard L. Brady

[2] Dr. Shore presently chairs the Anthropology Department at Emory University. Our thanks for his re-review of this section.

Investigation: Formal Status in Samoa

Many groups have formal status systems, often with each rank given a name. Perhaps the one most familiar to most people is the system in the U.S. Army, with Generals, Colonels, Majors, Captains, and so on down to Privates. Formal status in Samoa is complicated. Here's the beginning:

A young man (and sometimes a woman) who has served his family well in war and peace, and who has shown the ability to lead, will be elected a *matai* [mah-TAH-ee], or chief, and given a title. This title is voted on by all the members of the family.

Every *matai* title has a special name attached to it. Generally the title name was given previously to a *matai* in the family who has recently died. The new chief uses this special name instead of the name he was given at birth. The title gives the *matai* authority over the family's plots of land. The new chief now has the right and the duty to tell family members how to use the land. Also, the title gives him a place in the village chief's council. Large, important families will usually have more than one *matai*.

Discuss and record your answers:

1: Is matai status inherited or earned?

2: Over whom does the matai have authority?

Samoa has thousands of chiefly titles in their system of formal status, but there's a huge difference in status between high titles and low ones.

Here are descriptions of some of the chiefs that Bradd Shore met in Samoa:

Niumangumangu:

This man is a "talking (or orator) chief (*tulāfale*)." He's responsible for making speeches for the high chiefs of his village. He controls a small plot of land in the village. His title gives him some authority in the village and in his household.

(Continued)

Malietoa:

This man is a "high chief" (*ali'i*) rather than a "talking (or orator) chief." He was head of one of the four Royal Families of Samoa. Such royal chiefs are addressed with very special phrases during ceremonies. Until his death in 2007, Malietoa was not only a revered political leader and advisor, but also served as Samoa's Head of State. He had many thousands of acres under his control, although lower chiefs might make the actual decisions about using this land. Malietoa is the one in the middle in the photo:

Afamasanga:

This is the leading chief's title in an important Samoan village. This title also gives the chief an important voice in the political district of which his village is a part. At any meeting of village chiefs from this district, Afamasanga has the highest status. Certain special terms of address are used with a chief of this title. He also controls a fairly large amount of land in the district.

Toleafoa:

This title was once one of the highest on the important island of Upolu--considered almost a kingly title. Today, however, the Toleafoa is generally thought to be under the authority of one of the four royal titles of Samoa, and is actually split among several title holders. Each controls a large amount of land, and is always consulted whenever there's an important question about the large areas under his control.

Tua:

This is a new title, created by a high chief and given to a younger man in his family to give the high chief more votes in an election. Since only chiefs can vote, new titles often are created to gain votes. While Tua can vote, he has no significant voice in council meetings. That is, he offers no opinions but simply listens to those of others. He has little authority, even in his own family, and controls no land.

3: Identify the factors that indicate power, such as control of land. Based on these factors, rank these chiefly titles in their order of status, from highest to lowest.

4: Where did you put the "talking chief?" Why?

The fly whisk (over the shoulder) and staff identify the standing man as a talking chief or orator. In a few unusual villages, an orator chief outranks all other high chiefs.

Investigation: Informal Status in Samoa

Samoan chiefs vary in status, but any chief has higher *formal* status than those without chiefly titles. Sets of formal statuses are known as *ranks*. However, there's another status system in Samoan society—an *informal* one. A person can have high status in this informal system if he—or she—has no title at all. For example Bradd Shore had no chief's title, but had high status as a foreign guest and, especially, as a teacher.

The story that follows is a traditional one in Samoa. It's from the distant past, but illustrates important elements of status:[1]

[1] Fitisemanu II and Glen Wright, *The Sacred Hens and Other Legends of Samoa*, (Apia, Samoa, Glen Wright 1970)

A Child of Heaven

Tama-a-le-langi had been made a very high chief in his district when he was only a child. But he had lost his chiefly title in a war—even though his family finally won the war.

Young as he was, Tama-a-le-langi did not regret losing his title. Indeed, the fact that he was no longer a chief gave him great freedom. Now he had time to roam from village to village, becoming friends with the chiefs in his district.

Tama-a-le-langi was always welcome in any village. Everyone was glad to see the strong, healthy young man whose manners were so graceful that all the girls admired him. He was well educated, too, with a great knowledge of Samoan history and great skill in using the Samoan language. On top of all this, he had an almost magical ability to please anyone with whom he had dealings.

As Tama-a-le-langi grew into manhood, his prestige became greater and greater. The people of the district looked upon him with love as their leader and king. Even though he had lost his title, he was treated like a high chief.

Now the time was ripe for him to marry. It was the duty of the talking chiefs under him to find a suitable wife for their leader. She must be one who, through her family connections, would bring greater power and prestige to Tama-a-le-longi. At last the choice was made. Tama-a-le-langi would marry Namoa'itele, daughter of a high chief in an adjoining district.

Namoa'itele was beautiful, and had all the skills needed by the wife of a great leader. She knew the traditional dances and the proper ways of treating important guests. As a taupou [tah-oo-POH-oo], or village princess, she could make the kava drink for visiting chiefs—and the kava ceremony is one of the most important in Samoan life.

The marriage was celebrated with great splendor and feasting. It was announced that Tama-a-le-langi and his bride would live in the village of Leulumoenga. This was a great honor, and the people set to work to make their village worthy of it. First, they built a large and beautiful *fale* [house] for the young couple. It was right by the sea, and had a beautiful bathing pool fed by a fresh spring. Nor did the work stop there. Indeed, the entire village was rebuilt. People said it was the loveliest spot on the island of Upolu.

With Namoa'itele, Tama-a-le-longi lived for many years in great happiness. The district thrived under his wise leadership, and his name is still remembered with great honor. Though he had no title, he was truly a king.

What qualities helped Tama-a-le-langi to achieve such high informal status? Of these qualities, which might be important keys to status among people you know? Which qualities might be of little importance in your society?

Below is a list of qualities that contribute to high status in modern Samoa. Some involve formal status, others informal status.

Into which category, formal or informal, does each of the following qualities best fit?

Village mayor	Member of Samoan Parliament
High chiefly title	Very wealthy
Village princess	Well-educated
Strongest man in a village	Manager of the Bank of Samoa
Prime Minister of Samoa	Son of a high chief
Owner of a general store	Married to the daughter of a Royal Family chief
Very good at making speeches	Owner of a large house
"Talking Chief" title	Principal of a school

1: Which, if any, of the qualities were difficult to categorize?

2: As Samoa becomes more modern, will the traditional chiefly title system become more important or less important in terms of status? Give reasons for your answer.

3: What other formal status systems might become more important in the future? Why?

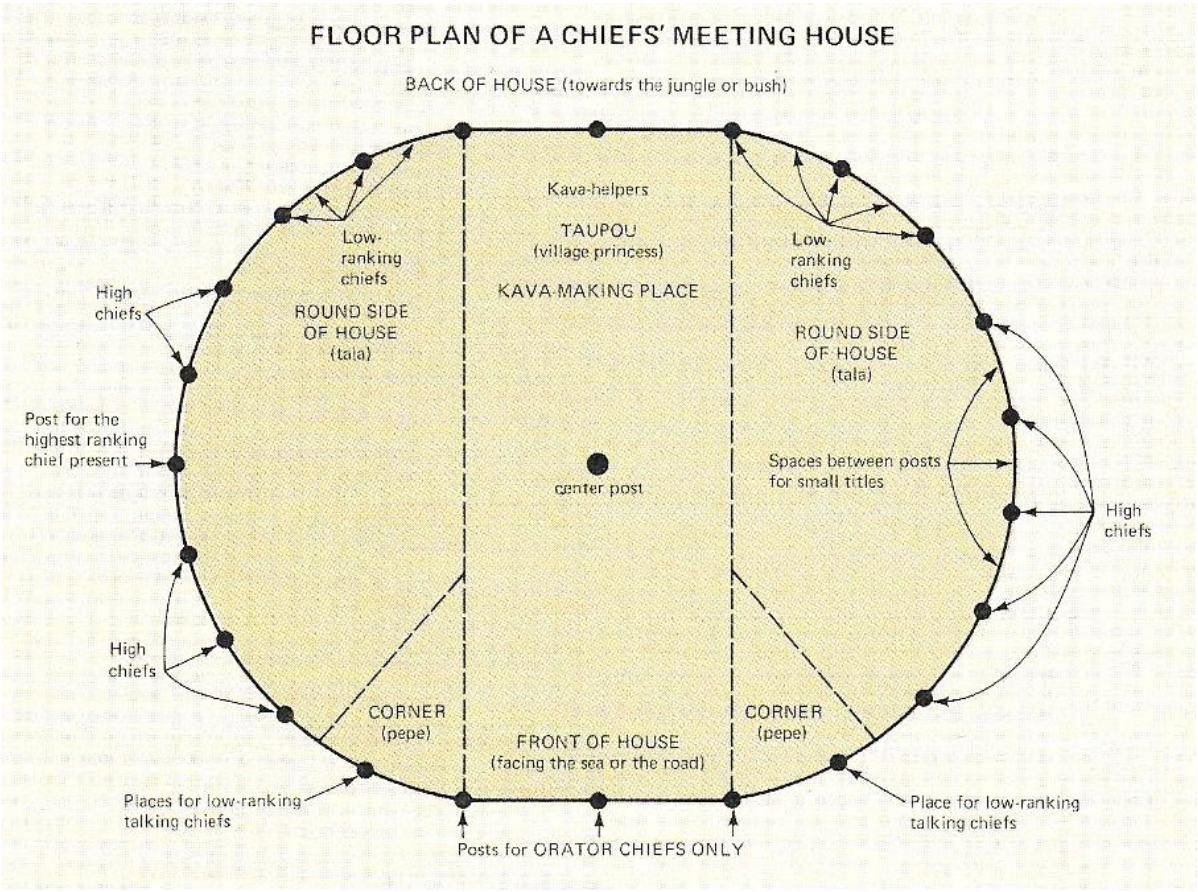
Investigation: A Chiefs' Meeting

In towns and villages everywhere in the world, decisions must be made and followed or problems of various kinds will result. Roads must be built and repaired. Public areas must be kept clean. Disputes among neighbors must be settled.

In Independent Samoa, the governing of villages and districts is done by the family chiefs meeting in council to make decisions and solve problems. The meetings are very formal and polite, with rituals that make variations in status clear.

Matai are treated with great respect. When they're meeting, those nearby or passing keep as quiet as possible.

In any chief's meeting, the meeting house itself plays an important part in the rituals. The house is large, with many posts around its open sides. The chiefs sit on mats on the floor, with their backs to these posts. However, a chief cannot simply sit where he pleases. His position must reflect his status, whether high or low.



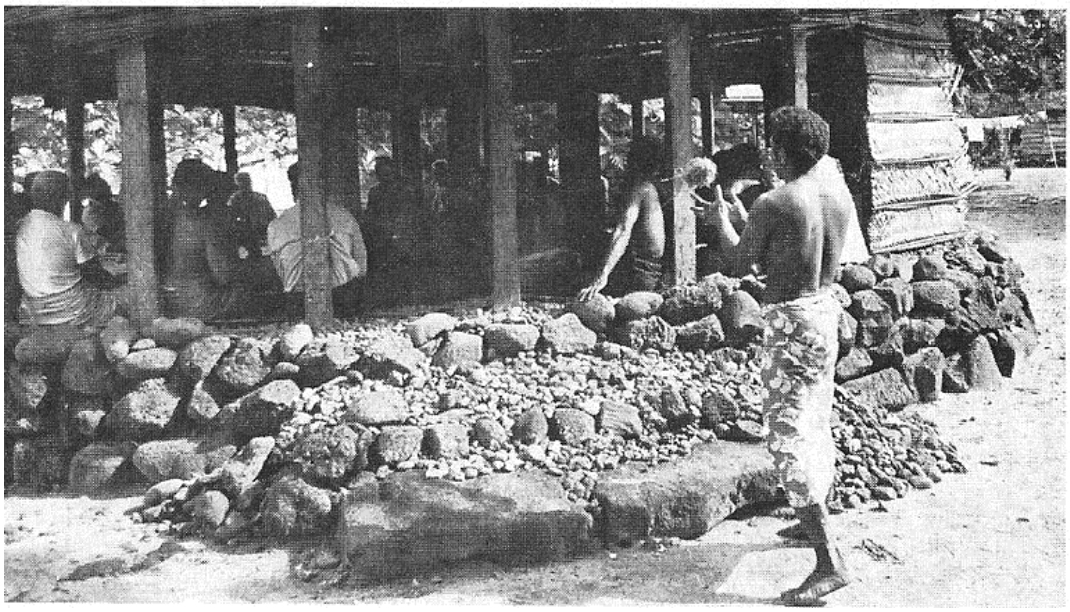
When the chiefs meet, a group of younger men without chief's titles—*taulele'a*—waits outside to take any action the chiefs decide must be done. The group is called the *'aumanga*. If, for example, the chiefs plan a feast, the *'aumanga* gathers the food. It's sometimes called the "backbone of the village."

(Continued)

Below: The *'aumanga:*

As the chiefs gather inside the house, another important status ritual begins. This is the *kava* ceremony. No Samoan would dream of beginning an important meeting without the ceremony. *Kava* is a drink made by mixing water with the powdered root of a *kava* plant. It has a cooling, woody taste that's quite pleasant once you're used to it.

The *kava* is made in a special area of the meeting house. Several young men of the village grind the *kava* roots to a fine powder. The job of actually mixing the kava with water is the special duty of the *taupou*, or village princess. Using a thick bunch of fibers, she mixes the kava. The fibers filter out any oversized chunks of kava root. From time to time, without a glance, she flips this bundle over her shoulder. It flies out between posts and is caught by a young man waiting there. He shakes the bits of root from the bundle and return it to the *taupou*. This process is repeated until the kava is ready.



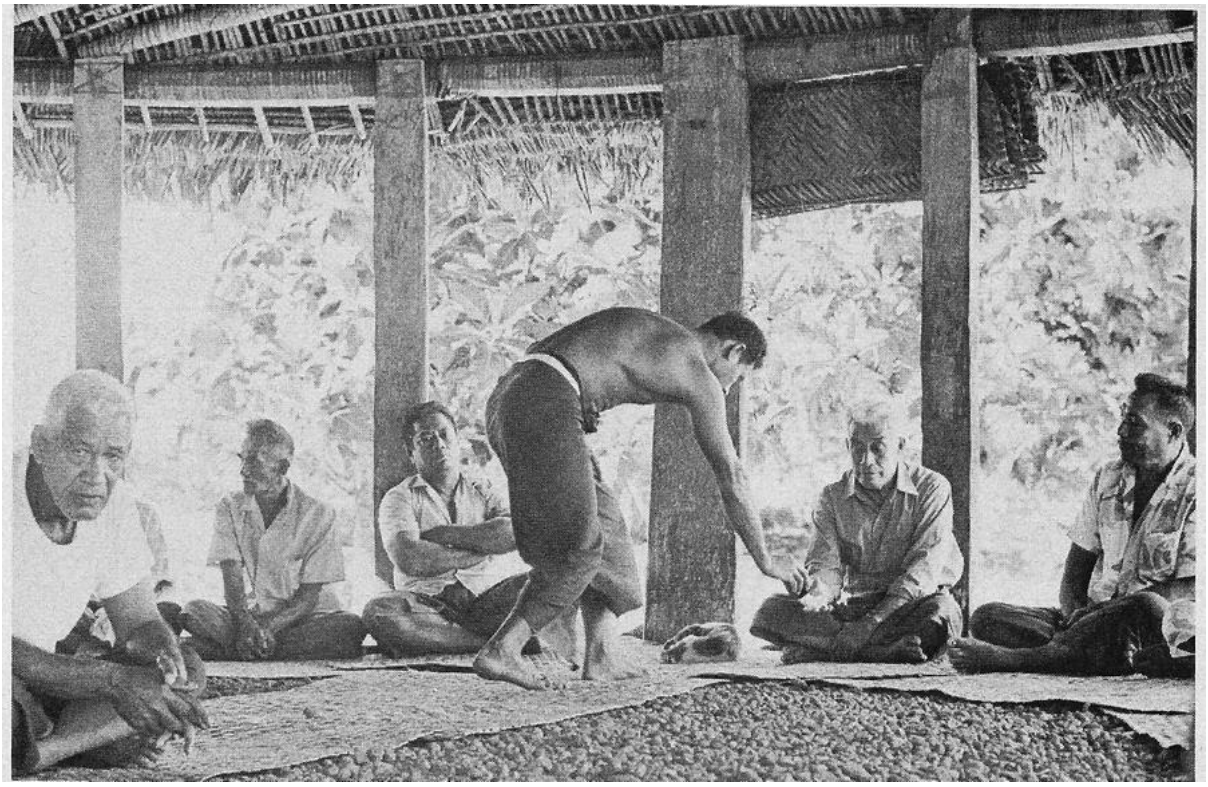
Meanwhile, another important part of the ceremony has begun. This is the oratory or speech-making contest between the high-ranking "talking chiefs" that are present. Samoans love speeches, and each "talking chief" tries to use more colorful and flowery language than the others. Meanwhile, his opponents try to catch him up in mistakes about Samoan history or other matters.

The main part of each speech is spent in praising the members of the meeting and any guests present. The high chiefs act as if they're not interested in the speeches, staring absent-mindedly around the room. But, in fact, they're listening very carefully.

(Continued)

The prize in the oratory contest is the right to make the main speech of the meeting. Almost always, this is won by the most important "talking chief" present. He usually begins by asking for time to say "just a few words." These "few words" turn out to be the longest and most high-flown speech of the day.

At the end of the main speech, the chiefs clap their hands. This is the signal for kava to be served. Each chief is brought a cup of *kava* by one of the young men. The cup is presented in a special way and with special terms of honor. The most important part of this ritual is the order in which *kava* is served. In general, the first and last cups served reflect the highest status.



Only after the *kava* ceremony has been completed does the actual business of the meeting begin. The "talking chief" who received *kava* first states the matters to be discussed and gives his opinion as to what should be done. Other chiefs then add their opinions, always very politely. The highest chiefs are listened to most carefully. After everyone has been heard, a decision is reached. Almost always, the decision more or less agrees with the opinion of the highest chief present.

Finally, all the business has been decided. Sometimes this takes hours. Afterward, the chiefs are served a meal; each chief makes a polite thank-you speech, and the meeting is over.

Based on the data describing the chief's meeting, discuss and answer the questions below. You may find them difficult, but do your best.

1: What effect do you think ritual has on the average person's respect for power and authority?

2: How does a kava ceremony make communication and decision-making easier among chiefs in Samoa? What might happen in a meeting if there was no kava ceremony?

3: What opportunity does the meeting provide for a chief to increase his or her status? Is an increase in status easy or difficult? Why?

4: In what way does the ceremony help Samoans maintain societal stability?

5: In many societies, the ability to communicate effectively goes with high status, but in Samoa, the status of "talking chiefs" is generally lower than high chiefs. Suggest possible reasons.

Investigation: Summarizing Status Relationships

In Unit 7, page 16, there's a detailed version of the Model. ***Go down the list of subcategories and sub-subcategories, and identify some possible relationships between status in Samoa and other subcategories or sub-subcategories.*** In some cases there will be little or no relationship. However, other relationships can be significant. For example, how is status related to buildings? To exchange of goods and services? To ownership?

Describe probable relationships between status in Samoa and two or three other Model subcategories. You may wish to add other subcategories or sub-subcategories to the Model to fit Samoa's culture.

Investigation: Target Area Status

Status ranking affects everybody, but it's a particularly sensitive subject for most young people, often depending in part on matters over which they have little or no control. Perceptions of status can be unfair, even cruel.

Discuss, and record your opinions:

1: What determines status ranking for the adults in your Target Area? Which characteristics are formal; which informal? Would most young people in your Target Area agree with your rankings?

2: What characteristics determine status in your own age group? How much control does an individual have over each characteristic?

3: What ways do people in your age use to try to move up the "status ladder?" Are any of the ways unfair to others?

Status in Rural India

The Republic of India occupies a subcontinent in south Asia. It's the second most populous nation on earth (China is first), with a total population of 1.3 billion (2015). The nation has rapidly modernized in the past 40 years, and is becoming a leader in technology and manufacturing.

Change is slower in rural areas around the world, and villages are nearly always more traditional than the cities. Nimkhera is a small central India village of stone and concrete houses. The village is 40 miles east of Bhopal in central Madhya Pradesh (map). Of the 750 or so villagers, most men are farmers, farm workers, or craftsmen. Most women work in the home, though many do other kinds of work, such as farm work and basket-weaving.

http://www.mapsofindia.com

While some of the villagers are Muslim, the majority follow the Hindu religion. In India, the Hindu religion is closely tied to an ancient and complex status system. In some places, especially large cities, this system is less important now than in the past. But in rural areas it still has great force.

In the mid-sixties, Anthropologist Dr. Doranne Jacobson lived for more than two years in Nimkhera, and has returned there many times since. (Her accounts in this unit are from this initial visit, so they show status in the village at that time.) As she reports, "One of the most striking features of village life is the number of status differences within both the family and the community."[1],[2]

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[1] Marion Brady and Howard L. Brady, *Idea and Action in World Cultures*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1977. Prentice-Hall. pp. 409-421. © Marion Brady and Howard L. Brady

[2] Dr. Jacobson has had a distinguished career. See http://prabook.com/web/person-view.html?profileId=783871. Our thanks for her re-review of the contents of this section.

Investigation: Caste and Status in Nimkhera

Background: Every Hindu person in India is born into a status group called a caste. A person's caste is the same as his or her parents; once born into a caste, that person is almost always a member of that caste for life. Couples that marry are also almost always the same caste.

In Nimkhera village, there are many different castes, most of them related to occupations. Eight important castes:

Thakurs	Brahmins	Kumhars	Khatiks
Khawas	Kolis	Metars	Karheras

The Kolis and Karheras are similar and have the same status. All the other castes differ in status. Some are high, some low, some in-between. (As noted earlier, a few people in Nimkhera are Muslim. Muslims do not belong to any caste, but belong to caste-like groups.)

Dr. Jacobson recorded events in the village in field notes, included below. ***Review the notes, and identify the relative status of the various castes.***

A Brahmin farmer friend of ours named Ramlal hired a Koli woman to help re-plaster his house a few days ago. She had to leave to fetch some water, and she left her baby in the courtyard at Ramlal's house. The baby was crawling around and crying. The Brahmin women in the house, Bau, Priya, and Kamla, didn't bother to comfort the child. I asked them why, and they said they wouldn't touch a Koli baby. I asked if they would touch a Thakur baby, and they said yes. The baby's mother soon returned, and he stopped crying.

***

A few minutes ago the little Metar boy Hansi (age 9) was sitting on my windowsill, looking at me. Tikki (a Brahmin girl, age 6) came up and stood at the other side of the windowsill, quite close to Hansi but not actually touching him. Phundi, a Kumhar girl of about 8, came up and then brushed against Tikki. Tikki said angrily, "Don't touch me! I just took a bath." Phundi move away without a word. I asked Tikki why she said that. "She touched you and then touched me: won't I be polluted then? The Metar boy quietly said, "So, what of it?"

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We [Dr. Jacobson and her husband] were invited to a wedding feast and were interested in the seating arrangements. The Brahmins and Thakurs sat in one line, though they were not actually touching each other. Members of the Khawas caste sat together in one corner of the courtyard, and the Kolis sat in another line. Opposite them were the Kumhars. The food was served by a Brahmin, who also had cooked it.

***

We asked Ramlal about caste in the village. He looked very much the Brahmin that he is in his long *dhoti* (draped trousers) and sacred thread (thread worn over one shoulder and across the chest.

"Well," he began, "of course you know that every Hindu belongs to a caste from the day of his birth until he dies. Some castes are high and some are low"

"Yes, but how are the different castes ranked?"

As soon as we said this, Ramlal began to talk about food. "As a Brahmin, I cannot eat meat, eggs, fish, or onions. But members of some of the lower castes may eat these things. Also, no one may drink water or eat cooked food that has been touched by someone from a caste below his own. However, uncooked sugar or grain may be accepted from anyone."

(Continued)

(Dr. Jacobson is an outstanding photographer, and supplied the photos that accompany her account. All are copyright © Doranne Jacobson. Used by permission.)

Ramlal paused for a moment, then added, “Of course, now that the Congress Party has come, the pollution business isn’t so strict any more. At one time, if we went to the market and happened to brush against a low-caste person, we would take a complete bath before entering the house. Now we just sprinkle a little water on ourselves.” [Discrimination based on caste was declared illegal in 1950; but attitudes and customs change slowly.—ed.]

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One night, a group of guests gathered at our house. One guest was Ramlal. Another was Abdul, a Muslim. Abdul told us a joke about Hindu pollution rules:

A miserly Thakur gave his low-caste servant only a little money to buy food for dinner. The food the servant was able to buy was really only enough for one person, but it had to be divided between servant and master.

The two men sat a little way apart, each preparing his own meal. The servant looked hungrily at his master’s portion, then had an idea. ‘Master’ he called, ‘Please see if my rolls are properly made.’ At this, he tossed one of his rolls into the midst of this master’s food, polluting the whole meal. Since the master couldn’t eat the polluted food, he went hungry the whole night. But the servant ate the master’s portion as well as his own—and had a fine meal!”

Everyone laughed at this story, including Ramlal. Abdul then praised two famous Indian leaders, Gandhi and Nehru. These men had fought for the equality of all castes. They had taught that the lower castes should be given special treatment to help them become educated and prosperous. “If they were alive today,” Abdul said, “they would make people of all castes eat together—even Metars.

***

Today we talked to Ramlal about democracy. He was interested in hearing about our system. We told him how a garbage collector had become an important official in New York City.

“That could happen in India, too,” said Ramlal, “But even if a Metar becomes Prime Minister, I won’t eat with him or let him in my house.”

He also said that, since we Americans don’t observe caste rules in our country, he would have to treat us like Muslims or low-caste people. When we asked what he meant, he replied, “I won’t let you enter the inner rooms of my house, and under no conditions will you be allowed in the kitchen. And, of course, I won’t accept food from you.”

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Munshi's family, Thakurs, invited all the village women to a songfest to celebrate the birth of Munshi's baby. About twenty older women and a dozen younger, unmarried girls came. After the singing, boiled wheat was served. The lower-caste people were told to sit apart, so that the high-caste people's wheat would not be polluted accidentally by touching them. I was also told to move away, and felt a little insulted by this.

Considering what you have read, which caste seems highest in status? Which seems lowest? Of the other castes, which would you say are fairly high and which fairly low? On what information do you base your opinion?

Pollution is mentioned in three of the data pieces above. What do you think a person of high caste means by this term? What different forms of pollution can you find in the data pieces?

Recall the high status given Bradd Shore in Samoa, and the reasons for his high status. Compare this with the status of the Jacobsons as shown in the last two data pieces. What general differences between Samoan and Indian ideas about status do these two approaches show?

As you have seen, the caste system determines not only status, but such things as eating habits and treatment of guests. It also affects the kind of work that one does.

There are hundreds of castes and caste-like groups in India. Traditionally, the members of many of these groups worked only at certain jobs. In past times, this system was followed more strictly than today. Now these traditions are loosening, and there is much more flexibility in Hindu society, especially in cities.

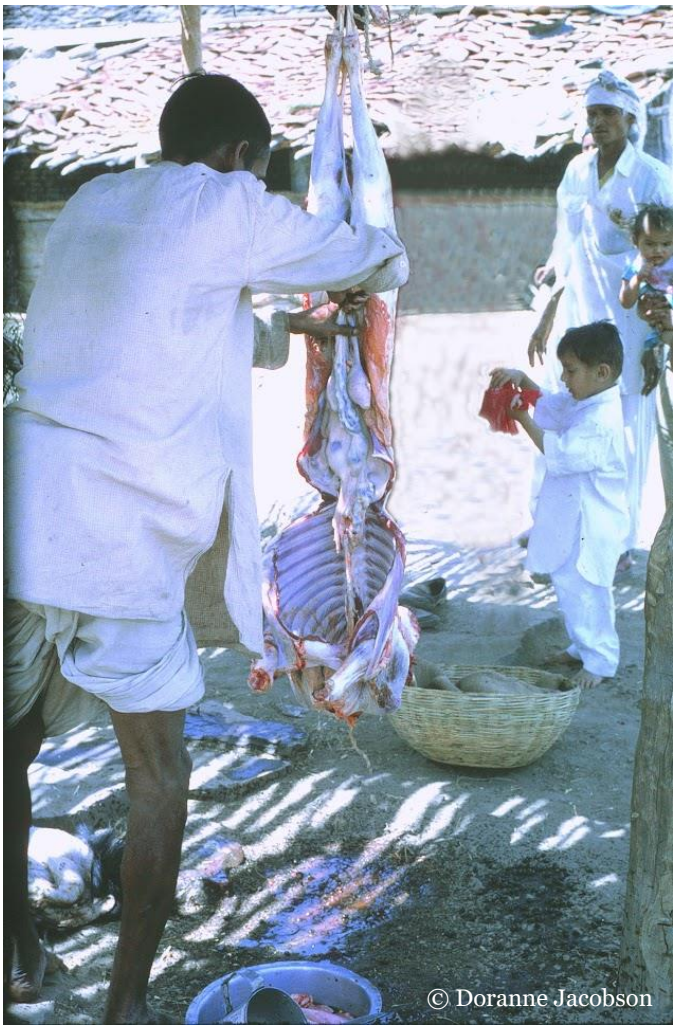
Ramlal, the Brahmin friend of Dr. Doranne Jacobson, told her about the roles of the castes in Nimkhera. This information is summed up in the data piece below. While much of it concerns work roles, there is other information as well. Again, the castes are not listed in order of status.

As you read, look for more clues that will help you decide exactly where each caste ranks in status. Based on this data and what you've read before, list the castes in order of status, from high to low.

Thakurs: In the past, Thakurs were warriors. Today they are landowning farmers. They accept food only from other Thakurs and from Brahmins.

Metars: The members of this caste get the filthiest jobs around the village, though they also make and sell baskets. Metars accept food from anyone.

Khatiks: The Khatiks are butchers. Since they butcher goats, which is considered a dirty task, they are thought of as very low and unclean.



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Kolis and **Karheras:** Both of these are weaver castes by tradition. Today, however, most are poor laborers who work for others.

Khawas: Members of the Khawas caste are barbers by tradition. They also are called on to supervise some home rituals. Some are farmers.

Brahmins: This is the caste of Hindu priests and landowning farmers. Brahmins accept food from no other caste.

Kumhars. The Kumhar caste is the caste of potters. They make clay pots for holding water and sell them to the villagers.

1: What do the two lowest castes have in common? Relate this to the higher caste's concerns about pollution.

2: Suppose that a Kumhar made a great deal of money selling high-quality pots. Would this give him higher status than a Brahmin? Why or why not?

3: In a small town in America, Canada or Europe, would there be much difference in status between a farmer, a barber, and a butcher? Can you think of any reasons why the status divisions among these jobs would be so much greater in India?

4: The large Indian cities are becoming more and more like modern cities in the industrial countries. There are many factory jobs and other kinds of work that fit no traditional caste. What effects do you think such changes might have on the caste system in the cities? In places like Nimkhera?

In Indian villages like Nimkhera, the most important key to status is caste. But status differences don't end there. As in most other societies, there are status differences between young and old, rich and poor, men and women.

The following accounts are taken from Doranne Jacobson's field notes. They describe some of the relationships within the family of Ramlal the Brahmin. (Remember that all the members of a family belong to the same caste. Also notice how many relatives live within the same household. In most American families, many of these family members would live in separate households.)

As you read the data, look for clues to:

1: The relative status of men and women in the family

2: The relative status of older and younger members of the same sex within the family.

Ramlal was one of the first people to visit us when we came to Nimkhera. As we've said, he is a Brahmin. He is 28 years old, and owns about 150 acres of land.

Ramlal visited us often for more than a week, but never brought his wife. Then, yesterday, he told us that his wife and the other women of the family were eager to meet us. He invited us to call on them. Today, with my research assistant Sunalini, I went to see them.

(Continued)

We found the women cleaning grain in their sunlit, high-walled courtyard. After a little talk, we learned that Ramlal's wife is named Kamla. She is 18 years old. Her sister-in-law Priya, 17, is married to Ramlal's brother Mulchand. Several other female relatives live in the household. They include the mother-in-law of the young women (who is blind); Bau, their spry grandmother-in-law; and Ramlal's aunt Sundarbai.

While we were talking, we heard Ramlal's voice as he came around a corner. Both young women quickly pulled down their saris to cover their faces. As soon as Ramlal was gone, they uncovered their faces again. A bit later, an older neighbor woman arrived, and they again covered their faces.

I asked Kamla and Priya about this custom of veiling their face. They said that they veil in front of all older men and women in their in-laws' home and village because they "feel shy." However, they don't veil in front of Bau, because she asked them not to. Also, they don't veil in front of the mother-in-law, since she is blind and wouldn't notice anyway.

(Continued)

A few days ago, Priya's husband Mulchand visited us. We asked him if he consults his wife before he buys things. He said, "I consult my father and my uncle Bhola before I buy anything. It's also a rule that you consult your wife. I mean, if I'm buying something for *her*, like a sari or a blouse, then I consult her. But not if I'm buying land or a new bull; only men decide about those things."

Later I asked Priya's grandmother-in-law if Priya can buy things without permission. Bau replied, "She can buy saris or blouses if the vendor comes to the house. But she doesn't go to the market in town. She would have to get the money from me if she wanted something. I keep the money in my trunk. Anyway, why should he have to buy anything? I buy all the vegetables, and the menfolk bring most of the clothes.

***

Ramlal told us he was going to have his house re-plastered with mud. He was going to hire laborers to do it, so his wife would not have to do the work. He said a man would be paid two rupees a day for such work, and a woman 1.25 rupees.*

***

One day in a nearby town, we saw Ramlal's uncle Bhola, who was there on business. We were going to see a movie and invited him to come with us. He seemed to enjoy it, and later mentioned that it was the first English-language movie he had ever seen. He added that his wife had never seen a movie. "I never let my wife go out to a country fair, let alone a movie. Of course, when she's visiting her parents, she can do whatever she wants"

***

We spoke with Bhola's wife Sundarbai. She is about 30 years old and the mother of three children. She told us that she would soon be leaving for a long visit with her parents at their home. "I want to stay there for a whole year," she said. Then she sighed, "But I doubt that my husband would let me stay that long.

***

At Christmas time we decorated our house with colorful ornaments. One morning I went to Ramlal's house to invite Priya and Kamla over to see the decorations. Kamla's brother was visiting, and she asked him if she could go. He immediately said yes. (He had been over the night before with Ramlal and had seen the Christmas decorations.)

*In the years since this note was taken, prices have changed a great deal. Now (2017) these wages would be about 200 rupees for a man's labor for a day, and about 175 for a woman.

(Continued)

Priya also wanted to go, but she seemed worried about asking her mother-in-law for permission. Finally Kamla's brother noticed this and said, "Go on without asking, it'll be all right."

Both young women immediately came with us. They pulled their saris over their faces and walked the 100 feet to our house. They admired the ornaments and left quickly. They said they would be scolded if they stayed too long.

1: Based on these data, what's the relative status of men and women in Nimkhera?

2: Within the family, identify relationships between age and status.

3: Identify relationships between status and Action Patterns.

4: Identify other status differences or changes suggested in the account.

Many customs change very slowly, particularly in small towns. One of these customs is marriage, described below:

We were passing through the village where Kamla's parents live, and so we stopped for a visit. Kamla's mother welcomed us with smiles, as Kamla had told her about us. We spoke about many things, among them Kamla's marriage.

Kamla's mother told us that a girl's marriage is arranged by her parents. The main concern is to find a "good" boy of equal education and wealth. (Of course, he must also belong to the same caste as the girl.) Kamla's father had gone out in search of such a boy. Both parents had asked their relatives for information about suitable prospects for Kamla. Finally, Kamla's father heard about Ramlal.

After investigation and discussion, both parents agreed that their daughter should marry Ramlal. Kamla's father met with Ramlal's father and arranged the marriage. Kamla first saw Ramlal at the wedding. She didn't go to live with him until three years later, after a second ceremony was performed.

Kamla's mother also mentioned that her oldest son was coming home soon from the army. She and her husband already have selected a bride for him. As soon as he returns, the marriage will be held.

The graphic advertisement on the facing page appeared in a leading magazine for Indian women, *Femina*. It deals with marriage in the modern setting of a large Indian city.[1]

1: What would you say was the relative status of men and women in arranging a marriage?

2: Divorce is uncommon in India. Why might this be so?

3: Do you think that Indian ideas about marriage are likely to change as the country grows more modern? Why or why not?

4: If a man and woman attending university happen to fall in love, and are from the same caste, what actions might they take to avoid family problems that might prevent their marriage?

(In the ad, a "barrister" is a lawyer; "foreign-returned" means he has returned to India after completing his education or employment abroad, such as in England or the United States.)

[1] Today many marriage arrangements are made not only through newspaper advertisements but through contacts initiated online. Many popular Indian websites advertise available brides and grooms.


शुभविवाह
THE KAPOORS ARE CERTAINLY CELEBRATING THEIR DAUGHTER'S WEDDING IN GREAT STYLE!
AND SUCH A WONDERFUL BOY... A Ph.D!
WE HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A BOY FOR OUR SUNITIE FOR TWO YEARS, BUT SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO FIND ANYONE SUITABLE. IT'S ALL LUCK!
WHO IS GOING TO START HIS OWN FACTORY!
REALLY?! TELL ME WHICH PAPER!
OUR DELHI PAPER. THE TIMES OF INDIA. ALL THE PARTIES THAT ANSWERED WERE SOUND!
BUT MY HUSBAND WON'T LIKE IT IF THEY ASK FOR A PHOTOGRAPH OF OUR DAUGHTER
WELL, IN THIS CASE IT WAS MR. KAPOOR'S BOSS WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE! HE ADVISED THEM TO PUT AN AD IN THE PAPER.
NOTHING LIKE THAT! THE TIMES OF INDIA PEOPLE ARE SO PARTICULAR IN FACT, THAT ONLY A GIRL'S FATHER MAY INSERT THE AD!
SOME TIME LATER
Matrimonial correspondence invited in confidence from Punjabi Brahmin boy of 25 to 30 years, highly educated well-settled, for smart, good-looking graduate accomplished girl. Apply: Box 24356, Times of India, New Delhi.
...HE'S A FOREIGN-RETURNED BARRISTER AND HAS A BIG PRACTICE IN THE CITY... WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL TO YOU AND, OF COURSE TO THE TIMES OF INDIA!
Make a lucky find in the classified columns of the Times of India, Delhi Edition.
Where the nicest people meet their match.
Write to: The Advertisement Manager, Times of India, 7, Bahadur Shah Zaffar Marg, New Delhi.

Investigation: Summarizing Status Relationships

In Unit 7, page 16, there's a detailed version of the Model. ***As you did for Samoa, go down the list of subcategories and sub-subcategories, and identify some possible relationships between status in rural India and other subcategories or sub-subcategories.***

Describe probable relationships between status in rural India and two or three other Model subcategories or sub-subcategories. As before, you may wish to add other subcategories or sub-subcategories to the Model to fit rural India's culture.

Status in Igbo Society

The Igbo (EEgh-boh) people are one of the three main tribal groups in the African nation of Nigeria. The villages and home towns of the 33 million Igbos are in the moist tropical forestland of southeastern Nigeria. (Many earlier sources refer to the group as "Ibo," but that version of the name is rejected by the Igbo people as inaccurate.)

The area is densely populated. Over the past half-century, the extraction and refining of crude oil along the coast has brought a great deal of development.

In the past, most Igbos were farmers, growing root crops such as yams, cassava and taro. Many still farm. Their villages are clustered around central market towns where crops, goods, and information are exchanged.

Although these patterns are changing, traditionally the Igbos live in compounds, each surrounded by a wall, with separate houses for each wife and her children. Grown sons and cousins also have separate houses within the family compound. Family ties are strong.

Status plays an important role in Igbo life. In this section you'll investigate their status system and its effects on the lives of the Igbo people.[1]

http://i-df.org/igbomap.html

[1] Marion Brady and Howard L. Brady, *Idea and Action in World Cultures*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1977. Prentice-Hall. pp. 409-421. © Marion Brady and Howard L. Brady

Investigation: Sources of Status

When social scientists talk about status, they often use the terms **ascribed status** and **achieved status.** Ascribed status is status over which a person has no control. It's automatically given because of qualities such as age or sex. For example, a Korean man who has passed his 70th birthday is given high status because he's old and because he's a man—ascribed statuses, since they're not affected by the man's past actions or achievements.

But if the Korean man is a scholar or a government official, his **achieved** status will also be high. His own actions and individual history have helped increase his status.

In Igbo society a person's rank is partly determined by each of these kinds of status. Below are several proverbs the Igbo frequently use to indicate their Shared Ideas related to status.[1]

Based on the proverbs:

1: List actions and characteristics that are valued by the Igbo people.

2: Which seems to be more important to Igbos,* achieved *or* ascribed *status? Explain the proverbs that support your opinion.

1. If you can do some important thing better than someone else, then you have defeated him.
2. A man's deeds are his 'beauty.'
3. The son of a rich man in the womb is the same age as the son of a poor man already born.
4. One who is too cautious with his life is always killed by the fall of a dry leaf.
5. If a man is not strong enough to fight, many come to fight him.
6. A learner is not greater than his teacher.
7. In union there is strength.
8. Every man is a chief in his own house.
9. A dog does not bark at his master.
10. No one knows which womb holds the chief.

[1] Northcote W. Thomas, *Anthropological Report on the Ibo Speaking People of Nigeria*, Part III (London, Harrison and Sons, 1913.

Traditional Igbo houses. Most Igbo live in conventional Western-style houses now.

http://joshualoweteacher.weebly.com/igbo-culture.html

Investigation: Igbo Status-Related Action Patterns

Among the most important Action Patterns of any society are those that grow out of its status system. In Samoa, the *kava* ceremony and chiefs' council point to the importance of the chiefs as decision-makers. The Hindu caste system in India divided all traditional occupations into rigid ranks, assuring that workers would be available for all traditionally-needed jobs. The materials in this activity describe several important Igbo patterns related to status.

Based on the data:

1: ***Determine how each pattern is related to* achieved** or **ascribed *status, and the extent to which each of these is important within the pattern.***

2: ***Describe how you think each of these patterns might affect Igbo attitude toward (a) work (For example, is work a good thing or to be avoided?), (b) education and training, (c) government jobs, (d) the proper use of wealth, and (e) success.***

Among the traditional Igbo, one of the important reasons for status differences was the title which a person possessed. Titles were gained by joining title societies. A man who held the highest titles was thought of as a "chief," even though his titles didn't give him an official position. Here's the way the *ozo* or title system works:[1]

[1] *Area Handbook for Nigeria* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972)

Titles could be purchased by any man who wanted them. In order to buy a high title, the man first had to buy all of the lower titles that led to the higher one. Any man who was a free-born citizen and a resident in an Igbo town could obtain titles, if he could afford the payment.

Men who held the same title formed a kind of club or organization, a "title society." The money and gifts paid for each title were divided among the members of the title society for that title. Traditionally, the higher titles were so expensive that only a few men could afford to purchase them.

Once a man owned a title, he was entitled to a share of the fees paid by all who purchased that title later. Women were not allowed to buy titles for themselves, but were entitled to share some of the honors when their husbands gained titles

In the Igbo area of Awka—a cluster of towns and villages—there were seven major titles:

Amanwulu: To buy this title a man had to pay a small fee (the equivalent of about £10 in money and gifts). Title holders could wear a special belt and carry a small wooden staff. This title was usually taken by very young men.

Chi: The entrance fee was about £20. Members could carry a long iron staff and an ivory horn. They could also take a new name.

A ja-ama: The entrance fee was from £10 to £12. The title holder received no special benefits except his share of future fees. This title was important only as a stepping stone to higher titles.

A jali ja: The entrance fee was from £50 to £90. The amount a person paid depended on whether or not he was opposed by any of the existing title holders. If a person already holding the title had some reason to dislike a candidate for the title, the candidate was also required to supply cows to be killed for a feast for those who were already members of the title society.

A title holder was entitled to carry an iron staff nine feet long and wear wide copper bands around his ankles. He was also allowed to carry an ivory horn and a goatskin bag. He could use a chief's carved stool and could carry a goat skin to use when sitting on the ground. A title holder also had the right to be buried in a coffin within his family compound and to have a cow sacrificed at his funeral.

An Igbo man who obtained this title was considered a minor chief, an honorable and influential citizen. Few men tried to obtain any higher titles.

Ekwu: The title cost about £15. It had no special benefits except the share of fees and was used as a stepping stone. Only men interested in taking the next title joined Ekwu.

(Continued)

Awzaw: This title cost £120 or more. It was the most important title of all. A man with this title was treated with special respect and was a very important man in traditional Igbo society.

In addition to the great expenses paid for this title, the candidate sponsored special feasts and celebrations. Once he made the necessary payments, he moved out of his own home for two months. It was required that he never have his feet under the roof of any house for this entire period. He was smeared with chalk from head to toe, and stayed enclosed in a small booth out of public view, usually in a friend's family compound.

Once the man had completed all the requirements, he was entitled to carry an elaborate and heavily-decorated iron spear. Around his ankles he wore red-dyed cords. Each Awzaw had a huge ivory horn that could be sounded to announce his approach. The Azwaw chief sat on a specially-carved stool that no one else was allowed to use.

An Aswaw chief did not have to perform any kind of manual labor. No person was allowed to assault him. He was a member of the chief's council that governed town affairs.

Fu: This title cost about £30 and had no special benefits except a share of future fees. Only Awzaw titleholders could enter this title society.

Below: Igbo chiefs with status symbols. A red cap is one sign of a chief.

http://www.ezeogupublication.co.uk/Igbo/Content/page-pictureGallery1.php

Note: Chief's titles are also awarded to outstanding Igbo citizens for service to their community.

When an Igbo man marries, he has to pay a large sum of money to the parents of the bride. The price of the girl will depend on her background, her beauty, and (in recent years) her education. A tall, smooth-skinned girl from a wealthy family will be very expensive, especially if she is well-educated.

http://www.nairaland.com/2591733/picture-gallery-igbo-traditional-marriage

Well-to-do Igbo men often had more than one wife, each with a separate house and her own income from trading and farming, and each taking care of her own children.

Both of these customs may be changing. Some claim that the customary high bride price is now being phased out, and often only a token bride price is paid. “We don’t sell our women” seems to be the new sentiment. Wealthy men having more than one wife is also fading as a custom.

Anthropologists have found relationships around the world between agricultural patterns and payments associated with marriage. In areas where it was traditional for women to do much of the agricultural work (generally with hoes), bride prices—often high—were paid to the bride’s family. In societies where the men did the main agricultural work (with animal-pulled plows), the bride’s family paid a dowry to the groom’s family.

The Igbo people have migrated by the hundreds of thousands away from their home territories in search of better land and better jobs. Often the Igbos from one village who live elsewhere—such as in the cities of Nigeria—have organized "improvement unions" to help their home villages. They send money back to improve public facilities such as village water systems. Members return home on holidays, and tell their village relatives about ways to improve their lives and take advantage of modern developments.

A traditional occupation in central Igboland:[1]

In Awka many of the men are smiths, skilled in making tools and weapons of iron. This important craft has led to a great deal of fame and prosperity for the men of Awka. They train only members of their own clans in the craft, and keep their methods secret from all others. [*Smithing is still practiced, but not as extensively as in past years.—ed.]*

Awka smiths have migrated to many places outside Igbo land, in search of customers for their skills, but they maintain close ties with their homes and craft unions.

Different levels of smithing ability are recognized by special titles. As a smith increases in skill and experience, he is given new titles that suggest his rank.

Training courses for smiths last from two to eight years, depending on the size and ability of the apprentice. Apprentices begin by pumping the bellows that supply air to the smith's fire, then are gradually assigned more difficult tasks. In order to graduate, the apprentice must prove his knowledge of the craft, and must demonstrate the size of his arm muscles and the force of his hammer blows.

As a symbol of his graduation, the new smith is awarded an anvil and a hammer forged by the master smith who was his teacher. Friends and other smiths within his clan provide a feast of celebration for the new graduate.

[1] J. O. Nzekwu. "The Smiths of Awka." *Nigeria*, #61, 1959

Rems Nna Umeasiegbu, an Igboman, describes one part of his culture:[1]

Throughout Igboland wrestling is an important sport. Young men have the chance to distinguish themselves and show their skill. Sometimes arguments are settled with a wrestling match. An extremely popular girl who has had several offers of marriage may even arrange a wrestling competition and marry the winner.

Inter-village wrestling competitions are common. Each village has its own wrestling ground. Wrestlers are grouped according to the records of achievements. All the villagers are informed of any competitions, which usually take place in the evenings. A ring is made and spectators sit around it. The wrestlers squat and chat together before the match.

The competition is started by the two principal wrestlers from the two villages. A competitor picked up so his legs no longer touch the ground is declared defeated. If it appears that no competitor is defeating the other, the match is called a draw. Then another set of wrestlers comes in.

The total successes of each team determine the results of the competition. The team with the greatest number of successes is given a prize by the chief.

[1] Rems Nna Umeasiegbu, *The Way We Lived* (London. Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd. 1969)

Dancers at a traditional Igbo funeral for a person of high status. Most Igbo have adopted Christianity, but also accept traditional beliefs in life after death. The ceremony with dancing allows the spirit of the dead person to take his or her place among the ancestors. http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-22610497

Describe major differences you see between the status systems of Hindus, Samoans, and the Igbo.

Investigation: Success in Urban Society

Centers of change around the world are cities. That's where the forces of change—Setting and Demographics—have the greatest effect and new Action Patterns tend to develop.

However, Shared Ideas change slowly, and groups with differing ideas and attitudes respond to the forces of change in different ways. People from some societies have difficulty succeeding in cities, but others easily adapt to the complexities of city life, with its businesses, industries, and government agencies.

There's a close relationship between ideas and patterns related to status and success in cities. This relationship is easy to see in the culture of the Igbo.

Below are several pairs of statements which reflect different ideas and attitudes.

Study the list, then review the data that follow. Based on what follows and previous data about the Igbo in this section, decide which statement the Igbo are more likely to accept.

Success depends mostly on luck and fate.

Success comes to those who try harder than those around them.

Enjoy today, don't worry about tomorrow.

Sacrificing today can pay off tomorrow.

A good decision is more likely if everyone takes part in it.

Some people are authorities; they know best and should be respected and obeyed.

A father's honors should be passed on to his sons.

Everyone should have an equal chance to get ahead.

Don't be satisfied with yourself. You can always climb a little higher.

Whatever your position in life is, accept it and be content.

The first Europeans came to what is now Nigeria in the late 1400s, and by the 1600s the British had a monopoly in trade with the area. Nigeria was a British colony from 1861 to 1960. Colonial activities from Nigerian history:[1]

In the early 1900s, the British tried to increase their control over trade in that part of Africa occupied by the Igbos. They had trouble, however, because there were no powerful kings or chiefs among the Igbos. In neighboring Yorubaland it was possible for the British to negotiate with leaders who represented groups of people. The Igbo had no such leaders and lived in villages governed by an assembly. Decisions were made in village meetings attended by all adult males.

(Continued)

[1] John Hatch, Nigeria: *The Seeds of Disaster* (Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1970)

In Igbo village assemblies, a village elder assumed responsibilities similar to those of a president of a club. British officials, observing these meetings, mistakenly thought that the presiding elder "ran" the village. Elders were then given certain political and judicial power by the British.

These "warrant chiefs," as they were called, soon became the most disliked and resented individuals in the village.

Other insights into Igbo culture related to status:[1],[2]

One of the favorite quotations of Nnamdi Azikiwe, a prominent Igboman and one of the leaders in Nigeria's independence movement:

"God created each of us. He did not, however, create us to be merely what we are. He created us to see what we can make of ourselves."

***

From a book by C. Odumegwa Ojukwu, an Igbo army officer:

"Tribalism is an evil. I believe it can be avoided if we make sure that jobs in our society are given to those who are best qualified.

"All job openings should be advertised. If experience is needed, that should be stated in the advertisement. If you go to an interview and then don't get the job because you look scruffy, the interviewer should write that down and let it be known that you didn't get the job because of how you looked. This is one way to bring about improvements in the situation.

"I believe there ought to be some sort of commission in our society a person can go to in order to get justice without going through a lot of red tape. In some countries they call it the *ombudsman*. The commission should have the power to look at an individual's problem, particularly when a person's rights are being trampled upon."

As you've seen, Igbo women are excluded from certain positions, such as membership in men's title societies. In other areas of Igbo life, however, they play important and powerful parts. The following descriptions were written by Victor Uchendu, an Igbo who was a writer, professor (University of Illinois) and anthropologist (deceased 2007, murdered to prevent his becoming mayor of his Igbo town):[3]

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[1] Janheinz Jahn, *Through African Doors* (New York, Grove Press, Inc. 1962)

[2] C. Odumegwa Ojukwu, *Biafra: Random Thoughts* (New York, Harper & Row, Perennial Library, 1969)

[3] Victor Uchendu, *The Igbo of Southeast Nigeria*, (New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, London: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965)

Women dominate the retail trade in the town markets. They are literally everywhere as buyers and sellers. Before marriage, girls are expected to acquire successful marketing techniques. They haggle over prices in a manner that might frighten Westerners. The sell their husband's as well as their own farm products. Many women engage in speculative trade, buying wholesale from distant traders (who must leave the market early) and selling in bulk and/or retail when the market is full.

http://scannewsnigeria.com/opinion/the-nigerian-market-and-igbo-business/

A woman may be highly ranked because of the position of a distinguished son, her success in trading, or her position in a women's title society. Indeed, some women are ranked higher than their husbands. Wealthy women marry in their own right, found big compounds, and play the role of social "father" quite effectively.

The Igbo woman can leave her husband at will, abandon him if he becomes a thief, and summon him to a tribunal, where she will get a fair hearing. She marries in her own right and manages her trading capital and her profits as she sees fit.

From a guidebook for foreigners living in Igboland or doing business there:[1]

> Igbos, both men and women, are quick to start a new business if they see any chance of making a profit. The search for new ways to make money never stops. If one person introduces a new product or discovers how to make more money on an old one, everyone else immediately follows his or her lead. Ownership of several small businesses is quite common.

Investigation: The Igbos and Modern Nigeria

The Igbos live in a country with about 250 other tribal and ethnic groups. These groups differ a great deal in culture. Three tribal groups are most important—the Igbos in the southeast, the Yoruba in the southwest, and the Hausa in the north. Cultural differences between these groups have led to enormous problems, climaxed by a bitter civil war that ran from 1967 to 1970. In this investigation, you'll identify some of the cultural differences and changes that helped lead to this war.

The Hausa

Nigeria has a total population of an estimated 184 million people (2017)—the largest population of any African nation. The dry, northern region is dominated by the Hausa. The Hausa (and the similar Fulani) make up about 29% of Nigeria's population, or about 53 million people. (Nigeria has a very high birth rate, and the population is increasing rapidly. Population statistics from various sources are highly inconsistent.)

Hausa territory is divided into a number of traditional kingdoms, each centered on a city and ruled by *emirs*—noblemen with religious and political power. Much of the culture of the Hausa is an outgrowth of their Sunni Muslim religion. For many centuries these people have been in close contact with the other Muslim people in North Africa and the Middle East. Their leaders have generally ruled with rigid and harsh Muslim laws.

The Hausa people, and especially their leaders, are extremely traditional, and do not consider change to be important. They reject nearly all new ideas. The people of Hausa society are generally divided into three levels; rulers, administrators, and commoners. For the most part, people are born into one of the three classes and remain there for life. Within each level, different occupations have different status rank. The ruling class of several Hausa kingdoms are members of what was originally a separate tribe—the Fulani.

(Continued)

[1] *Area Handbook…*, op. cit. (including Hausa and Yoruba descriptions on this and the next page).

Hausa society has a rigid hierarchy. People are generally taught to be content with whatever position they have. They must treat those above them with respect and careful politeness. Hausa officials usually expect to receive gifts from lower-status people whom they assist. They give gifts, in turn, to those above them.

Women lack many rights, and are usually dominated by men. Children are expected to show great respect for the authority of their fathers, and to obey them completely.

Non-Muslim outsiders are considered crude pagans who are not obeying God. The Hausa believe that most other Nigerians do not have orderly societies or a proper respect for authority.

[In 2009, a Muslim group in northeast Nigeria, called "Boko Haram," began an armed uprising, generally to oppose the non-Muslim administration of the nation. This terrorist group has committed violent offenses, including the 2014 kidnapping of 276 female students from a school. They were sold as brides in neighboring nations for a small fee.]

The Yoruba

The most numerous and important tribal group in southwestern Nigeria is the Yoruba. The Yoruba people traditionally lived in a series of city-states, most of them ruled by a king. These kings (*oni*) are still very important in Yoruba society. Many of them are well-educated leaders. The king is selected by a council of local family chiefs, but kings must be chosen from the same local royal family. Below the level of king, status is often achieved rather than ascribed.

The Yoruba consider their royal history very important and take great pride in the greatness of their kings, past and present. A great king was traditionally expected to make much show of his wealth and power.

Making money is important to the traditional Yoruba, but saving money made is considered "hoarding." Instead, traditional Yoruba are expected to spend their money to show their status. Wealthy people often use their money to seek political office.

In spite of their kings and city governments, Yoruba culture is very different from that of the Hausa, and similar in many ways to that of the Igbo.

Discuss and summarize the main differences in the status systems of the Hausa, Yoruba and the Igbo. Identify similarities and differences between them, and compare them to other societies you've studied. Which one is most like the status system in your society?

In their early relationships between the British and the people of Nigeria, the Igbo people were not as important as the Yoruba or Hausa. As you've seen, the British misunderstood the characteristics of Igbo society, and it led to difficulties. The Igbo weren't organized much above village level; each village ran its own affairs, so the British couldn't go to a "headman" and make changes through him. However, the importance of the Igbo eventually began to change, as the data that follow will show.

From Newsweek magazine:[1]

> Igbo tribesmen were latecomers to the modern world, emerging from the bush in the 1930s. They were quick learners, however, and soon Igbo men were shocking the members of the neighboring Rivers Tribes by appearing in the marketplace as retail traders, a job traditionally delegated to women. Before long, the Igbos gained pre-eminence everywhere in Nigeria as soldiers, lawyers, businessmen and bureaucrats. The first Igbo ever to be admitted to the bar, Sir Louis Mbanefo, rose to be a justice of Nigeria's Supreme Court.

An Igbo man, in a newspaper article, gave reasons for the growth of Igbo power:[2]

> The Igbos accepted jobs others considered beneath their dignity. Though the jobs were menial, they brought hard cash. And with the money the Igbos soon took to buying lands, buildings and estates wherever they could be found. It was not uncommon for an Igbo tenant to buy his Yoruba landlord's property or for an Igbo driver to acquire a fleet of lorries [trucks] from his former Hausa employer or for an Igbo tapper to acquire acres of rubber plantations from his Bini master.
> The Igbos took loans to invest in meaningful projects and denied themselves social pleasures until the money was repaid. Other tribes, particularly the Yoruba, obtained loans in order to buy expensive cars and throw lavish parties.
>
> Igbos always stick together and maintain a great attachment and loyalty to Igboland wherever they might be. The African extended family system is certainly strongest among the Igbos. One person would arrive singly in a place with a wooden box or pillowcase as his only property. Within five or ten years a full Igbo colony, their fingers in all the available pies in the place, would have sprung up.

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[1] *Newsweek*, September 30, 1968 *(Ibo changed to Igbo for consistency in this and following articles.)*

[2] Sam Uba, "What are the Ibos hated so deeply?" *Dacca Morning News*, Reprinted in *Atlas World Press Review*, March 1968.

An American journalist made this report:[1]

Whole Igbo communities would club together to put a single bright child through school; and when, as often happened, the graduate had secured a position of power, he found jobs for the kinsmen who had sacrificed to make his success possible. ("In the old days," a Yoruba complained recently, "when an Iboman took over a government department, the rest of us immediately began looking for work elsewhere.") When Nigeria was a [British] Crown Colony, the Igbos operated 300 high schools and two universities and counted amongst their number 700 lawyers, 600 engineers, 500 doctors and more than 1,250,000 children enrolled in grammar school—figures matched by no other tribal group in Nigeria.

https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/africanworldforum/OPWwCRioi50

After the British pulled out in 1960, the Igbos, in effect, inherited control of the civil service system, dominating the key posts in government, the army, police and railways.

Based on this data and the summary of Hausa culture:

1: Write a statement from the Igbo point of view that gives the opinion that Ibos probably had about the Hausa.

2: Write a statement from the Hausa point of view that gives the opinion that the Hausa probably had about the Igbo.

[1] Michael Moh, *Biafra Journal*, Time-Life Books

Newsweek magazine, in October 1966, told how hostilities began to grow in Nigeria:[1]

> Last January, army officers, mostly of the Igbo tribe, overturned the federal government and murdered its main leaders, who were from the north. In July, the northerners struck back: Igbo strong man Gen. "Big Johnny" Aguiyi-Ironsi was killed and replaced by a northerner, Lt. Col. Gowon. The blood price is still being paid.
>
> Late last month, in villages and cities throughout the north, mobs of angry Hausa tribesmen invaded homes and offices where Igbos were likely to be found. The northerners beat or murdered any Igbos (or suspected Igbos) who fell into their hands. Hundreds of Igbos were killed and hundreds more fled in panic to airports and railroad stations, trying desperately to get aboard planes and trains hastily pressed into evacuation service.
>
> By last week, massive population shifts had ripped away most of the intertribal settlements that had help bind the federation together. About 10,000 Igbos were estimated to have pulled out of the north. And since the Igbos are far more proficient technically than the Hausas, this mass exodus left the railroads, communications, power stations and dam sites in helpless disarray.

Many of the Igbo people withdrew into their southeastern region of Nigeria. Because of their treatment and the hostility of most Northerners, the Igbos and some others southeastern groups planned to withdraw from Nigeria and form their own country.

Under the leadership of Colonel C. O. Ojukwu, the southeastern part of Nigeria declared its independence on May 30, 1967. The new country was named The Republic of Biafra. Fighting between Biafran and Nigerian Federal armies began on June 6, 1967.

The Igbo forces were successful for a short time, but the federal army received support and equipment from other countries and soon surrounded the Biafrans, cutting them off from all but a trickle of supplies, including food. Hunger soon began killing far more Biafrans than the guns or bombs of their enemies, but they were afraid to surrender, believing they would be killed. The war dragged on for 30 months until the Biafran people could fight no longer and they surrendered in January of 1970. At least a million, and perhaps as many as three million Igbo people were killed or died of starvation and diseases during the conflict.

[1] *Newsweek*, October 17, 1966

Since the war, the Igbos and other easterners have been accepted back into the Nigerian Federation. There have been surprisingly few additional hostilities, and conditions improved much more rapidly than most people expected. However, as could be expected, resentment and discrimination against Igbos has led to some difficulties.

Investigation: Summarizing Status Relationships

In Unit 7, page 16, there's a detailed version of the Model. ***As you did for Samoa and rural India, go down the list of subcategories and sub-subcategories, and identify some possible relationships between status in Igbo society and other subcategories or sub-subcategories.***

Describe probable relationships between status in Igbo society and two or three other Model subcategories or sub-subcategories. As before, you may wish to add other subcategories or sub-subcategories to the Model to fit Igbo culture.

Investigation: Status in Your Society

You've seen the extreme importance of status in shaping societies around the world. But what about your own society?

Discuss and report:

1: Identify three to five people with high status in your society, and collect data about them to answer these questions: What gives them high status? Which of these status characteristics are formal? Informal? Achieved? Ascribed?

2: What are the most important symbols of status in your society? From magazines, newspapers, and similar sources, collect photographs that show status symbols.

3: To what extent do people in your society have status mobility—ways to improve their status?

4: What situations lead to low status in your society? Is low status for some people fair to them?

For Teacher/Mentor:

As with other ethnographic details throughout *Investigating World Cultures*, learners will soon forget that a traditional Samoan house is called a *fale*, that *matai* is a chief, and that an orator chief carries a fly whisk and a staff. Details are unimportant, and remembering them unnecessary.

The point of the investigations, besides giving learners opportunity to think deeply and enhance their cognitive skills, is (1) to develop an understanding of the important ways that status and rank affect them, and (2) to appreciate the rather extreme variation in the ways societies define status and structure the interrelationships it creates.

What learners should take with them is an understanding of vast societal differences in status structures and their consequences. To make this clear we've looked at three different societies: Samoa, rural India, and the Igbo of southeast Nigeria.

This is the longest unit of the course. A reminder: In many respects, "covering the material" is irrelevant. As we've said, learners will soon forget the details of each society. What really matters is the quality of thought, and if the dialogue is rich, it doesn't really matter if learners only get part way into the material.

Samoa

The culture of Samoa, the first society investigated in this and the next unit, differs considerably from that of Western society. Its complex social relationships are described by anthropologist Bradd Shore and are accompanied by photographs he took years ago while serving in the Peace Corps.

Shore contributed material used in every unit of *Idea and Action in World Cultures*, and we've included some of his best material from that book in this and the next unit.[1] He re-reviewed and updated this material prior to posting (2017).

A real understanding of a society as complex as Samoa isn't possible within a unit or two, but ethnographic material can serve as a vehicle to help learners grasp general principles of society and culture.

For interested learners, pronunciation of Samoan words is fairly easy for English speakers. From Shore's book *Sali'ilua: A Samoan Mystery*:[2]

> "The glottal stop is represented by an apostrophe (') and vowel length is indicated by the presence or absence of the macron (¯).

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[1] A side note on cultural differences between American Samoa and Independent Samoa: The great cultural divide involves which version of oval-ball football is important. American Samoans are intensely interested in American football, and the tiny island has supplied far more than its share of players to American universities and the National Football League. Independent Samoa, on the other hand is just as intensely interested in Rugby Union, which is perhaps even more violent and—since it's played with less protective gear—dangerous. Samoan teams have excelled, in some years qualifying for World Cup competition.

[2] Bradd Shore, *Sali'ilua: A Samoan Mystery*, New York and Guildford, Surrey, 1982, p. xvi

"…The form written as "g" is pronounced "ng" in all cases. The glottal stop is a break or constriction in the voice, such as that in the English "uh-oh!" or the Cockney pronunciation of "bottle" Otherwise, all consonants have approximately the same values as in English.

"Vowels are pronounced with their "pure" values as in Spanish or Italian…Vowel length is approximately doubled when the vowel is marked with a macron. Stress is generally on the penultimate syllable.

"…the plurals of Samoan words omit the English –s. Thus, such terms as *matai*, *ali'i*, or *tulāfale* may be either plural or singular depending on the context."

Investigation: A First Look at Status in Samoa

The only question associated with this data piece compares patterns between Samoan speech and the learner's own language. Of course, speech patterns typically differ depending on the relative status of speakers, but in English-speaking societies, the differences are more subtle, though still significant. One of the authors once worked with an engineer/technician who previously had been in charge of communications technology on the airplane used by Henry Kissinger when he was U.S. Secretary of State. He told me, "Kissinger and I were on first-name basis. I was 'Hey, you!' and he was "Yes, Sir!'"

Investigation: Formal Status in Samoa

By this time, learners should be able to move into investigations with little difficulty. As with most of our materials, we suggest that the learners work cooperatively in small groups or learning teams.

The final section of the unit on status (focusing on the Igbo of Nigeria) deals with differences between *achieved* and *ascribed* status in society, but the first Samoan investigation touches on the subject. Samoan culture combines the two kinds of status rather uniquely.

In Samoa, the status rank of a title is established by previous chiefs who have held the title, and remains fairly stable when the title is assigned by the family to a new title-holder. The major status determinant—control of family-owned property—goes with the title and rarely changes significantly. However, status of a title can, of course, be affected to a degree by the performance of the *matai*. A chief who shows notable leadership, special skill, or who provides a high level of service to the family and community can increase, to a degree, the status ranking of his (or, rarely, her) title. This ranking change would only be evident, of course, when the community chiefs meet. A chief who excels may also be given a second, higher title in addition to his first, if the family has a higher-ranking title available to be assigned.

Obtaining a title in the first place can be stressful. The young person who wants the prestige of being given a title must qualify by impressing his family with his maturity, and by giving service and showing respect to those in authority, but must hide his ambition. He is, in a sense, competing with other members of the

village *'aumanga* for status, but this ambition-driven competition must not be apparent, or it would be disqualifying.

Investigation: Informal Status in Samoa

A Samoan who holds high non-chiefly formal status (village mayor, Member of Parliament, etc.) is almost certain to also hold a title as a chief. Forty-seven of the 49 or 50 MPs are *matai*; two MPs represent residents of the nation with ethnicity other than Samoan, and therefore have no family chiefs to represent them.

Investigation: A Chiefs' Meeting

As always, ethnocentrism can be a problem. "Why don't they just get down to work without all this elaborate ceremony?" may be a spoken or unspoken reaction.

If the chief's meeting is dealing with difficult decisions, as may often be the case with village disputes of various sorts, then the rituals help tamp down raised emotions, and establish the authority of the council and its leaders to make enforceable decisions that will be accepted by disputing parties.

The *kava* ceremony contributes to these two goals both ceremonially and (to a slight extent) chemically. *Kava* has a mild sedative effect, with no significant adverse side effects on cognitive ability, so it also helps calm raised emotions.

The role of orator chiefs will likely be confusing to learners. Their obvious role is as communicators for the high chiefs, to present their views and decisions to the rest of village society. Orator chiefs are also the community's oral historians, knowing and disseminating important data about genealogy and the significant past. They provide the Samoan equivalent of "legal precedent" for village action.

Most chiefs' meetings are preceded by informal meetings between various parties seeking to influence the decisions, and often there's a general consensus prior to the main meeting as to the proper decision.

Investigation: Summarizing Status Relationships

Systems-based learning is, above all, an exploration of relationships and meta-relationships between aspects of reality. Too much of our time in the past has been spent learning what Whitehead called "inert facts," that were either quickly forgotten or remain as useless mental debris. This investigation focuses on what we expect learners to do to "make sense" of societies and cultures.

Additional subcategories (and a device for juxtaposing them) are at:
http://www.marionbrady.com/RelationshipHypothesesGenerator.asp

Investigation: Target Area Status

Status can be a painful subject, particularly for adolescents. Dealing with it explicitly, and helping learners understand how it works, should defuse some of its adverse effects. We address it here rather than at the end of the entire unit to reinforce the importance of status as a subject for study.

Status in Rural India

This is the second of the three parts of the *Investigating World Cultures* unit on Status. The original material was supplied by Dr. Doranne Jacobson; she re-reviewed the material and updated comments prior to the posting of this unit (2017), and supplied the outstanding color photographs.

This part of the unit should offer few problems for learners at this point. If learners with Indian heritage are in the class, of course, extra care must be taken to avoid dealing with the subject of status in any way that would result in hurt feelings.

As noted, the data in this section present a "snapshot" of status in an Indian village from the mid-1960s. The changes in almost every aspect of Indian society (including caste relations) since that time are remarkable, and continue at a rapid pace. The objective of this part is not to give learners soon-forgotten information about India, but to increase their understanding of status by seeing it in a society that contrasts with their own.

Westerners spending time in India for business purposes these days (and there is more and more of that contact with Indians) see little evidence of the effects of caste in most of their dealings, except for the obvious remaining presence of a great deal of poverty in parts of the major Indian cities.

Under the leadership of the Congress Party, discrimination based on caste was declared illegal in 1950, but it remains a part of customs and attitudes, especially in rural areas, which are slow to change. It is, of course, also perpetuated by economic status associated with caste hierarchy—high-paying professional jobs often go to upper-caste individuals whose well-off parents are able to pay for advanced education, for example.

On a visit to India a few years ago, one of the authors[1] was entering the small apartment building in New Delhi where his host and hostess lived. He noted a family living under the front steps, ironing spotless, gleaming white bedsheets with a charcoal-fired iron. His hostess explained that they did laundry for the residents of the building, and that this kind of work was performed by people of the lowest caste.

His hostess told him, "I offered to pay the expenses so their children could go to school, but the parents refused. They told me, 'If our children are educated, what can they do? There will be no jobs for them.'"

From the *New York Times*: [2]

> As India transforms, one might expect caste to dissolve and disappear, but that is not happening. Instead, caste is making its presence felt in ways similar to race in modern America: less important now in jobs and

[1] Howard Brady

[2] http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/16/opinion/sunday/caste-is-not-past.html

education, but vibrantly alive when it comes to two significant societal markers — marriage and politics.

No surprise on that first one. Inter-caste marriages in India are on the rise but still tend to be the province of the liberal few. For much of the country, with its penchant for arranged marriages and close family ties, caste is still a primary determinant in choosing a spouse.

Dr. Jacobson comments: "In Indian politics today, castes and groups of castes often vote as a block, thus asserting their political power in India's democracy. Legally, under the Indian Constitution, many scholarships and political offices are reserved for members of low-ranking castes. Accordingly, proving membership in these low-ranking castes is very important in obtaining benefits under this system of affirmative action.

"About Muslims: they may not have caste as such, but they certainly are particular about status and have caste-like groups. There are a few such Muslim groups in our village, and they generally do not intermarry. However, there's some increasing flexibility on that point. For example, the high-ranking Pathan landlords of the village strongly prefer to marry Pathans rather than the low-ranking Fakirs, Pinjaras, and Sheikhs. Extramarital liaisons, sometimes legalized with a quickie nikah, do sometimes occur, however.

"There have been tremendous changes in caste-related issues in India in the past decades, though [it is] correct to say that, generally speaking, villages are slower to change in this regard. In cities now, people of all castes rub shoulders everywhere without paying much attention to it. And amazingly, a Chamar (low caste leather worker) woman from our village has a job as a cook in a city household! Caste still has a stranglehold in places like rural Bihar, but much less so in Madhya Pradesh."

***

A Greek historian named Arrian copied from writings of a traveler who visited India, probably about 310-300 BCE. The traveler, called Megasthenes, toured the region in one of the times of splendor of the Maurya dynasty. He described the caste system that was already existing, similar in many details to prevalent for later millennia.[1]

Castes were rigid in ancient India probably because (a) the specialized work performed by each caste changed very little from generation to generation, and (b) this work was taught by parents and other older members of the group to the young—the only education system then present. In many cases, the craft or profession being learned was complex enough that a legacy system was needed to maintain proficiency. Observing caste boundaries helped ensure that essential skills and knowledge wouldn't be lost. (Of course, eventually ritualized ideas about purity reinforced boundaries and maintained social stability, at the expense of the loss of creative change and the advantages of diversity.)

[1] See http://www.marionbrady.com/worldhist/07EarlyIndia.pdf

Not mentioned in the learner materials, but of course an integral part of the rationale for the caste system is the Hindu belief in reincarnation, and the assumption that being born into a particular caste is the result of behavior in a previous life—the concept and consequences of "karma."

A fundamental message in a society with little status mobility is, "Be content with your situation," and this message crosses over to elements of status having to do with age and gender.

Learners may be most interested in the portion of the unit that deals with arranged marriages.

Investigation: Summarizing Status Relationships

This activity is a repeat of the one for Samoa, focusing this time on rural India.

Status in Igbo Society

The extent to which the Igbos have been achievement-oriented in virtually every aspect of their society and culture contrasts markedly with the other two societies considered in the Unit. This orientation gave them enormous adaptive advantages in Nigerian affairs, but of course also led to resentment, particularly by the Hausa. The differences between these two Nigerian societies could hardly be more extreme.

One Shared Idea that characterizes the Igbo and other societies that have been successful in urban settings is a move to future orientation rather than being more concerned about the past or present. The whole idea of "investment," a key to success in business, is alien to some traditional societies. Those societies which have successfully moved to advanced development (e.g. China, Korea, Japan, and India) have discarded static or cyclic views of history.

Learners are unlikely to have any real difficulty with the investigations in the Igbo section of this unit.

(July 2017)