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# The New Emerging Adult in Chiapas, Mexico: Perceptions of Traditional Values and Value Change Among First-Generation Maya University Students

Journal of Adolescent Research

27(6) 663–713

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DOI: 10.1177/0743558411417863

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## Abstract

Social changes in indigenous Maya communities in Chiapas, Mexico toward increasing levels of formal education, commercialization, and urbanization are transforming traditional Maya developmental pathways toward adulthood. This mixed-methods study is based on interviews with a sample of 14 first-generation Maya university students who have also undergone a transition from a rural to an urban environment, either with their families or as part of their educational process. Greenfield's theory of social change and human development suggests that formal education and urbanization shift developmental pathways in the direction of increasing values for individual autonomy. This study supports Greenfield's theory: students perceive they are departing from traditional values by endorsing notions of choice, exploration, self-fulfillment, expanded norms for behavior, and gender equality. However, change is a gradual process of negotiating a pathway through old

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and new values. Qualitative analyses of interviews reveal how Maya university students are working to harmonize new values of independence, self-fulfillment, and gender equality with the traditional values of respect for elders and family obligation. The study concludes that formal education and urbanization are forces that create conditions for changes in developmental pathways toward adulthood consistent with the characteristics of emerging adulthood. This study adds to a growing body of literature documenting particular manifestations of emerging adulthood in developing countries around the world and shows how emerging adulthood may be a key developmental period connected to the socialization of individualistic values.

### **Keywords**

emerging adult, Maya, social change, cultural values, gender

Ideas about the nature of the transition from the traditional to the modern are often traced back to Lerner's (1958) seminal work on modernization in 1958. Although Lerner's modernization theory has been critiqued as overly simplistic and xenophobic, recent evidence does show that movement away from an agrarian way of life in the developing world is generating changes in cultural values, in a general direction Lerner proposed, toward self-expression and individual autonomy (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). To understand the role psychological development and socialization play in this process of cultural evolution in the developing world, two theories are used as frameworks that link changes at the level of society with changes in psychological development. The first is Greenfield's theory of social change and human development (2009), which employs the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* from German sociologist Tonnies (1957) to describe how sociodemographic change from a rural, subsistence-farming ecology (*Gemeinschaft*) to urbanization, commercialization, and higher levels of formal education (*Gesellschaft*) shifts socialization toward an emphasis on individual autonomy. The second theory provides a particular way in which socialization pathways may shift. Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood (1998) suggests that with postindustrialization, there arises an extended period of self-focused development, after adolescence but before full adulthood is achieved. The two theoretical frameworks are applied to an analysis of perspectives of social ecological and value change among a sample of first-generation indigenous Maya university students in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas.

These Maya university students are among those at the forefront of the social changes that are happening among the Maya in Chiapas, which include

migration to urban centers (Rus, 2009), extended education (Schmelkes, 2009), and economic development away from subsistence agriculture (Cancian, 1994). They were asked to express, in their own words, their perspectives and personal life experiences of these changes. Guided by Greenfield's (2009) theory, the goal was to identify cultural values and beliefs associated with increasing contact with *Gesellschaft* factors, factors that also correspond to the same demographic circumstances, especially university education, identified by Arnett (2000) as giving rise to emerging adulthood. This theoretical approach can illuminate how cultural values related to group interdependence versus individual autonomy could derive from the ways youth make meaning out of shifting sociodemographic conditions and from the experience of an extended period of preparation before adulthood.

### **Traditional Maya Culture in Chiapas, Mexico**

The influence of Spanish colonization on Maya culture in Chiapas has been profound and continuous, yet indigenous culture has remained distinctive from that of mainstream Mexico. Beginning in the 16th century, appropriation of Maya land by Ladinos (a term that denotes Spanish-Maya mixed ethnic heritage, but identification with Mexican culture) forced many Maya men into indentured labor on Ladino-owned ranches; others continued to be involved in trading, which was an important part of precolonial Maya culture (Collier, 1975). After the Mexican revolution in 1910, land reform returned land to indigenous men, giving way to a period of subsistence corn farming that lasted until the 1970s (Cancian, 1994). Maya communities in southern Mexico remained largely isolated from mainstream Mexican culture during this time (Cancian, 1994) and anthropologists working in these communities described them as agrarian, with men mainly raising maize, beans, and squash for family consumption, occasionally travelling on foot or mule to the city to sell their surpluses, and women doing the work of grinding the corn to make tortillas, weaving, and raising children (e.g., Vogt, 1969). These were self-sufficient and contained cultures, each community with its own nuances in self-government, clothing, marriage and religious rituals, and language (the most common in Chiapas are Tzotzil and Tzeltal).

An important governing and spiritual tradition common across Maya cultures in Chiapas is the cargo system, a hierarchical series of year-long positions of male service to the community attached to Maya spiritual traditions and a cult of saints and temples (Vogt, 1969). Traditionally, men serving in these positions host religious ceremonies that are quite expensive relative to

their lifestyle and, as such, serve to redistribute wealth in the community. These roles symbolize ascensions in prestige through communal interdependence; as men age and accumulate wealth, they move up this ladder of social hierarchy in a systematic fashion through their commitment of service to the community.

The interdependence and hierarchy symbolized by the cargo system is reproduced in many other aspects of traditional Maya social life, highlighting an emphasis on the reproduction of traditional organizing patterns (Vogt, 1965). Vogt, working particularly in the Maya community of Zinacantán, has showed how certain concepts, such as this idea of a graded system of social order, are replicated at different levels of Maya life from religious rituals to the organization of family dwellings. For example, the concept of older brother-younger brother, prevalent in Zinacantec culture, is used to classify everything from mountains in the geographical landscape to the relationship of junior to senior cargo holders. The priority placed on disciplined replication of tradition throughout Zinacanteco life is also exemplified in weaving, where strict adherence to imitation of traditional patterns had been central to weaving apprenticeship (Greenfield, 2004). Even the Tzotzil term for the Tzotzil language points to the importance of conserving tradition: “baz’i k’op” means the “true language,” emphasizing respect for tradition as the route to a correct manner of speaking (Vogt, 1969).

Group interdependence and hierarchy is further apparent in the ways that gender roles are constructed in many Maya communities in southern Mexico. Gender duality constitutes a contrast essential to the Maya worldview (Marcos, 2009). At the root of Maya spiritual traditions is the interdependence of opposites, a belief that a constantly fluctuating equilibrium of the masculine and the feminine is responsible for the creation of the cosmos, which dictates a coordination of gender differences (Marcos, 2009). Scholars have suggested that the gender hierarchy seen in contemporary Maya culture is a distortion, traced back to the influence of Spanish colonization, of this spiritual tradition of harmonious duality (Nash, 1997). Indeed, anthropologists in a variety of communities have described how women’s domain in the home and men’s in the public has been tied to a domination of the male over the female (e.g., Eber, 1999; Flood, 1994; Re Cruz, 1998). Gender hierarchy has often been related to having a voice in decision making; for example, women in Zinacantán have been thought of as “not having anything of value to say,” whereas men were thought of as “good talkers” (Lynch, 1971).

The importance of the complementary nature of Maya gender roles is clear in anthropologists’ identification of the indigenous depiction of marriage as necessary because “a man needs a woman to cook his tortillas and a woman

needs a man to raise her corn” (Freeman, 1972). Adolescents’ transition to adulthood happened by way of an assumption of these prescribed gender roles demonstrated by previous generations and ultimately fulfilled through marriage (Fishburne, 1962). Marriage rituals did not emphasize romantic love between two individuals, but rather, symbolized the alliance of families, and interactions between male and female adolescents previous to this union were prohibited (Fishburne, 1962). In traditional Maya transition to adulthood, we find circumscribed developmental pathways that replicate traditional practices and gender roles in order to maintain ongoing integrity of the family unit.

### **Social Change Among the Maya in Chiapas, Mexico**

In the 1980s, Maya communities in Chiapas began to become less self-contained and isolated, more open and outwardly connected (Cancian, 1994). The Mexican government at this time initiated development in the region that included building roads and investment to exploit the hydroelectric and petroleum resources, and men began to move from farming to wage work, trucking, and commerce (Cancian, 1994). The neoliberal political turn in Mexico in the 1980s and 1990s, in particular, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), also pushed indigenous men out of corn farming by opening the Mexican market to U.S. corn, which is produced more efficiently and sold more cheaply, although many also point out that a subsistence agriculture way of life was already disappearing (Ackerman, Wise, Gallagher, Ney, & Flores, 2003). Recent statistics paint a dramatic picture of the flow of indigenous migrants from rural to urban areas, largely for economic reasons: by the year 2000, approximately 200,000 of the 1.5 million indigenous inhabitants of Chiapas had relocated to one of the seven major cities in the state and tens of thousands more had migrated to various cities across México (Rus, 2009). These social changes have had effects on gender roles, facilitating indigenous women’s participation in wage labor and commerce for family survival as well as family decision-making when husbands travel for work in nearby cities (Kintz, 1998; Nash, 1993; Re Cruz, 1998; Rus, 1988). Moreover, the Zapatista movement in 1994 brought worldwide attention to the nature of indigenous oppression in Mexico and brought many international human rights organizations to Chiapas (Jung, 2003).

The nature of indigenous education has also showed dramatic changes during this time. Chiapas has been considered the most underdeveloped state in Mexico, with schools and health services only instituted during the presidency of Lazaro Cardenas in the 1930s (Nash, 1995). Education at this point

was largely based on an assimilation model, with Mexican teachers instructing in Spanish and using Mexican pedagogical cultural models (Modiano, 1973). Thus, schooling was not relevant to Maya culture, and indigenous people perceived the primary schools that were instituted in rural indigenous locales in Chiapas as valuable only to the extent that they could acquire counting and Spanish-speaking skills useful for trading with Ladinos (Modiano, 1973). Schooling beyond primary school was not perceived as necessary, especially because it involved long distance travel from home, essentially jeopardizing one's connection to his or her community and indigenous identity (Modiano, 1973).

School enrollment beyond primary school remained low, even with the institution of *telesecundarias* (middle schools) in the 1970s and *telebachilleratos* (high schools) in the 1990s in some rural areas of Chiapas. *Telesecundarias* and *telebachilleratos* are distance-learning schools that rely heavily on televised material for instruction. However, federal government incentive programs, such as *Oportunidades*, which provides cash grants to families, US\$10 to US\$40 a month for each child in school, appear to be having an astonishing effect on postprimary school attendance in rural areas across Mexico, increasing secondary school enrollment by 24% and high school enrollment by 84.7% from the 1995-1996 school year to the 2002-2003 school year (Parker, 2004). Moreover, a recent initiative by the Mexican Institute of Education to promote formal education among its indigenous populations has resulted in the establishment of the Intercultural University across Mexico and in San Cristóbal de las Casas in 2005. The goal is to boost indigenous university enrollment by providing accessible admission requirements as well as curricula relevant to indigenous peoples that honor indigenous cultures in light of past discrimination (Schmelkes, 2009). Currently, only 1% to 3% of university students in Mexico are indigenous, but as a result of these efforts, some are estimating that a growing number of indigenous youth are attending university outside their villages (Schmelkes, 2009).

## **Greenfield's Theory of Social Change and Human Development**

Based on 30 years of longitudinal research studying this social change in Chiapas, Greenfield's (2009) theory suggests that socialization adapted to a *Gemeinschaft* environment (rural) channels psychological development through cultural values emphasizing interdependence, whereas socialization adapted to a *Gesellschaft* environment (urban) channels development through cultural values emphasizing autonomy. Developmental pathways emphasizing

interdependence prioritize social obligations, responsibility to the family, and conformity to established social norms as determined by the social group; developmental pathways emphasizing autonomy prioritize the individual's right to follow his or her personal desires, to select social partners, and to act freely within those social relationships (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). The two value systems underlying these pathways are not seen as dichotomous but rather vary on a continuum and the more important autonomy or interdependence is, the more likely it is to frame other values. For example, in cultural pathways that prioritize adolescents' interdependence with the family, individuals' choices are understood within a broader cultural assumption that adolescents desire to be interdependent with a family unit. In cultural pathways that prioritize adolescents' autonomy, family interdependence is understood within a broader cultural assumption that adolescents should be connected to their family, not dependent or obligated, as they move toward independence (Greenfield et al., 2003).

Greenfield's theory coheres a variety of work that has been done linking shifts in socialization practices with economic development. Extensive longitudinal work by Kagitcibasi (2007) on psychological development and the rural-urban shift in Turkey from 1997 to 2003 found that maternal attitudes regarding the value of children shifted from a focus on the utility of children in helping the family economically and through household chores toward a focus on the emotional benefits of children. Moreover, Kagitcibasi demonstrated that it was parents who became wealthier and more urban during this period of time in Turkey who showed the greatest decreases in the importance placed on child obedience in child rearing and the greatest increases in the importance of independence and self-reliance as qualities in children. These findings suggest that alongside modernization in Turkey, parents shifted their socialization strategies away from cultivating values of interdependence in their children and toward increasing autonomy. Another cultural developmental psychologist, Keller (2007), has concluded from her studies on infant socialization and parental ethnotheories in places such as Germany, India, and Africa that socialization practices emphasizing interdependent values, such as close body contact and social stimulation, are more characteristic in small agricultural communities, whereas socialization practices emphasizing autonomy values, such as more bodily separation between mother and baby, are more characteristic in urban middle-class environments.

Education, another of the sociodemographic factors implicated in Greenfield's (2009) theory, has also been shown to encourage a focus on the self as an individual (Wang, 2006). Indeed, the goal of schooling is self-improvement through independent tasks and knowledge acquisition. Unlike the implicit learning

model of gradual participation in family duties, which assumes a shared context that does not have to be articulated, schooling involves socialization practices where there is explicit articulation of concepts assuming individual opinions (Greenfield, 2004; Greenfield et al., 2003; Maynard, 2004).

Formal education in the developing world may alter socialization in other ways, by reducing opportunities for family duties such as household chores and sibling caretaking, decreasing daily practices in which the child acts as a contributing member of a family unit (Munroe & Munroe, 1997). To be sure, education in more interdependent collectivistic cultures also represents new ways to contribute back to the family in the future (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999); however, education makes children an investment as future producers rather than current worker for the family (Caldwell, 1980). When formal education delays children's responsibility to a family unit and time is increasingly spent engaged in practices such as self-achievement, these experiences may augment a focus on the self.

Education, alongside economic opportunities to make use of education, may also have profound effects on conceptions of gender by altering the ways women are able to fulfill gender roles (Dreze & Murthi, 1999). Education provides women with alternative opportunities to achieve adult social status and wealth outside of childbearing (Handwerker, 1986). Formal schooling may also give young women opportunities to fulfill their gender role in public domains, providing socialization pathways that engender female power beyond domestic family spheres (Bradley, 1995; 1997).

Changes in socialization practices may also have an effect on partnering and marriage. Seymour (1999) found that in India, more highly educated women living in urban areas were more likely to value having a choice in selection of their husbands. Dion and Dion (1996) argue that the concept of romantic love, which assumes values for following personal desires and self-fulfillment, is more common in cultures that prioritize individual autonomy. At the same time, the emphasis on choice rather than automatic commitment leads to higher divorce rates in more economically developed, individualistic societies (Redfield, 1941).

In sum, increasing evidence points to a connection between *Gesellschaft* conditions and socialization of autonomy and gender egalitarianism, yet we know little about how youth in the midst of change from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* circumstances make sense of the corresponding value shifts. Their meaning-making can provide us with insights into how cultural values evolve through psychological developmental processes and socialization experiences. While most cross-cultural studies of adolescent socialization have focused on comparisons of socialization strategies in more collectivistic



cultures compared with the U.S. (e.g., Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991), cross-cultural work is just beginning to investigate changing dynamics in adolescent socialization in the developing world as these cultures move rapidly toward modernization (e.g., Chen, Cen, Li, & He, 2005). A growing body of work on the development of emerging adulthood across the globe may provide answers about how socialization pathways from adolescence to adulthood are shifting in response to the spread of *Gesellschaft* environments. Moreover, this work can illuminate how youth undergoing this shift are making sense of value changes from their experiences.

## **Emerging Adulthood and Cultural Values**

A cultural theory from its beginnings, Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood (1998) suggests that under conditions of postindustrialization in the United States, the median age of marriage and parenthood has risen sharply and that the period of life from the late teens to the mid-20s, which used to be a time for the acquisition of adult roles, is now characterized by a period of instability and multiple pathways toward adulthood, often through the experience of continued education. This creates a unique period of time of self-focus where youth have matured beyond the bounds of parental authority but are not yet facing the responsibilities of maintaining a family as an adult (Arnett, 2004). The key developmental process of emerging adulthood is independent exploration of who one is and what one wants to do in the face of a multitude of possibilities afforded in a post-industrial culture (Arnett, 2004).

Arnett has proposed that, although emerging adulthood takes on a variety of cultural variations (e.g., Douglass, 2007; Facio & Micocci, 2003; Nelson & Chen, 2007), the normative patterns of behaviors associated with this period of development could rest upon a set of cultural beliefs that cut across different cultures (Arnett, 2010). These beliefs are (a) independence and self-sufficiency must be established before adulthood, (b) marriage should be founded upon romantic love, (c) work is an expression of a person's identity, and (d) youth should indulge in leisure and self-development during the late teens and into the mid-20s. This set of beliefs all elaborate upon a basic cultural assumption prioritizing individual autonomy, which may contradict the values in familistic cultures of Latin America, Asia, and the developing world. As such, Arnett suggests that these cultural values could take on different forms in these cultures, motivating different shades of emerging adulthood just as they motivate different shades of adolescence across cultures (Arnett, 2010).

The question then arises, what is the nature of these cultural variations? Greenfield's theory would hypothesize that an emerging adulthood

developmental pathway would arise as an adaptation to the advent of formal education and complex adult roles in an urban economically developed *Gesellschaft* environment and that, through the socialization experience of this pathway, youth will acquire increasing values for individual autonomy. Indeed, evidence indicates (1) that emerging adulthood is more likely to happen in places that are relatively wealthy, urban, and provide higher levels of formal education (Galambos & Martinez, 2007) and (2) that the globalized movement toward more urban, economically complex environments engenders exploration and self-focused development during the transition to adulthood (Arnett & Galambos, 2003; Facio, Resett, Micocci, & Mistrorigo, 2007; Galambos & Martínez, 2007; Macek, Bejcek, & Vanickova, 2007; Nelson & Chen, 2007; Rosenberger, 2007).

Yet the recency of a more *Gemeinschaft* way of life and more interdependent cultural values may linger and influence psychological adaptations toward autonomy with the emergence of *Gesellschaft* factors. This may explain the diverse manifestations of emerging adulthood that are beginning to be documented. Sometimes the self-focus and individual exploration at odds with the group orientation characteristic of collectivistic cultures are combined with traditional values by continuing to preserve a family orientation alongside values for individual choice and independence (Facio et al., 2007; Nelson & Chen, 2007). Alternatively, some youth reject traditional values with the experience of a period of self-focused development; for example, research finds that Chinese youth and Japanese women are increasingly focusing on the self rather than the family (Nelson, Badger, & Wu, 2004; Rosenberger, 2007). The goal of this study is to illuminate the nature of cultural value change that is connected with adaptations to *Gesellschaft* factors and the extension of a preparation for adulthood and to explore how a sample of pioneers of emerging adulthood in the developing world are making sense of social, ecological, and value change.

## **Current Study**

This mixed-method study explores first-generation Maya university students' perspectives of cultural value shifts that are associated with increasing contact with *Gesellschaft* factors and with an extended period of development before adulthood. Semistructured interviews conducted with a sample of university students were designed to elicit perceptions of changing norms from the village to the city and to elicit perceptions of differences in values compared with values of past generations and of those who remained in the village and did not pursue higher education. The methodology is similar to approaches that use socially constructed narratives, autobiographical storytelling, to

understand how people construct their sense of self (Bruner, 2002; Holloway & Jefferson, 2000; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2000; McAdams, 1996). Cultural values are notoriously difficult to document because they are implicit assumptions taken for granted (Markus & Kitayama, 2003). Thus, participants were asked to focus particularly on differences between indigenous villages and the city and change from the past to the present, with the idea that focusing participants on contrasts would illuminate cultural values and assumptions related to the different ecological contexts.

Interviews were qualitatively analyzed using Greenfield's theory as a guiding framework to create themes that captured particular manifestations of perspectives of value change in the sample that relate to interdependence, autonomy, and gender roles. Next, these themes were used to systematically code the interviews and quantitatively answer the question of whether there is an overall perception of value change that could be classified as moving toward individual autonomy. Finally, the presentation of these themes and an in-depth case study qualitatively unpack the ways in which participants make meaning of the changes from their experiences adjusting to a *Gesellschaft* environment and how they are negotiating possible contradictions between traditional and newly acquired values.

*Hypothesis 1: Individual autonomy*—It is predicted that participants would perceive cultural value change as generally shifting toward more individual autonomy compared with previous generations and compared with their perceptions of community members who remained in their natal rural villages and did not pursue education into adolescence and beyond.

*Hypothesis 2: Gender egalitarianism*—It is expected that participants would perceive cultural value change in the direction of increasing beliefs in equal rights between men and women compared with customs for gender hierarchy common in their villages and in past generations.

## Method

### *Participants*

A sample of 14 university students, 9 women and 5 men, were recruited from an indigenous organization that gives scholarships to indigenous Maya attending university in the colonial city of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Four of the participants, two men and two women, were not recruited directly from the scholarship organization but were referred to us by other participants in the

study. All participants had to move from rural Maya villages to San Cristóbal de Las Casas for university; however, some moved to the city at earlier time points. Two moved to the city with their families and attended school in the city beginning in elementary school; four moved to the city for middle school; five moved to the city for high school, and three moved to the city to attend university. Except for those who experienced elementary school in the city, all participants moved to the city, either by themselves or with family members, specifically for school because their villages did not have a middle or high school. Participants' villages were all within a couple of hours' drive from San Cristóbal; five participants were from Tenejapa, two from Zinacantán, two from Oxchuc, one from San Juan de Chamula, one from Chanal, one from Chilon, one from Nicholas Ruiz, and one from Pedernal.

The mean age of participants was 24. The average number of years of schooling for fathers of participants was a little over 4 years (range = 0-8 years), and for mothers, it was a little under 2 years (range 0-8 years). Five participants were majoring in economics (3 female, 2 male), three in law (2 female, 1 male), two in history (1 female, 1 male), one in anthropology (female), one in communications (female), one in pedagogy (male), and one in biochemistry (female). Seven participants said that they were single, four said that they were in a dating relationship, and two were recently married. One female participant was a single mother of two. On average, participants came from a family of seven children. All participants except one, who had a generous scholarship and lived with her sister, were working while going to school and had no monetary support from their parents. Eight participants lived with siblings or relatives in the city, three participants continued to live with their parents (one in the city and two commuting to university from their village), two lived with their spouses, and one (male) rented a single apartment. Participants' first language was either Tzotzil or Tzeltal, both Maya languages; and all spoke Spanish fluently.

### *Procedure*

A 2-hour semistructured interview in Spanish was conducted with participants by the author. The interviewer explained that the goal of the study was to understand the experiences of some of the first indigenous Maya to attend university. The interview instrument consisted of questions relating to life in village compared with city, career and education goals, family and friend relationships, dating and marriage, and changing gender roles. The full interview instrument is included in the appendix. Interviews took place in coffee shops and in parks following the interview instrument questions, but also

allowing for the conversation to flow naturally. Interviews were digitally recorded and then later transcribed in Spanish and translated into English by a native Spanish speaker living in Chiapas, a professional writer who has a degree in Computer Science from Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas (UNACH) and has lived in an English-speaking country. Participants were given 200 pesos (about US\$20) for their participation in the study.

## Analyses

A mixed-methods approach was used, integrating qualitative and quantitative analysis.

*Qualitative analysis.* An interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, Jarman, & Osborn, 1999) approach was used in the first step of data analysis. The goal of IPA is to illuminate the meaning-making in which participants are engaged as they describe their personal experiences in their social worlds. Unlike grounded theory where the analysis is atheoretical, in IPA, a theoretical orientation provides a strategy for organizing and making connections in interpretations of the data. In other words, the point of the analysis was to identify themes in the interviews that were relevant to Greenfield's theory of social change and human development, which hypothesizes psychological adaptation in response to the transition to a more *Gesellschaft* environment.

To begin analysis, the author read through the university student interviews numerous times, focusing on content relevant to the study, individual autonomy and gender egalitarianism versus interdependence and gender hierarchy. The first step was annotating interesting and significant aspects of the interviews with preliminary interpretations and then, using Greenfield's theory, making theoretical connections between these notes compiling them into themes that were condensed to six: three themes relating to values associated with autonomy and interdependence and three themes relating to gender roles. Five themes in the following list incorporated a contrast between values perceived in the village and in previous generations (left side of list) with values participants perceived that they hold as a result of their experiences as university students in an urban setting (right side of list). The sixth theme represents a pattern in the data showing that participants perceived women's roles as increasingly incorporating behaviors and responsibilities traditionally associated with men's roles.

1. Behavior and relationships
  - a. Ascribed roles vs. chosen roles ( $\kappa = .81$ )
  - b. One-way of being vs. multiple norms for behavior ( $\kappa = .84$ )

- c. Family relationships vs. relations with unrelated others ( $\kappa = .87$ )
2. Gender and sexuality
  - a. Partnering as a family contract vs. partnering for love ( $\kappa = .94$ )
  - b. Gender hierarchy vs. gender egalitarianism ( $\kappa = .84$ )
  - c. Women's roles moving toward men's roles ( $\kappa = .80$ )

*Quantitative analysis.* The second step in data analysis was coding the interviews using the rubric of the six themes identified in the qualitative analysis. The author coded each participant's conversational turn in two ways: whether or not it corresponded to one of the six themes and the direction of change (if any) participants perceived relative to traditional values. This was done to assess to what degree the sample perceived movement toward values departing from traditional values. For example, this utterance in a conversational turn, "My mom thought only about her work in the village. But I think about what I want to do in my future, what I will do, what I want to achieve" was coded as "change from ascribed to chosen roles." The unit was the conversational turn, and a turn could be coded with multiple, overlapping themes. Next, a second coder, a university student in the United States, learned the coding scheme through practice coding of three interviews. He then separately coded 6 of the 14 interviews (40%) for purposes of determining interrater reliability. Overall, kappa scores for each theme are listed above. Note that the coding system was symmetrical, in that it allowed for changes in both directions and for no change to be expressed, thereby allowing for quantitative disconfirmation of the hypotheses. All kappas are above .80, considered almost perfect agreement (Viera & Garrett, 2005).

As multiple themes could be coded in each turn, each theme was considered to be independent of the others for statistical purposes. Therefore analyses were carried out to test for significant directionality of change separately for each theme. For each participant, the proportion of utterances classified as one of three alternatives (change toward autonomy/gender egalitarianism, no change, change toward interdependence/gender hierarchy) were counted in each of the first five themes. In the sixth theme, three alternatives were considered: women's roles incorporating behaviors associated with men's roles, no change, and men's roles incorporating behaviors associated with women's roles. Therefore, the chance probability for each of the three alternatives was .33. A multinomial test was then conducted to test whether there was a predominant direction of change over the whole sample for each theme.

## *Qualitative Analysis in Presentation of Data*

The last step of the analysis was to go in-depth into each theme and unpack particularly interesting instances of meaning making that reflected significant aspects of the theme. These qualitative interpretations are presented in the qualitative section of the Results section. Finally, one participant was chosen as a focus for a case study analysis to present an idiographic account of the sociocultural changes as they play out in a particular person's life and the ways in which she makes meaning out of her experiences of social change. This participant was chosen because she is the very first person from her community to go to university in the city, thus a true pioneer of social changes, and her interview was particularly rich. Her story and interpretations of her account are presented last.

## **Results**

### *Quantitative Analysis*

Quantitative analyses showed an overall trend toward perceptions of more individual autonomy and gender egalitarian values as a result of their education and movement to an urban center. Quantitative analyses also show that, overall, participants perceived women's roles increasing incorporate behaviors traditionally associated with men's roles, primarily in terms of earning money outside the home, as the qualitative data will show. The following table shows the frequency of each theme, and the frequency of each direction of change, in terms of percentage of frequency out of total utterances classified under that particular theme. Total number of average utterances in an interview was 415 utterances (Table 1).

Every theme showed significant directionality of change from traditional to new values at the .00001 level of statistical significance. Five of the six themes showed unidirectional change; the theme that showed the least change was the movement toward the importance of friend relationships rather than family relationships.

### *Qualitative Analysis: Values for Behavior and Relationships*

*Theme 1: Ascribed versus chosen roles.* On the topic of adult role acquisition, participants perceived social change as engendering increased options in adult work and family roles. As the following sample of quotes in this

**Table 1.** Frequency of Overall Themes and Percentage of Direction of Change Coded Within Each Theme Among Total Utterances

Theme	Average frequency of theme in an interview Frequency (Range)	% of total responses coded as "change to new values"		% of total responses coded as "no change"	% of total responses coded as "change to traditional values"	
		Value	%		Value	%
Ascribed vs. Chosen Roles	45 (28-58)	To Chosen	99	1	To Ascribed	0
One-way vs. Multiple Norms	30 (12-39)	To Multiple	98	2	To One-Way	0
Family vs. Unrelated Others	38 (27-46)	To Unrelated	58	42	To Family	0
Partnering as Family Contract vs. Romance	47 (24-66)	To Romance	99	<1	To Contract	0
Gender Hierarchy vs. Equality	31 (15-47)	To Egalitarian	73	27	To Hierarchy	0
Gender Roles	23 (10-35)	To Male	60	37	To Female	3

category demonstrates, they largely perceived these changes as positive, doing so by endorsing a variety of values that emphasize the individual. The first quote exemplifies endorsement of increased options by prioritizing individual desires over adherence to traditional norms:

[I: "Do you think that your thoughts are different from your parents' thoughts?"] . . . Now already there are changes in that nobody is obligated to do something that they don't want to do, before yes, they were like enslaved to a thing and now no. ("Maria," 23 years old; immigrated to city at 15 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 7 children; father has 6 years of schooling and is bricklayer; mother has no schooling and sells her weavings)

Likening traditional roles to "enslavement" was among the more extreme examples in the data; however, a common thread throughout the interviews was a perception that schooling and urban living offer an escape from tradition and group consensus as a burden on individual choice:



[I: “How do people behave differently in the city compared to the community?”] . . . Each person can do what s/he wants, you don’t have to worry about what others think, but if you like what you are doing, well then do it. (“Mariano,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 16 years of age for high school; 6th oldest of 9 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is elementary school teacher; mother has 8 years of schooling and is elementary school teacher)

Endorsing values for individual choice and pursuit of individual desires in adult role acquisition was not to the exclusion of values for family connection and obligation; rather, the two were often made compatible by articulating helping one’s family in terms of an individual desire to do so:

[I: “And when you came here from your community, how did it feel?”] . . . I wanted to leave in order to move forward, I wanted to continue studying. I did it more because I was thinking of my parents, not so much for me. (“Juana,” 25 years old and married; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 5th oldest of 12 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has 2 years of schooling and is farmer)

Notwithstanding these instances of harmonizing increased role options and individual choice with family obligation, the following examples of participants’ perceptions of change demonstrate how increased variety in adult roles can act as a motor drawing out values for behavior independent from the family. This was especially notable among female participants who are experiencing more dramatic shifts in roles away from the domestic sphere and away from traditional norms that put decision making in the hands of men.

[I: “What would it be like if you stayed in the village?”] I would be in the cornfields, I wouldn’t have a profession, but now it is proposed to women, look, this is an option, this is another option, you have the liberty to quit. You have to find an independent way so you can do things because if not, even if you want to study, it is not possible because you have to ask the husband. (“Theresa,” 25 years old single mother of 2 children; immigrated to city as a child before elementary school with her family; oldest of 6 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is a laborer; mother has 6 years of schooling, is a domestic worker and sells her weavings)

As this quote begins to suggest, and the following quote from another participant continues to show, women consistently pointed out that education not only enables new role options but also expands a consciousness of agency in family roles, particularly in husband-wife relations.

[I: "What is the difference between women in the village and women in the city?"] . . . My mother, my grandmother, both told me that you should . . . not be a badly raised woman with your husband, imagine that my husband would be like a god, that I have to be below him . . . but maybe it is because of my studies . . . because one is intelligent, I am not of this idea anymore that I am going to be subjugated to my husband. ("Juana," 25 years old and married; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 5th oldest of 12 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has 2 years of schooling and is a farmer)

The linchpin in the valuation of choice over ascribed roles is the idea of exploration. Participants, especially women, perceived new circumstances as creating opportunities to experience a wider world outside the domestic sphere, where a variety of choices are available. This was seen as superior to the circumstances experienced by previous generations and those staying in the villages who they perceived to have more circumscribed daily living patterns and an ongoing obligation to tradition and family.

[I: "The idea of a woman, is it different for you than it is for your parents?"] Yes, because the thought before, women are only devoted to their homes, to take care of their children, to feed their husbands, and so on, that's it; but not anymore. Some people still think like that, and there are many women who are still in that situation. But, for instance, the young people nowadays no longer think like that; they have changed because of . . . who knows? Because of the school or the TV, I don't know, but yes, there have been changes . . . I see it as good because there are many women who suffer, they don't even go out, they don't even know what's going on around them. ("Guadalupe," 24 years old; began commuting to the city for high school at 18 years of age from her village; 2nd oldest of 5 children; father has 2 years of schooling, is a farmer and floriculturalist; mother has 2 years of schooling and is a housewife)

Exploration was idealized in a variety of ways that emphasized the individual, including associations between a personal knowledge of the world

with personal pleasure and the power to take one's well-being into one's own hands. In the following quote, exploration is positively regarded by idealizing autonomous navigations of one's world.

[I: "Tell me more about your life in the city compared to the village"]  
... I love to explore things by myself, to know many things, to make acquaintances with many people. And above all, I like to be free, I think that I love freedom. ("Elena," 27 years old and married; immigrated to city at 17 years of age for high school; single child of a single mother; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Underlying these endorsements of exploration is an assumption of the importance of self-development that derives from a diversity of personal experiences. As these last quotes and the following one from another participant show, ascribed female roles based on role fulfillment to the family were seen as less attractive than exploration of alternative options because these alternative options lead to self-improvement and self-fulfillment. For example,

[I: "Why do you want to work?"] I'm not saying that it's boring to be a housewife, but I want more than that, I not only want to be at home, I want to work, to meet people, to know cities, to improve myself ("Julieta," 23 years old; immigrated to city with her family when she was a child before elementary school; 4th oldest of 8 children; father has no schooling and is coffee plantation laborer; mother has no schooling and sells products in the market)

In sum, participants generally perceived that, with education and migration to urban locales, they were moving into adulthood by pursuing a variety of alternative options outside of traditional Maya roles. They made meaning out of these changes by endorsing individualistic values, in particular, articulating the importance of personal desires, independence, agency in husband-wife relations, individually negotiated explorations of a world beyond the family, and self-development. In instances where values for family obligation were highlighted, participants utilized individualistic values such as personal choice to help their families rather than automatic and unquestioned adherence to family goals.

*Theme 2: One-way of being versus multiple norms for behavior.* This category captures participants' perspectives of increasing complexity in notions of what is good and bad with migration to the city and increased education.

[I: "What was it like when your parents were young?"] . . . There wasn't the perspective of going to the outside, nothing more than staying inside, thus you reproduce that which is inside of the society . . . if you do something bad you are bad, if you do something good then you are good, so then there is a point of view of things in the community more extreme than in the city. ("Mariano," 24 years old; immigrated to city at 16 years of age for high school; 6th oldest of 9 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is elementary school teacher; mother has 8 years of schooling and is elementary school teacher)

Participants contrasted rigid thinking and restricted beliefs in the village with perceptions that they have more open and flexible viewpoints after living in the city and pursuing higher education:

[I: "What's different in the city?"] "School helps us . . . In my village, people are a little narrow-minded . . . they've only got their customs and no more; they even say that knowing more is wrong. In the city, people are open-minded . . . I changed since I left home, I have different thoughts from those I had there, free thoughts, I talk more." ("Jose," 22 years old; immigrated to city at 20 years of age for college; 8th oldest of 9 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

Along with this perceived complexity that comes with an expanded view of morality beyond tradition comes the necessity to articulate one's opinions in the sea of diversity and, in doing so, assert oneself as an autonomous rationalizing agent. The following quote illustrates this dynamic deriving from negotiations of contrasting viewpoints in interactions with unrelated others:

[I: "How is your life different in the city?"] . . . [talking about a friend] his point of view is not wrong but mine is not wrong either . . . He told me you have your own mind, but he told me you have to change . . . but if I want to change, I'll do it, and if not, I'll do what I want . . . he learned from me too. ("Elena," 27 years old and married; immigrated to city at 17 years of age for high school; single child of a single mother; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Participants' perceptions that they had broader, more multifaceted perspectives than their families were handled in a variety of ways, sometimes in terms of conflict, for example,

[I: “And has it happened that you tell your father you disagree with him?”] My dad doesn’t listen to me, he gets mad, you don’t know our custom, we were taught like this, my parents, my grandparents, they were cured like this and we will do the same . . . I tell him, no that’s wrong but I don’t even think about talking about that in the village, gee! They would throw you out of that place if you told them that idea! (“Julieta,” 23 years old; immigrated to city with her family when she was a child before elementary school; 4th oldest of 8 children; father has no schooling and is coffee plantation laborer; mother has no schooling and sells products in the market)

Other times participants negotiated their new perspectives with those of the village by exposing their families to new ideas and providing new kinds of models in the village that are understood as positive.

[I: “What does your mom think about women’s rights?”] We have talked to our mom, that women have rights . . . my mom understood it because we discussed it with her very well. (“Rosa,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 8 children; father has 6 years of schooling and plants coffee; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

This previous quote also suggests that the family remains important to participants. Sometimes, their remarks showed that they simultaneously valued obedience to the traditional customs of their parents and what they perceived was their own expanded perspectives and were working hard to resolve these contradictory frames of reference:

[I: “Do you go out with friends in your village?”] . . . parents are always right. I have learned a lot from the advice they have given me and never have I rejected the advice of my parents also, as long as it isn’t contrary to what I believe. (“Maria,” 23 years old; immigrated to city at 15 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 7 children; father has 6 years of schooling and is bricklayer; mother has no schooling and sells her weavings)

In sum, interviews showed that participants are experiencing expanded norms for behavior in the city through diversity, schooling, and relationships with friends, negotiating complexity in their personal values that sometimes challenge traditional customs from their family and communities. The process

of navigating this diversity in norms and perspectives seems to highlight participants' experiences of themselves as individuals who must make decisions and assert their opinions about their own notions of right and wrong.

*Theme 3: Relationships with family versus unrelated others.* Quantitative analyses showed that this theme had the most heterogeneity, with participants valuing both family and new kinds of relationships with unrelated others. Overwhelmingly though, participants said that the idea of friendship was more common for their generation and more common in the city. The following examples show this:

[I: "Does your mom spend time with friends?"] Friends, I don't think so, my mother doesn't know about friends, she has no custom of having friends, it doesn't exist. ("Julieta," 23 years old; immigrated to city with her family when she was a child before elementary school; 4th oldest of 8 children; Father father has no schooling and is coffee plantation laborer; Mother mother has no schooling and sells products in the market)

[I: "How have you changed?"] When I was living in my village I was pretty shy, I wasn't able to communicate with other people . . . but when I came here, I met many people, friends, classmates, professors, that's the reason why my life has changed a lot. ("Eduardo," 22 years old; immigrated to city at 18 years of age for college; 5th oldest of 8 children; father has 4 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Participants contrasted the nature of relations with parents and friends:

[I: "Are your thoughts more like your friends or parents?"] I think more like who I am with my friends because there is more conversation, we live more together than at my house. ("Maria," 23 years old; immigrated to city at 15 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 7 children; father has 6 years of schooling and is bricklayer; mother has no schooling and sells her weavings)

[I: "Do you think you are more like your parents or like your friends?"] Because our parents didn't study, they don't understand us, if we talk about our studies, they sometimes don't believe us. But with my friends, we understand each other better, we can communicate better.

We have good communication with our parents, it's just that the difference is our parents always talk about advice, they tell us . . . I want you to obey me. ("Eduardo," 22 years old; immigrated to city at 18 years of age for college; 5th oldest of 8 children; father has 4 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

As the last quote indicates, the symmetrical nature of peer influence is contrasted with the hierarchical nature of parental socialization. Participants' remarks indicated that they value new perspectives gained through peer relations while maintaining a respect for traditional values from their families. This connection to their families is a way of maintaining positive valuations of their ethnic identity.

[I: "Do your friends think one way and your parents think another way, do you feel in the middle?"] Yes, What I've always thought is that I think the way my parents live is good, because it's a custom we've had for a long time, and we must not lose it; and it's also good to know other things so that we are not at a loss for knowledge, for knowing what's going on around us. ("Guadalupe," 24 years old; began commuting to the city for high school at 18 years of age from her village; 2nd oldest of 5 children; father has 2 years of schooling, is a farmer and floriculturalist; mother has 2 years of schooling and is a housewife)

[I: "Are your thoughts more like your friends or parents?"] I don't feel like I behave exactly the same as my classmates in the city, and neither do I feel exactly . . . for instance that I want to keep studying, it's not a thinking from my community, but it is from one of my sisters. But that I want to travel and everything, I think it has to do with my going there [to the city]. My behavior is a fusion of things I've taken from each place I've been. ("Francesca," 21 years old; immigrated to the city for high school at 15 years of age; 7th oldest of 9 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher; mother has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher)

Overall, becoming a university student in the city seems to increasingly involve more symmetrical peer relationships than were experienced in the past and by those remaining in the village. These symmetrical peer relations may facilitate values for agency through a process of autonomous relational negotiations in contrast to customs for hierarchical relations based on age and family. However, participants' values for family connection and respect persist,

combined and contrasted through the individual's personal negotiations of competing value systems, and are sustained as an important cornerstone in participants' sense of self.

### *Qualitative Analysis: Values for Gender and Sexuality*

*Theme 1: Partnering as family contract versus romantic love.* Participants saw partnering as moving away from customs involving unions in the context of family obligations and increasingly in terms of individual choice, especially increased choice for women. Participants perceived these changes as positive and congruent with their values for individual agency. For example,

[I: "How is marriage in your village?"] Our custom is that they have to speak with the parents, it's funny because he comes the first time and is yelled at, they are sometimes thrown boiling water . . . women are not asked they are forced, sold . . . the custom was awful. ("Julieta," 23 years old; immigrated to city with her family when she was a child before elementary school; 4th oldest of 8 children; father has no schooling and is coffee plantation laborer; mother has no schooling and sells products in the market)

Values for individual choice in partnering may come from dramatic changes in customs for gender relations related to increased schooling and movement to urban environments:

[I: "Is there a difference between how boys and girls behave in the city compared to your village?"] . . . In the village, when they see you close to a girl people may think otherwise, this guy is with this girl they must be a couple . . . and guys too, they have their own thoughts about it, girls are only useful for being girlfriends. So when you speak to a girl they are sometimes shy to answer too, they have certain ideas, like "oh they're guys they must not talk to me" . . . So there's no fluid communication, the only way to communicate is from girls to girls and from guys to guys . . . when I arrived in the city, I was shy for talking to girls too, I wasn't able to talk as fast as I wanted to; but I thought, this is not good, I have to communicate, I must not think otherwise, that is, in a respectful way, normally. ("Roberto," 33 years old; immigrated to city for high school when he was 23 years old; youngest of 4 children; father (deceased) had 2 years of schooling and was a farmer; mother has no schooling, was housewife, now lives with her daughter)



With open cross-sex communication comes the development of relationships that incorporate more elaborate interpersonal exchanges. Participants saw traditional customs for marriage in terms of its basic functions for survival, but their current norms as about emotions, exploration, and the compatibility between two individuals. For example:

[I: “How is marriage in your village?”] Women in villages have the custom of having a husband because they want to be fed . . . but in a city, they look for sentimental matters. (“Elena,” 27 years old and married; immigrated to city at 17 years of age for high school; single child of a single mother; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

[I: “Is marriage different now from when your parents were married?”] Now they get married older, they think about it twice, they have more ideas, they get to know the man, she knows his behavior, and if she still likes him, let’s get married. (“Jose,” 22 years old; immigrated to city at 20 years of age for college; 8th oldest of 9 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

Formal schooling for women is significant in moving partnering away from an economic relationship where women depend on men for resources and instead giving women more agency.

[I: “How is marriage now?”] In my community women get married very young, the girls I know are with a partner and have a child before they are twenty. So I don’t think they’re looking for something in a husband, I think a guy approaches them and tells them you are pretty, I love you, they think quickly . . . I don’t want to be like that, I don’t want that someone gives me money, I also want to say this or the other, and give my opinions. [I: “Why do you continue your studies?”] I think it’s the only way I will get something good. Besides I like to study, I like what I am studying, it seems to me very interesting. (“Francesca,” 21 years old; immigrated to the city for high school at 15 years of age; 7th oldest of 9 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher; mother has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher)

[I: "Your parents support you going to school?"] . . . When a boy was pursuing me my dad said. . . Don't disturb my daughter, my daughter is studying and she asked me to tell you, so leave her alone, if you want a wife, there are more girls her age, so I'm sorry, I don't have the right to decide if she will get married with you. ("Susana," 25 years old; began commuting to the city from her village for computer classes and professional work while finishing high school in her village; 4th oldest of 8 children; father has 2 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is housewife)

The preceding quote dramatically shows the changes in parental involvement in partnering, but data also showed that parental involvement does not disappear but is negotiated and combined with new values for agency. For example,

[I: "How did you meet your girlfriend?"] My dad's family and her parents know each other for many years. In high school we knew each other, can I walk you? Alright, I walked her. ("Jose," 22 years old; immigrated to city at 20 years of age for college; 8th oldest of 9 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

[I: "Have you had a boyfriend?"] Yes . . . but then I didn't like him . . . my mother said he did not suit me. Here they say that if parents tell you that a man does not suit you, you must obey them because he will fail you in the future, he won't be as you expect. ("Julieta," 23 years old; immigrated to city with her family when she was a child before elementary school; 4th oldest of 8 children; father has no schooling and is coffee plantation laborer; mother has no schooling and sells products in the market)

With parental involvement lessening and institutionalized marriage rituals disappearing, responsibilities for sexuality shifts to young women, who look to friends, rather than family, for knowledge. For example,

[I: "Have you had a boyfriend?"] I had two boyfriends before, but I didn't like the way they would go like, if you really love me, prove it . . . there are girls who have relations with their boyfriends and they get pregnant and the man runs away . . . I wouldn't like it to happen to me. ("Rosa," 24 years old; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle

school; 2nd oldest of 8 children; father has 6 years of schooling and plants coffee; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

[I: “Did your mom talk to you about sex?”] No, I learned about it at school. My classmates in high school didn’t talk about it, or they say it to one person. But in college, it’s a topic, we can talk about it and nobody looks at us in anger for saying it. (“Francesca,” 21 years old; immigrated to the city for high school at 15 years of age; 7th oldest of 9 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher; mother has 8 years of schooling and is an elementary school teacher)

To summarize, participants seem to be experiencing new norms for partnering that pull them away from conceptualizing male-female partnering as about pragmatic continuation of family interdependence and toward notions of partnering as about a compatibility between two autonomous agents who have personal preferences and choices. Moreover, with this shift toward partnering as about an emotional connection between two individuals comes increased responsibility and risk that must be negotiated by individuals outside a family support system.

*Theme 2: Gender hierarchy versus equality.* Both men and women perceived that they held more gender egalitarian beliefs than previous generations and those staying in the village. For example,

[I: “Does your mother believe that men and women are equal?”] Those 40 years old and older, their thoughts are different . . . my mother is always going to be subject to the man, I can’t do anything without the consent of my husband, they think the man is above the woman. (“Maria,” 23 years old; immigrated to city at 15 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 7 children; father has 6 years of schooling and is bricklayer; mother has no schooling and sells her weavings)

[I: “How is your behavior different in the city and in the village?”] . . . when my grandma sometimes comes, I walk beside her. Because I’m a man, my grandma says no, you lead the way, and I tell her, no, grandma, come on, we are alike, I tell her. (“Luis,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 12 years of age for middle school; youngest of 5 children; father (abandoned family) has 2 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother (deceased) had no schooling and was a farmer)

Gender equality and women's empowerment was most often conceptualized in terms of women having connection to larger spheres of influence outside the family and voicing and manifesting their own ideas, opinions, and desires.

[I: "Who are the leaders in the village?"] There have been more male leaders than female leaders because he can go out alone wherever he wants, but the woman can't. But there are some women now who are already leaders in their own village, who can go out. They go, for instance to gatherings, they organize themselves . . . but for women it's a little difficult to organize themselves, because what if her husband needs to have lunch and she is not allowed to go because of that. It's complicated . . . in politics men have to always be there, they take command and they speak up, but no woman has been seen speaking up in front of a man . . . because of the customs that a woman must not speak up. ("Guadalupe," 24 years old; began commuting to the city for high school at 18 years of age from her village; 2nd oldest of 5 children; father has 2 years of schooling, is a farmer and floriculturalist; mother has 2 years of schooling and is a housewife)

[I: "How are women different in the village?"] Women were shyer before, but not anymore because they have learned a lot . . . they can defend themselves . . . They were pretty quiet before, their husbands would yell at them, they wouldn't say a word. ("Eduardo," 22 years old; immigrated to city at 18 years of age for college; 5th oldest of 8 children; father has 4 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Present, but less common, were remarks that gender inequality persists in the city, as in this example:

[I: "Do men behave differently in the city?"] . . . They know they must not discriminate to women . . . but some, even if they are educated, they don't change, I think there are limitations. ("Elena," 27 years old and married; immigrated to city at 17 years of age for high school; single child of a single mother; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Is there evidence of male resistance to women's empowerment? Two of the five men in the sample seemed to maintain traditional frameworks for

gender that preserve their position of power in gender relations even as they endorse gender equality, for example:

[I: “Do you think men and women are equal?”] Men and women are equal, we are all human beings, we have the same freedom now. A man can get married, a woman can get married too; a man can go out, and women can go out too. [I: “Is there more respect for women nowadays?”] There has always been respect for women but the difference now is that they have more freedom. There are women who provoke the husband, she gives the man reasons for being hit; they don’t want to serve their husbands their food or wash their husband’s clothes, they don’t obey, that’s why she is sometimes disrespected. But as long as women respect their husbands, men will respect their wives. (“Eduardo,” 22 years old; immigrated to city at 18 years of age for college; 5th oldest of 8 children; father has 4 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a farmer)

Schooling disrupts these traditional hierarchical frameworks for gender relations, particularly female obedience, as the following example shows:

[I: “Do women obey more in the villages?”] I’ve realized that women are more obedient in the villages because they were raised like this since they were little girls. My daughter, you have to learn to cook, to take care of the children, to clean the house . . . but as they study in schools they develop the ideology that they are also important, they honor themselves. (“Luis,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 12 years of age for middle school; youngest of 5 children; father (abandoned family) has 2 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother (deceased) had no schooling and was a farmer)

[I: “How are things different from when your mother was growing up?”] School is giving a lot to women, knowledge, you can say I can maintain myself, I don’t depend on anyone, and I can say whatever I want, what it is that I think, and nobody can tell me anything, for example my husband . . . I am a free woman. (“Juana,” 25 years old and married; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 5th oldest of 12 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has 2 years of schooling and is farmer)

Overall, participants perceived gender equality in terms of the growth of self-determination, self-efficacy, and independence in women, often seen as

a consequence of formal schooling. The quotes also suggest that values for individual choice and agency lay the groundwork for gender egalitarian values.

*Theme 3: Women's roles moving toward men's roles.* A widespread pattern in the matter of gender roles is that participants perceived educated women who move to the city take on roles outside the home. In this way, they have access to resource acquisition, decision making, and self-representation, ideas traditionally associated with the male role. As described in the previous theme, this produces increased gender equality in family dynamics:

[I: "Do you want to work when you are married?"] . . . Now the decisions are between the two, because the man earns, and the woman earns also, she has the same work as a man, so then they decide together for what they are going to assign the money or what to pay for. Before, no, the man had all the money in his hands. ("Theresa," 25 years old single mother of 2 children; immigrated to city as a child before elementary school with her family; oldest of 6 children; father has 8 years of schooling and is a laborer; mother has 6 years of schooling and is a domestic worker and sells her weavings)

Female participants mostly perceived this role movement toward male roles as empowering and enabling independence, freeing them from needing a husband for survival. This is the case with traditional gender roles that emphasize the complementary nature of male and female duties that harmonize through the family cooperation. For example,

[I: "Are women different now?"] Before they got married to be supported by the husband, she doesn't want to work, he gives me the money. But now it has changed very much, many women already work, they earn their own money. ["Rosa," 24 years old; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 8 children; father has 6 years of schooling and plants coffee; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

Female empowerment through independent resource acquisition may disrupt traditional notions of women's respect for men. Remarks from the two men in the sample who endorsed traditional gender values more than the others, revealed that they might feel threatened about their own position as men when women take on their roles. For example,

[I: “Do women behave differently in the city?”] I think that women behave more like men [in the city], I think that’s part of being a feminist, it’s too arrogant, for instance, a man does a certain job and she wants to do the same. (“Jose,” 22 years old; immigrated to city at 20 years of age for college; 8th oldest of 9 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

Sometimes, among more of the traditional male and female participants, there were perceptions that gender roles are remaining the same, especially in terms of women being more appropriate child caretakers. For example,

[I: “Do you want your wife to work when you get married?”] I think that my wife should stay at home because as the man of the house, I work, I give money, so that she isn’t careless of the children, so that she takes care of them as they should be. (“Jose,” 22 years old; immigrated to city at 20 years of age for college; 8th oldest of 9 children; father has 3 years of schooling and is a farmer; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

[I: “Are men and women different?”] Men don’t think about whether his children have a place or not. But women think that they want to own a house, to be there with her children. (“Rosa,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 8 children; father has 6 years of schooling and plants coffee; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

Present, but to a much lesser extent, were values for men incorporating female duties, although it is unclear how these values translate into actual behavior:

[I: “And when you have children in the future do you want your wife to work?”] It depends on her decision and our circumstances, because she sometimes thinks that she wants to participate [in the workforce], so we might decide, I’ll take care of the child, then it’s her turn to take care of him. (“Roberto,” 33 years old; immigrated to city for high school when he was 23 years old; youngest of 4 children; father (deceased) had 2 years of schooling and was a farmer; mother has no schooling, was housewife, now lives with her daughter)

[I: “Do your brothers wash their clothes?”] They say that in the village men must not wash clothes because only women must wash, they must do everything. But I think it’s wrong like that, we all have the right to do it. Men can also wash their clothes, they’ve also got hands. (“Rosa,” 24 years old; immigrated to city at 13 years of age for middle school; 2nd oldest of 8 children; father has 6 years of schooling and plants coffee; mother has no schooling and is a housewife)

In general, there was an overall perception that women were moving into more public, resource acquisition roles, gaining power and status through controlling resources, roles formerly reserved for men. Women saw this as a new way to continue to fulfill their duties to the family by contributing increased resources in the form of money. They also perceived it as engendering independence and power in relationships with men; in particular, women making their own money appeared to disrupt traditional ideals about complementary roles that bring men and women together for the survival of the family unit. Men sometimes expressed feelings of encroachment into the ways that they would fulfill the male role in the family; in other instances, they saw their own roles as expanding into the traditionally female home-based activities.

### *Case Study Analysis: Susana*

“Susana” is 25 years old and in her second year studying intercultural communications at the Intercultural University in San Cristóbal de las Casas. She lives with her parents, a housewife and a farmer, and five of her seven siblings in her village, commuting to her university in shared taxis with daily routes to the city. Susana is the very first person in her village to attend university, enduring the dramatic school attrition rate in her village: 37 students comprised her primary school class, but by middle school, only six remained, and she graduated from high school among a class of four. As a pioneer of advanced education, Susana represents in her village a novel kind of postponement of adulthood:

[I: “Was it difficult to continue studying?”] . . . My classmates tell me, “study hard, you can do it, we can’t”. But [I ask them] why can’t you? “I can’t because I need money, I have to work, I have to support my parents, because I’m already grown-up,” they told me that, “I’m already grown-up, it’s now time for me to work, and then I can’t work and study, but since you have this freedom with your parents you can.”



Susana and many other participants in this study described high school and university attendance as temporarily exempting them from the responsibilities of full-time dedication to adult work roles and marriage. What clearly emerges from Susana's pursuit of advanced education is a pattern of daily living characterized by, as Arnett (2010) has also described, minimal social and institutional control and experiences featuring independence.

[I: "Why don't you want to get married now?"] Because I want to study, I want other experiences, I don't know exactly. I'm free to go out at any time, to wake up at any time, late, early, I don't have a schedule, that is, I get phone calls, let's go, and well, there's nobody to ask permission to go out, just my parents, [I say] "I'm going out". [They ask] "What are you going to do?" [I say] "I'm going out, I'll be back later" and so, I see it with my [married] sisters, my aunts . . . you have to prepare the food, if you don't have a gas heater, you have to heat the water, and washing and ironing, oh, when I want to iron, I iron, and when I don't I just put on my clothes and go out, that is, I have this freedom to do what I want.

To understand the dawning of an emerging adulthood period of life in this community through the life of Susana, it is useful to establish the material circumstances that form the crucible for her idiosyncratic pursuit of education and abandonment of the ascribed pathway to adulthood in her village. In this way, we can understand how other indigenous youth in Chiapas may be drawn into experiencing this new period of psychological development. We can begin when the Mexican government instituted distance-learning *telesecundarias* (middle schools) in the 1970s and *telebachilleratos* (high schools) in the 1990s in rural areas with televisions to assist in transmitting course material. From this point on, indigenous people no longer had to leave their communities, and thus relinquish ties to their ethnic identity, in order to pursue education. However, even with this disincentive removed, the aforementioned attrition rates in Susana's village attest to the ongoing dismissal of the value of formal schooling common among many indigenous communities in Mexico. What we see in Susana's story is another aspect of social change occurring in Chiapas that may be making it more likely that parents and children will value the importance of schooling: the expansion of governmental and human rights programs in rural areas that are making school relevant to traditional frameworks by providing youth with opportunities to apply what they are learning in school to help develop their communities, while also

spreading a cash-based economy that transforms the pursuit of education into something practical and adaptive.

Susana began to participate with her sister in “The Chiapas Indigenous Photography Project” while attending the *telebachillerato* in her village. Funded by the Ford Foundation, the human rights program supplied cameras and technical support to over 200 indigenous people in rural villages across the state, exhibiting and publishing a series of books on interpretations of life through an indigenous lens. By joining the group, Susana first experienced a world of professional activities, and the opportunity to earn money, outside of her community. With support from the project, she studied computing in the city on Sundays and, then, with her newfound skills and social connections, gained professional work transcribing interviews and managing data for an anthropologist and another human rights organization. When she graduated from high school, she failed to gain admission to a university in San Cristobal, and then at some point, the professional work she had been doing subsided. She says she began to feel “desperate” about what to do:

[I: “Where did you go to high school?”] . . . [After high school] I was left like this, without a job. What am I going to do? Where? How? Well, I don’t know . . . I don’t have anything to do neither at home nor in the city, nothing . . . but no no I said I can’t be here at home . . . my mind is open and I must not close it again. [I: “Why? Would it be boring to stay in the village?”] Yes boring, and I don’t want to lose my friends that I had in other places, I already learned many things out of my village.

Susana’s comments suggest that in deviating from traditional norms, she acquired values for independence, multiple perspectives, and selection of relationships outside the family that made it difficult for her to return to a lifestyle limited to ascribed duties and family obligation. Interestingly, it may also have been difficult for her to retreat from the alternative category of womanhood that she seems to have established in her indigenous community through her professional activities:

[I: “Then what did you do?”] . . . I thought that, if I no longer study, if I no longer work, if I quit everything, how will I use what I learned there? And I began to coordinate things, what am I going to do? I can’t be like this. People of the village, before, would see that I’m already out, that I’m studying, that I’m working, and then come back as a housewife? Because people there never go out, neither their daughters nor their sons.

Indeed, one thing that makes some of the first indigenous emerging adults in Chiapas unique from emerging adults in other parts of the world may be the sense of duty some of them feel to be role models, teach their families what they are learning, and give back to their indigenous communities. These youth represent to their villages potentially positive practical outcomes that can arise in deviating from traditional pathways toward adulthood. As they do so, youth maintain a positive sense of self and connection to their community and their heritage. This theme is illustrated in the following quote as Susana talks about her current work with National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Villages (CDI) helping women in her community while she goes to university.

[I: “Why do you like to work in this job with women?”] I like it when organizations give them support, and then the women look at me like that, I feel they look at me as a hard-working woman, not like the others, and I have to demonstrate who I am, I am studying not only for me, but I have to share what I see, what I feel, what I learn, what I’ve got, and then I have to make an effort so that they also know that it’s worthwhile to study, and that their sons and daughters learn. Because I’m truly a woman and I have faced many obstacles in my life, but I won’t give up, I have to rise and demonstrate who I am. So I have this idea, and I can’t give them anything else, but my confidence to them, that’s the only thing.

When Susana says, “I feel they look at me as a hard-working woman, not like the others”, she is referring to a belief among people in her village that young girls go to school only to talk to boys and then end up pregnant out of wedlock. The belief highlights how coed schooling during adolescence violates traditional injunctions against social interactions between unrelated adolescent boys and girls common in many indigenous villages. Many parents do not allow their daughters to go to school because of this reason. This constrains the spread of a period of life that features independent negotiations of diverse cross-sex relations after puberty but before the social institution of marriage can rein in expressions of sexuality. Susana invokes this notion of “hard work” throughout her interview to render her potentially threatening nontraditional behavior as acceptable within indigenous cultural frameworks. This perhaps contrasts with values for leisure documented among emerging adults in the West. For example,

[I: "How did you come to study at the Intercultural University?"] . . . I began to go to school [at the Intercultural University], and then alright, I'm not here to play with school, I have to study. I'm in fifth semester so far, and we have worked many of us, making presentations in gatherings and lectures.

The next example shows how she also calls upon the traditional cultural value of family obligation to lend legitimacy to her alternative pathway of extended preparation before adulthood and marriage. The tensions surrounding Susana's status as a single woman existing in the public sphere are palpable throughout her narrative, and one can see how she is constructing an identity, as well as a new kind of womanhood for her community, that attempts to personify traditional virtues but metamorphosed into the form of a more independent educated woman:

[I: "Do your parents worry that you are not married?"] No, they feel happy, because, to tell you the truth, I didn't destroy my right, what my dad gave me, that is, it's something of my dad's legacy . . . he gave me that freedom, and then they ask my dad, is your daughter still studying? Yes, but how does she do it? I don't know, ask her, me, I don't know, I just give them the freedom, oh, but you don't get mad at your daughter? [My dad says] Why would I get mad at her when she does her duties too, when she obeys me? [They say] Yes, because your daughter thinks about things very well, not like the other girls, the other girls will get married, they go to Secondary School, they go to High School and get . . . the parents' shame is that girls get pregnant, that is why there are not many girls studying, because most of them get pregnant in the schools.

Upholding traditional feminine virtues such as purity and obedience while experiencing the increased independence of emerging adulthood is a tricky balance that pulls Susana in opposite directions, resulting in contradictions and inconsistencies. At some points in the interview, Susana rejects the notion of exploration of multiple partners while acknowledging the traditions of her elders when sexuality and partnering were negotiated within the context of the family:

[I: "What do your parents think about having a boyfriend?"] . . . my mother told me, especially because you are a student, if you see a boy you like and he tells you to go to bed, please daughter, be very careful,

don't do it; if you feel that you are ready to have a husband or to have sex, tell me, and then we'll see how we can arrange it, we tell you if it's right or wrong because that's your life . . . no, I told her, I don't want to have sexual relations just like that with any man, of course not. If I am really prepared for that, I have to look for a man for me, just one man for me, I won't get this man, and it's over and I get another one, I'm not just for that, because my dad has taught me, if I do that, I swear I will throw you I don't know where, he says, my dad doesn't like that we do that, ever since my grandma, my grandparents told me that.

However, during the course of the interview, Susana rejects marriage traditions of the past and also describes two different romantic relationships she experienced which didn't work out and of which, it seemed, her parents were not aware. When talking about these relationships, she demonstrates her values for romantic love, exploration, and individual choice in partnering.

[I: "Are things different for you compared to when your parents were growing up?"] . . . in the past they forced them, hey, you know what? A man has already come, you will get married! It doesn't have to be like that, and I have always told my dad, if you force me to get married, I'll run away.

[I: "Do you have a boyfriend?"] . . . we had a great relationship, we met everyday, all day long, and then we loved each other very much, but then they [friends] told me no, be careful because this man has a son with another woman . . . So I told him, I don't belong to anyone, if you don't understand me, I don't understand you either, if you love me a lot, I don't know if I love you, so forget about me, look for your own path.

Emerging in this last quote, and further demonstrated in the next, is how Susana leverages her now expansive social network outside her family as a resource in negotiating relationships with men. In recounting how a number of men have attempted to compel her to marry them, she highlights how the experience of studying and working in the city has given her a wider sphere of social influence that she can access to preserve her independence. For example,

[I: "Do you want to get married?"] . . . one man even went to Chamula [indigenous community just outside the city] for taking me, but the president in charge then was my friend, that is, I know him very well

and he knows me, and the president asked, Why her? She is going to get married with you? Of course not, because I know Susana, she is not getting married with any man, I know it very well, and I have seen her attitude said the president, and the guy who wanted to marry me asked, "and what do you know about her?" We have worked with her, and she already called me last week, if she gets any problems, it will be solved.

Susana is especially skilled in maintaining social connections, and this kind of access to social spheres of influence is quite novel for indigenous women in Chiapas who have traditionally been somewhat limited to more domestic spheres. Another example shows how she utilizes her social connections to establish her status and identity to those who would look down at her for wearing her village's traditional skirt, blouse, and shawl that mark her ethnic identity. As she does so, she also solidifies her pride in her ethnic heritage.

[I: "Why do you continue to wear your traditional clothing?"] Women who change their clothing is when they feel ashamed of their words, their language, their clothing . . . but I'm not afraid of my language and my attire, I will be as I am . . . in the new university, principals came from other places, and I know them, "hi Susana, how are you?" And the students would just look at me, who is she then? That is, that's when they realized my presence, my attire, that is, they identify me quickly by the way I get dressed, and the principals since they don't know the other students they won't greet them. [The principals tell me] You have an invitation here and there, you do this, they even bring me presents, look, we brought you this, congratulations, and the students just look at me . . . they didn't feel as arrogant as before, so she is not a simple student . . . and that's why I feel fine like this, I don't care if students discriminate against me.

Susana's experiences illustrate how a movement toward individualistic values and behaviors is not about a movement toward isolation, but rather, Susana's independence and individuality is sustained partly through her ability to navigate her social world through strategic ties to an expansive network of social resources. Moreover, her movement toward increased values for individual seems to derive from her independent experiences, new kinds of friendships, and exposure to knowledge and perspectives outside traditional frameworks. These values are combined with her respect and obligation to her parents and to her community, as well as her identification with her ethnic identity and traditions. Indeed, Susana's story provides a host of rich examples

of the ways that a new period of life and its corresponding new cultural values are integrated within and made relevant to the putative frameworks for morally correct behavior. In doing so, Susana maintains her connection to her community and the cultural values in which she was raised, and likely has a powerful effect as a role model for future generations in her village.

## Discussion

In accord with Greenfield's theory of social change and human development, quantitative analyses of interview data with first-generation Maya university students showed that they perceived values moving toward individual autonomy and gender egalitarianism in connection with sociodemographic change from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* conditions. These data confirm research that has demonstrated relationships between economic development, urbanization, and individualistic values (Hofstede, 2001; Kagitcibasi, 2007) and between formal education and individualistic values (LeVine et al., 1991; Rogoff, Correa-Chávez, & Navichoc-Cotuc, 2005; Tapia Uribe, LeVine, & LeVine, 1994; Wang, 2006). The nature of this study's design of course limits interpretations that sociodemographic factors elicit particular values; however, the ways in which participants described their experiences illustrate how *Gesellschaft* circumstances pull for certain behaviors that could make the individual as an independent agent more salient. For example, the increased adult role opportunities offered under *Gesellschaft* conditions seem to draw out increasing salience of individual choice and pursuit of personal desires. The diversity of relationships with unrelated others possible in an urban environment seems to make individual negotiations of relationships as well as assertions of one's opinion in that social milieu more adaptive.

The qualitative analyses of these youths' perceptions of change are useful in that they illustrate specific instantiations of values for autonomy that may arise with *Gesellschaft* ecological conditions, in this case, the experience of extended education in an urban environment during the transition into adulthood. As others have suggested, there may be multiple dimensions of the individualism-collectivism cultural value system (Oyserman, Kimmelmeier, & Coon, 2002). The six themes in this study highlighted various aspects of a shift toward individual autonomy that may be salient to youth experiencing extended preparation for adulthood by going to university in an urban environment. Participants in this study perceived a university education provided them with a proliferation of choices for adult role fulfillment, unlike the lack of alternatives in the preset farming and tortilla-making adult roles of

traditional Maya culture. Moreover, the process of knowledge acquisition in formal schooling and exposure to diversity in an urban environment seemed to provide them with opportunities to navigate multiple perspectives outside of more circumscribed traditional prescriptions for moral behavior. The multitude of adult role options and a broader range of acceptable moral behavior were associated with values for asserting individual choices and opinions, constructing and following personal desires, and seeking self-fulfillment and self-improvement. However, it is important to note that underlying these various manifestations of value shifts was an increasing emphasis on the individual as an independent entity.

Education in an urban environment also seems to provide a new kind of social forum for unrelated peer relationships to flourish, further facilitating individual exploration and negotiation of the kind of adult one wants to be. Unlike the conformity to authority involved in parental socialization, peer socialization is more symmetrical, forcing reciprocity, cooperation, and collaboration of social actors as individuals with individual perspectives and opinions (Youniss, 1980). Mead (1928/1978) has also theorized that the faster a culture is changing (generally toward more *Gesellschaft* environments), the more that parents and grandparents lose their place as agents of moral authority and the more likely an adolescent peer culture will arise to negotiate a new set of values more relevant for current conditions. Confirming the power of peer influence during periods of social change (e.g. Acock & Fuller, 1984), participants' interviews showed that they valued the idea of friendship and its more symmetrical relationship processes and that it was a mechanism by which they were constructing new values that departed from their family values. It is also important to note that of all the dimensions of change, it was this shift, toward an emphasis toward unrelated peer relations, which showed the most heterogeneity in terms of direction of change.

Indeed, qualitative unpacking of participants' remarks and Susana's narrative demonstrates that values were not moving in absolute uniformly in one direction but were punctuated at times by a return to traditional values or attempts to reconcile new perspectives with traditional values. Data showed that, in particular, participants maintained values for the authority of elders and obligation to the family unit while incorporating new values for autonomy. For example, participants talked about their ambitions in school with benefits of the family in mind and many participants emphasized the importance of hard work as a way to relate their nontraditional pathways toward adulthood to traditional values. This suggests that some cultural values might change at a slower pace than others and that intermediate values exist along the autonomy-interdependent continuum. With economic development,



values for individual choice and pursuit of self-fulfillment might flourish; however, the importance of the family might persist and be negotiated with these new pulls, as has been found for families that are transitioning to Gesellschaft ecologies (Fuligni & Pederson, 2002; Kagitcibasi, 2005; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2001; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Kagitcibasi (2005) suggests developing cultures can be high on both relatedness and autonomy, which was seen in the intermediate values between interdependence and individual autonomy found in this study. Participants' remarks such as "never have I rejected the advice of my parents also, as long as it isn't contrary to what I believe" demonstrates how interdependence and autonomy pull in different directions but may be expressed within the same breath, especially in cultures experiencing rapid change toward Gesellschaft conditions.

Combinations of values for individual autonomy and interdependence were also apparent in the ways that youth would sometimes utilize old frameworks to make sense of new values they were acquiring. For example, Susana lent legitimacy to her behavior as a single woman interacting in public domains alongside men, a violation of traditional gender codes, by emphasizing the ways she also upholds her family's honor by obeying her father and demonstrating hard work to the women in the community. Others have discussed how, in times of cultural instability, competing cultural frameworks become more explicit (Swidler, 1986); this study points to how youth in developing cultures may seek to find harmony between the tensions that surface from these competing cultural frameworks by making new concepts and behaviors relevant to existing values. In doing so, they may be able to maintain their connections to their families and provide influential models that make sense in terms of existing frames of meaning while still responding to new structural affordances under Gesellschaft conditions. Going to school and postponing marriage and adult work roles in exchange for a period of relative freedom may make sense to traditional frameworks in the sense that the investment in education could eventually lead to more resources that will benefit the entire family.

### *Gender and Values for Autonomy*

This study confirms previous research showing increasing gender egalitarianism with economic development, education, and individualistic values (Bradley, 1997; Chia, Allred, & Jerzak, 1997; Gibbons, Hamby, & Dennis, 1997; Handwerker, 1986; Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Williams & Best, 1990). A discourse of gender equality may be more adaptive for Gesellschaft environments.

Qualitative data in this study illustrate how values for achieved, rather than ascribed, adult roles and values for multiple perspectives beyond traditional customs may facilitate new cultural concepts of gender, including gender egalitarianism and valuing women in men's public roles.

In collectivistic cultures, men and women are understood in terms of the roles they fulfill, rather than in terms of personality differences (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001). In the more collectivistic Maya culture, the unquestioned acceptance of adult gender roles passed down from previous generations renders concepts of gender equality irrelevant because men and women are understood in terms of the roles they fulfill for the group. However, achieved roles are based on individual preferences, motivations, and abilities, rather than ascribed to a particular gender. Data in this study suggest that when education provides both men and women with similar role options, distinctions between individuals come into the picture along with notions of everyone having the same rights to pursue their individual desires. In addition, data from this study support research suggesting that education and economic development also provide both men and women with increasingly similar opportunities to access economic benefits outside the domestic sphere, facilitating notions of independence and female empowerment (Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Participants talked about the ways in which education provided them with ways to earn money, giving them freedom from depending on men for resources, as is the case in Maya customs for gender relations. Moreover, confirming the idea that education is an individualizing force (Wang, 2006), participants reflected that the process of knowledge acquisition cultivated a sense of self-efficacy and instilled notions of empowerment in women, further lending itself to notions of gender equality. This adds to expansive literature documenting the variety of ways education may lead to female empowerment in societies across the world.

Interview data also show how these new gender concepts are associated with partnering. Marriage in traditional Maya culture was not about romantic love but was a "fundamentally functional, economic relationship" (Freeman, 1972). With new gender role options changing the functional motivations for marriage, partnering becomes about choice and following individual desires. Collier (1997) shows how cultural discourses about courtship in a Spanish community moving toward *Gesellschaft* conditions shifted from social conventions and obligation to concepts related to adherence to internal beliefs and desires as well as romantic love. The same pattern was found in this study; men and women talked about marriage and childbearing in terms of a life they wanted to create for themselves based on their own self-determination and contrasted this to obligatory marital roles based on traditional customs.

Thus, we can see how values for choice in romantic partnering may be intricately intertwined with increasing female independence from a family unit and notions of gender equality.

### *Values for Autonomy and Emerging Adulthood*

Research on the spreading of emerging adulthood around the world suggests that adult roles created in new market economies produce new, more individualistic developmental pathways during adolescence, as longer periods of self-focused activities are adaptive for fulfilling these new adult roles (Arnett & Galambos, 2003). Participants in this study possessed many of the characteristics of emerging adults found in other countries in the midst of social change in that they are likely to be students, unmarried, without children, maintain ties to their parents, experience identity exploration, and have more self-focused orientation than adults (Macek et al., 2007). The opportunity to delay adulthood, and focus on self-development and exploration rather than adhere to traditional norms, may exist only for middle-class urban youth in the developing world (Arnett, 2010). This study suggests that those with this opportunity in Chiapas may be agents of cultural values shifts as they provide new kinds of models for pathways to adulthood to their families and communities.

The individualistic values participants endorsed map onto, yet diverged in some ways from, the cultural beliefs described by Arnett (2010) as underlying emerging adulthood. Indeed, as Arnett (2010) had suggested, the beliefs are founded upon an ethic of autonomy that is in tension with traditional interdependent cultural values found among Maya culture in Chiapas. Although participants in this study perceived increasing independence with the changes happening in Chiapas, they did not believe that they should be independent from their families in order to enter into adult commitments. Rather, as has been shown with youth in China who migrate to urban locales for work (Chang, 2009), participants were sometimes helping their families monetarily so that moving into adulthood meant ongoing support provided to their parents. Relatedly, despite instances where participants talked about the increased freedom they were experiencing by postponing marriage and continuing school, endorsements of leisure were not prevalent. Instead, they endorsed hard work in order to achieve a level of economic success beyond what past generations could achieve with limited opportunities for school. More in line with Arnett's outline of emerging adult beliefs, romantic love did emerge as a basis of marriage, as did discussions of career choice based on personal desires and preferences, and thus representative of individuals'

identities; however, still apparent in the interviews were the implications of such choices in work and partnering for youths' relationships with their families.

Although some have critiqued the utility of emerging adulthood because it is not present in all cultures (Hendry & Kloep, 2007), this study suggests the term is quite useful precisely because it identifies a developmental pathway adaptive to a particular set of cultural and sociodemographic circumstances. The unique aspects of emerging adulthood, opportunities for self-focus and exploration with the delay of adult responsibilities to a family unit, may be developmental mechanisms by which cultural values shift toward increasing individualism. By identifying the common practices and values present in the developmental pathway of emerging adulthood, we can better understand how more individualistic values are socialized in more *Gesellschaft* environments.

## **Appendix**

### *Semistructured Interview Instrument*

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How old are you?

Where were you born?

How many siblings do you have?

When did you move here to San Cristóbal? Why?

Who do you live with here?

Where are you studying? What are you studying? How did you come to study this?

Do your brothers and sisters study?

How far did your mother and father go in school? What do they do for work?

How are things different in the city compared with your village?

How are men different in the city compared with the village?

How are women different in the city compared with the village?

What kinds of work do men and women do in the village compared with what men and women do in the city?

Have you changed since you have been studying at the university in the city?

Do you behave differently when you are in the village compared with the city? What kinds of things do you do in the city that are different from what you do in the village?

Do you think you are different from those who stayed in the village?

- Are things different for you compared with when your parents were growing up?
- Do you think you think differently or have different beliefs than your mother and father or your grandparents?
- What kinds of ideas do your mother and father have about what women are like? About what men are like? Is this different from your ideas?
- Do you have friends in the village? Friends in the city? What are they like? What kinds of conversations do you have with your friends?
- What kinds of things do you do with your friends?
- What do you want to do when you finish studying?
- Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend or are you married? Do you want to get married? Do you want to have children?
- Do you want to work after you are married/Do you want your wife to work when you are married?
- How did your parents get married?
- What do your parents think about having a boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Do men and women interact or talk to each other differently in the city compared with how they interact or talk to each other in the village?
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## **Acknowledgments**

The author would like to thank the women of FOMMA in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico for allowing participant recruitment from among the university interns working in the organization and for their enthusiasm about the project. The author also thank Romin Álvarez for transcribing and translating the interviews and Darab Zarrabi for his help coding the interview data. The author is deeply grateful for the mentorship from Dr. Thomas Weisner and especially Dr. Patricia Greenfield, without whom this project would not have been possible.

## **Author's note**

The author was affiliated with the UCLA Department of Psychology and the FPR-UCLA Center for Culture, Brain, and Development when conducting this research.

## **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

## **Funding**

The author disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article: The project was supported by grants

from the FPR-UCLA Center for Culture, Brain, and Development, the UCLA Center for the Study of Women, and UCLA Graduate Division.

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## Bio

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