Parenting strategies in Mayan Communities around Lake Atitlan: Reproduction of values and the challenge of adapting to a more globalized world

Wolters, W.F. (Sophy)

Master Thesis

Sophy Wolters

Leiden University

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Supervisor Dr. Tessa Minter

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Drawing by Angelica Bauer

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‘Quietly, but proudly, she leads us into her own cultural world, a world in which the sacred and the profane constantly mingle, in which worship and domestic life are one and the same, in which every gesture has a pre-established purpose in which everything has a meaning (Menchú 1984).’

12 October

“In 1492, [they] discovered they were Indians, discovered they lived in America, discovered they were naked, discovered that the Sin existed, discovered they owed allegiance to a King and Kingdom from another world and a God from another sky, and that this God had invented the guilty and the dress, and had sent to be burnt alive who worships the Sun the Moon the Earth and the Rain that wets it.”

Eduardo Galeano in Children of the days (2013)

Title page illustration:

The drawing on the title page is by Angelica Bauer, an artist who lived in Santiago Atitlan for decades. This is the title page illustration of the book by V. Stanzione about The Nawales from Santiago Atitlan. I chose this illustration because it is a representation of all the tasks Tzutujil women and men perform during their lives.

Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank all the wonderful people in the villages around Lake Atitlan, who talked to me about how they grew up, what they learned and what they want to pass on to their children. They made this study possible by spending time with me, opening up and teaching me about their lives. There were tears shed at memories of the hard life and there was laughter as we shared stories about our children. Most of all I appreciate the parenting tips each one of you shared with me for our Mayan Child guide in the making.

Without the perspective of the two medicine women Tomasa and Sebastiana, this thesis wouldn't have been so rich. Their interpretation of the stories of the participants helped me put my findings in a broader perspective of poverty, exclusion and violence in Guatemalan society. And their stories about Mayan cosmology, the importance of knowing your Nawal, about Mayan culture and ceremonies added understanding to all the stories I heard during interviews. They deepened my knowledge on Mayan culture and customs.

This research wouldn't have been possible without the solid base of anthropological knowledge of concepts I gathered during the courses offered by the CADS department. I thank all my teachers for the interesting, thought-provoking lectures and discussion we had during my premaster and master track. My background in development is mainly practical. Putting my experience in an academic context has been very insightful.

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Last but not least I would like to thank my family for hanging in there, supporting me and cheering me on, even when I didn't believe I could do it. And I dedicate this work to my grandchildren Finn and Emma, because being a grandmother renewed my interest in parenting practices. Kids, follow the guiding of your Nawal to understand your inner self and soul.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Why parenting?

This story on Mayan parenting starts a long time ago. In search of adventure my husband and I settled on the shores of Lake Atitlan in 1987 and didn't leave until 2008, when the children were ready for their adventure in the Netherlands. Raising our four children there, I often noticed how Mayan children seemed more cooperative and attuned to their surroundings than mine and other expat children living in Panajachel. Over the years, the differences between the dynamics in my family compared to the indigenous families I met became even more obvious, particularly when I worked together with Chepe and Diego (14 at the time), father and son, who delivered us their handicrafts for our export business in Guatemalan *tipica* (handwoven merchandise based on indigenous designs). They never seemed to have a misunderstanding or a fight, and they respected each other for what they brought into the personal and work relationship. Once, after a fight with my adolescent daughter, I asked them: "Do you ever fight?" They looked at me, then at each other, and asked "Fight? No. Why?''

Fig. 1: Diego and Chepe - photo Sophy Wolters 1994

Curious about the dynamics, I explored the theme of puberty in indigenous societies and found Margaret Mead's book 'Coming of Age in Samoa (Mead 1928)'. This awakened my interest in anthropology and cultural diversity. This research, then, is the realization of a long-held promise to myself, a dream of investigating parent-child relationships in indigenous societies.

Why Guatemala?

Years later, having become a grandmother, I was puzzled by the temper tantrums of my grandson. Looking for a book that could help understand his behavior, I came across a parenting book by Doucleff, called '*Hunt, Gather, Parent: What Ancient Cultures Can Teach Us About the Lost Art of Raising Happy, Helpful Little Humans (Doucleff 2021).'* I bought the book for my daughter, as I wanted her to be able to learn from Mayan mothers, as I had been able to raise her in that rich cultural environment. While reading Doucleff I wondered if the Guatemalan women I knew would recognize themselves in the parenting strategies Doucleff describes in a Mexican Mayan community in Yucatan. I realized that although I recognized the patterns she describes, this vision on Mayan parenting might be romanticized.

Thus, the subject of my master thesis was defined by my wish to understand indigenous parenting in a Guatemalan context. The objective of this study is to understand what parenting strategies parents use in Mayan communities around Lake Atitlan in the highlands of Guatemala and how they change over time. While the area is influenced by tourism, international trade in handicrafts, and assimilation policies by the Guatemalan government, the communities around the lake have preserved some of the traditions of Mayan culture. My research focusses on how people describe traditional child raising strategies, what is preserved of these today, and how people have adapted to a changing world.

The question that guided my field research was the following: How are parenting strategies in Mayan communities around Lake Atitlan, Guatemala, affected by social change? What set out to be a study of traditional parenting practices in the footsteps of Doucleff's (2021) journey to learn about parenting in indigenous communities, turned out to be a study of social complexity influenced by a history of exclusion, exploitation and violence. I hope you will follow me on this journey.

Why does it matter?

Every country has its own history, every community its own culture, every family its own story. This is an ethnography, studying the mundane, everyday life of Mayan parent in Guatemalan communities around Lake Atitlan. Guatemala is one of the few countries in the world, where indigenous people

make up for half of the population. Although they are marginalized politically, socially, and culturally in the Guatemalan context, there is a strength in numbers. Vibrant indigenous communities pass on values, customs, and language onto the next generations. These communities became even more empowered because of a revival of Mayan consciousness after the signing of the peace accords after a 40 year civil war.

This study attempts to create insight how Mayan communities parent and reproduce values and customs and over generations, but also how they meet the challenges of a globalizing world. The body of anthropological knowledge on parenting and the role of children in society is steadily growing. Even though it is important to learn from traditional rural communities, it is also very important to understand how people adapt to changing realities, while preserving indigeneity. If we learned something from the history of indigenous people, it is most important for people to know where they are from and find strength in their culture, as a Peruvian grandmother explains:

> "Your children – our children – have to remember where they come from, and who they come from, in order to move forward (Gottlieb and DeLoache 217, 260)."

Chapter 2: Eternal Spring, Eternal Tyranny

Guatemala: geography, history and people

Guatemala (Fig 2) lies on the isthmus of Central America, connecting North and South America with a range of volcanoes. There are 33 of them in Guatemala itself, three of them still active (Country reports 2021) and sometimes erupting. The northern region of Guatemala housed mayor cities of the Maya Empire. This civilization reached the peak of its power around the sixth century A.D. The Mayans excelled in calendar making, mathematics and architecture, leaving behind ruins of pyramids of their temples in the jungle of northern Guatemala, after they were abandoned in 900 A.D., still visited by millions of tourist to this day. It is not known why the Maya civilization collapsed, but the current Mayan communities in the highlands of Guatemala are descendants of this civilization, having a proto-maya language in common (Söchtig et al 2015). During the classic period of the Mayan civilization there already were connections between the lowland cultural and religious centra and the highlands because of exchange of goods (Rathje 1971).

When the Spanish conquered Guatemala in 1524 they were quite disappointed. It didn't have the riches of Mexico or Peru, and the country was volatile and prone to disasters: their efforts to develop the country into a money producing economy were beset by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and hurricanes with subsequent flooding mudslides. But the combination of volcanic soil and steady rainfall during the rainy season makes the Pacific side of the country very fertile and good for many tropical and semi-tropical products; new crops of sugar, cotton, coffee, cardamom, and bananas thrived, alongside of the traditional crops of indigo (deep blue) and cochineal (deep red), dyes used in the textile industry before chemical dies were invented (Smith 1959).

Fig 2: Map of Guatemala with Lake Atitlan region

(https://www.britannica.com/place/Guatemala)

In the years after the conquest adventurers of Spanish descent took the piedmont and coastal areas and created large *fincas* (the Spanish word for plantations), that used forced indigenous labor for planting and harvest seasons. Off season, the workers moved back up to their ancestral homes in the mountains to plant and harvest corn and beans, their staple diet. Spanish landowners and *ladinos*, as mixed-race people are called in Guatemala, controlled the economy and politics, but in their home villages the Mayans were quite autonomous (Smith 1984).

Guatemala is twice the size of the Netherlands with about the same population. Approximately 7 million (42%) are considered indigenous Mayans, the rest of them *ladinos* and a small group of Garifunda, descendants of freed slaves from the Spanish Caribbean, based on a census done in 2010 (World population review 2022). The Mayans, consisting of 22 different Mayan language groups, live mainly in the highlands of Guatemala, in rural towns, villages and hamlets.

The country was Christianized by the catholic church after the conquest by the Spanish by using syncretism. Traditional Mayan beliefs and practices blended with catholic rituals, trying to entice the Mayan population to attend church and become catholic. Traditional rituals were

practiced within and outside the church. Evangelism has been on the rise since the 1976 earthquake. Evangelist NGO's that sent missionaries to help people in the highlands that were affected by the earthquake brought this new religion with them. Equally important was that Mayans in the *altiplano* (highlands) converted to evangelism during the civil war, which started in 1954 and officially ended with the Peace accord signed in 1996, because the Catholic liberation movement was blamed for the insurrection (León- Ceto 2016). Moreover, evangelist churches take a strong stand against alcohol so lots of women, suffering from abuse, convert so the church will support them. Evangelical churches are also more horizontal, the pastors being community members and speaking the local language (own observation).

Civil war: 1954-1996

During the so-called "Ten Years of Spring" after the ousting of dictator Jorge Ubico in 1944, two presidents, Arévalo and Arbenz, tried to reform Guatemala and create a more equal society with access to land and income for the poor Guatemalans, and a representative democracy. Arbenz modernized the country by introducing a land reform, which meant that the government would buy unused lands from big landowners for the value registered at the tax office. This threatened the United Fruit Company, a US owned fruit company, and one of the biggest landholders in the coastal areas where they produced mainly bananas. The director of the United fruit company was the brother of the director of the CIA. The CIA, following the cold-war thinking then sweeping Washington, organized a coup to get rid of Arbenz, starting a 40 year conflict that became the civil war (Gibbings and Vrana 2020).

The guerillas fought the army from the mountains, attacking the fincas owned by the rich, who exploited indigenous labor as they had done for 500 years. And the military reacted with force, violence and genocide. Rios Montt, the general that was head of the *military junta* in the early eighties, used the burnt village tactics to try to force the guerillas and the Mayans in submission (Menchú 1984). Between 50000 and 70000 people were killed during the conflict and half a million people fled to Mexico as refugees. *La Violencia* (The violence) was not only a conflict between military and guerilla forces, who fought a liberation war to resolve class interests. It was a conflict with ethnic overtones between *ladinos* and *indigenas (*indigenous), a manifestation of unresolved racist tensions (Warren 1993: 26). The Mayans felt the conflict was a way for the government to destroy Mayan communities and culture (Menchú 1984).

Poverty in Guatemala

The key discriminatory forces in Guatemala's development that led to exclusion and poverty were the massive land expropriation from the indigenous population, leading to unequal distribution of assets; forced labor policies that exploited indigenous labor, and capital accumulation in the hands of a few wealthy families, as a result of racist education policies (Warren 1993; World bank 2004: 55). Because of this exclusion from economic development people from isolated communities migrated to cities in Guatemala -internal migration- and to the United States – international migration- to work in agriculture, domestic services and construction. Where coffee and sugar were the main sources of income of Guatemala until the 1980s, remittances are now the biggest source of income to communities in the highlands. Especially in bottom decile group – defined as extreme poverty- more than 50% of rural indigenous household income comes from remittances (Adams 2004). This brought about rapid development of these communities with a construction boom and improved education opportunities for children.

Table 1. Country of Origin for Central American Immigrants in the United States, 2019

Country	Number of Immigrants	Share (%)
TOTAL CENTRAL AMERICA	3,782,000	100.0%
El Salvador	1,412,000	37.3%
Guatemala	1,111,000	29.4%
Honduras	746,000	19.7%
Nicaragua	257,000	6.8%
Panama	101,000	2.7%
Costa Rica	94,000	2.5%
Belize	44,000	1.2%
Other Central America	16,000	0.4%

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS.

Fig. 3 Migration Policy Institute 2021

Indigeneity and *Catellanizacion* (Castilianization)

For years since the start of public schools in indigenous communities the official government policy was called 'castellanizacion', an official assimilation policy to teach indigenous kids how to fit into mainstream Guatemala. Although the term 'castellanizacion' means to teach children Spanish, it stood for wiping out what was indigenous (Chamalé Patzan 2015). The children were not allowed to speak their mother tongue in class or wear their local dress. Teachers whipped children on their hands and let them kneel on sharp stones for hours on end. The effect of this oppressive formal education system was cultural genocide as has happened with the first nations in Canada and the

USA. It made parents and children ashamed of who they were, internalizing the message that being indigenous was being less (Hood 2018: 69). As we will see in the empirical data, this had an effect on parenting strategies and perpetuation of violence in society into the home. But Peace accords of 1996 between the Guatemalan Government and the parties that represented the resistance movement, brought about a shift in Guatemala's development paving the way for transformation to a more inclusive nation.

> "On this day (December 29) in 1996, after three years of United Nations-moderated peace talks between the Government of Guatemala and representatives from the *Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca* (Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity), the parties signed the *Agreement on a Firm and Lasting Peace*, ending decades of civil conflict that began in 1962 and took the lives of over 200,000 Guatemalans (UN and Guatemala Peace Process 1996)."

In that Peace agreement the indigenous were granted the right to identity and the right to educate their children on indigenous languages, values, and customs. The government started a program for teaching the first few grades in the ethnic language of the region in primary schools, an incredible task, because of the many ethnic groups, some consisting of only a few communities. What the peace accords accomplished was a legal right to be indigenous people, the right to have a say and be part of society and decision-making processes. Whereas the conquest and 500 years of Spanish and colonial rule had left the Mayans docile and meek on the outside while bitter and distrustful on the inside (Woodward, 2005), the peace accords created a structure that gave a hope for the future and indigenous empowerment. The basis for this change was Art. 5 of the Peace Accords:

> "Art 5. Recognition of the identity and rights of indigenous peoples is essential for building a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual country of national unity. Respect for and the exercise of the political, cultural, economic and spiritual rights of all Guatemalans is the foundation for a new coexistence reflecting the diversity of their nation (Agreement on a firm and lasting peace 1996)."

The word 'Mayan' to describe the highland indigenous people as descendants from the great lowland civilization, is a modern concept from the 1980s, a political choice to create a commonality of all indigenous Guatemalans, where before they identified as an ethnic group. The term Maya was meant to replace the often depreciating terms that were used to describe the indigenous (Heckt

1999). Heckt quotes Barth (Barth 1969: 11, in by Heckt 1999:329) here to remind us that ethnic groups are formed as a social act of identity, not as a primordial, cultural or biological entity. The term Mayan is a conscious subjective self-definition to create boundaries. The identity of the oppressed is formed by common history as a reaction to the oppressor (DuBois 1905). The civil war, the violence used against indigenous communities, and the assimilation policies, strengthened the indigeneity of the Mayans. The recovery of indigenous knowledge is a process that is intertwined with the process of decolonization and a chance to learn to revalue indigenous ways of the past (Wilson 2004, 362).

I will use the word Mayan and indigenous, as Mayan is the overarching term being used nowadays to describe the indigenous in Guatemala.

Lake Atitlan region and its communities

Lake Atitlan in the region of Solola lies on a 1500 meters altitude and is a crater lake 340 meters deep. It is one of the birthing craters of the Central America Isthmus millions of years ago. In later eruptions, 'small' volcanoes popped up at the side of the Pacific which closed the open side of the ancient crater and created a lake.

Fig. 4 Lake Atitlan. Muybridge 1874

Around Lake Atitlan 12 different communities live in valleys separated from each other by ridges and canyons, and are mostly accessible only by boat. There are three ethnic groups living around the lake: Caqchiqueles, Tzutujiles and Quiches. As the only way of traveling was by cayuco

(handmade dugout canoe) the communities developed independently from each other creating unique villages. Because of this isolation, place, community and culture are still related to each other (Gupta and Ferguson 2012).

Each municipality has their own indigenous handwoven costume, now mostly worn only by the women and in the past woven by the women themselves. Over the past two decades, as more women are working outside the home, *huipil* (blouse) weaving has become a separate, specialized business.

Fig 5: Map of the Lake Atitlan Region (travelguatemala.net)

Lake Atitlan attracts a lot of tourists and traders, who purchase woven goods, participating in a form of what could be called cultural tourism. Mayan people have always made artifacts, woven their clothing, made their pots to cook beans in, crocheted their bags from maguey thread. Since 1930 tourism is an important institution to support Mayan livelihoods in the *altiplano* (Little 2004). Little argues that "Mayas use their cultural identity strategically within the context of national and international tourism (Little 2004: 6)".

Along the more accessible western shore, over the past 50 years rich ladinos families have bought lots and built vacation homes on the lake, where they spent Christmas, New Years and Easter

holidays. During the civil war a lot of those houses were abandoned, as these families found safer spaces to go to. Nowadays, along with the returned Guatemala City wealthy, it is more retired expats that live on the slopes overlooking the lake. International trade and NGO's working for development have come to the lake, affecting its indigenous communities and its economy, more than the mountain communities further away from this tourist center.

Today, the economy of the Lake region consists of subsistence agriculture, fishing, small scale coffee production as cash crop, tourist services and artifact industry for local and international markets. Most families have more eggs in a basket: fishing; growing food crops; weaving and making macrame beadwork; working as a professional; selling firewood; working in the service industry as a maid, cook or laundry woman; making tortillas to sell. People live in extended families that serve a social and economic network. Children take care of their parents; grandparents help taking care of the grandchildren. Aunts and uncles play an important part in raising the children of the family. Everybody of the family has a task to perform with the family unit. Kinship relationships are very important as a safety net (observations during interviews). Many of the inhabitants of these communities "retained a thread of cultural patrimony (Searcy 2011: 1)", but have also been exposed for decades to the influx of *ladinos* from the city, local and international tourists, and international traders.

Mayan customs

> "I love the richness of my culture, the clothes we wear, the language we speak, the food we cook, the customs we have. With customs I mean the respect for our ancestors, for nature, for our corn, beans and water. We pass these customs on from generation to generation. We value nature and humanity. The ladino only values business and money (Woman 47)."

This woman from Santiago Atitlan describes what she means by Mayan customs. Mayan culture is rooted in the *traje (handwoven blouse and skirt)* they wear, with a specific design for every town. It sits in the relationship they have with their environment and nature and their respect for ancestors and the old ways. It is expressed in their Mayan language. And in the food they prepare, in the tortillas they bake three times a day made from the corn husks they grow to be eaten with black bean paste for a healthy and balanced diet.

> "The tortilla […], presents us with dried grain that has been processed before it is even ground. The kernels have been boiled with an alkali {*Cal*, or slaked lime from limestone) that removes the skins of the kernels, which makes the grain easier to grind, adds a slightly

different flavor, and changes its nutritive substance. While still wet, these boiled kernels (*nixtamal*) are ground and shaped into a dough (*masa*) to cook flat on a griddle (*comal*) or hearthstone (Fussell 1999).

Fig. 6: Blue corn for blue corn tortillas, Santiago Atitlan.

Photo: Heter van Kruijssen Februari 2022

I would like to finish this chapter with a personal anecdote. When I was working for the microcredit program Friendship Bridge in the early 2000s, we had a meeting with some of the members of a credit group about Tzutujil culture, as we were preparing a field school workshop on culture. We asked the women to make a list of characteristics they defined as being "Atiteca" (being from Santiago Atitlan). The women mentioned the huipil from Santiago and the Tzutujil language. As I was wearing a Santiago huipil that day, that I had woven myself, I asked them if I could be an Atiteca too, as I also speak some Tzutujil. They found my question hilarious. Of course I could never become Tzutujil. After adding to the list of other outer characteristics, they concluded it was something deeper, inside, something you do recognize but can't name.

Four communities investigated

I did my field research on parenting in four of these lake municipalities. Panajachel on the north side of the lake is a tourist and market hub for the whole lake. From here the boats leave to the other communities on the south side of the lake. It was sometimes called *Gringotenango* (the place where expats live) for a while, a town of with hotels, restaurants, shops, a gringo supermarket with luxury goods and an international school for expat children. But most of the tourists are looking for adventures in other towns on the south and west side of the lake. Pana became the market hub, a

bustling community with supermarkets, fast food restaurant, hard ware stores, and pharmacies, servicing the people coming in from the small communities only accessible by boat.

On the opposite side of the Lake lies Santiago Atitlan, a Mayan town of almost 100000 people, capital of the Tzutujiles, who fought the Spanish when the conquered Guatemala. It was also the center of the guerilla activity around the lake during the civil war and housed a military base, where a massacre took place as late as 1991 when the town people walked out to ask where their disappeared loved ones were. Santiago quadrupled in population in 50 years, and as the town area doesn't expand the houses are becoming high-rises. Of all the towns Santiago is perhaps the most traditional Mayan. Not only the women wear *traje,* but also the men. Most people speak Tzutujil, also with their children. And it is the hub of handicrafts business, with the women making macrame bracelets, doing beadwork, crochet and embroidered purses and the men focus on loom weaving and wood sculptures. The shore of the lake houses the *cayucos* (hand dug canoes) that the Tzutujiles used to bring merchandise to the other communities, to fish, and to collect *tul* (reeds used for mat making). The women run the market square. Of the dock a road runs into town lined by tourists shops, but that is often how far the tourist go, before walking back to their waiting boats.

In the corner on the south side of the lake on the slope of the *Vulcan San Pedro,* lies San Pedro La Laguna, also a Tzutujil town of 15000. In the eighties this was still a sleepy town, with a boat from Panajachel that came in twice a week. Now it is a tourist hub for backpackers, with dozens of boats arriving every day. The main drag into town is lined with café's, restaurant, juice parlors and second hand clothing stores. It is a progressive town too, where the mayor and his council decided to ban plastics and Styrofoam from the environment. The *Pedranos* (people form San Pedro) are business like, and proud to be Mayan. For the longest time foreigners couldn't buy land as they wanted to preserve the town. But you have to walk a long way from the shore to find a real *Pedrano* neighborhood.

And last but not least I visited the little Tzutujil town of San Juan La Laguna (13000) in the back of the bay with long shores where people used to grow vegetables and onions. It is the center of backstrap weaving around the lake and specializes in natural dye. Various cooperatives of women own stores on the main way into town where the sell their merchandise. In the back of the bay townspeople grow coffee. They are also organized in a cooperative. San Juan has a very active council that promotes tourism. They made murals all through town and adorned the main roads where tourist roam for good buys. Fancy cafes toast and grind their coffee and serve a flat white with gluten free pastry. You can do coffee tours and climb the volcano. Shops sell natural soap and natural dye products. There are Spanish schools and homestays are organized to learn about the Mayan way of life. In this town it is very visible that the "Mayan strategically make use of their ethnic and cultural identity within the context of national and international tourism (Little 2004: 6)."

Fig.7: Mural San Juan. Photo: Sophy Wolters February 2022

Chapter 3: The cultural Nature of Parenting

> ''So, a mother, on her first day of pregnancy goes with her husband to tell these elected leaders that she's going to have a child, because the child will not only belong to them but to the whole community, and must follow as far as he can our ancestors' tradition.' (Menchú 1984)

How does culture matter?

> "Humans develop through their changing participation in the socio-cultural activities of their communities, which also change (Rogoff 2003: 11)"

How does culture matter, when looking at human development in a cultural context? This is the question Rogoff (2003) discusses in her introduction on the cultural nature of development. Parenting differs in different cultural contexts and it is by participation in this cultural context that children develop and become adults. When looking at parenting in communities we can see regularities, patterns, traditions. It is not that these patterns are fixed, they are fluid, reacting on, shaped by and shaping the communities.

Rogoff, who researched Mayan parenting practices in San Pedro on Lake Atitlan for decades, recognizes different regularities in child rearing in different environments. In predominantly rural communities children often grow up in adult focused settings, participating in adult activities, learning by observing, pitching in and practicing as a preparation for their own life of becoming a subsistence farmer or hunter/gatherer. In these settings social solidarity is more important than individual accomplishment. She calls this Interdependence with autonomy, learning to be responsive to the group, in coordination, but still acting autonomously (Rogoff 2003: 8-9; Coppens 2014).

This is unlike parenting in western communities, where children mostly grow up in child focused settings, segregated from community life and adult activity by compulsory formal education. They are taught to be independent, trained to be individuals. As an example she uses bedtime rituals, where children in western communities are often put to bed by themselves, while children in Mayan communities for example are being held constantly and sleep with their parents (Rogoff 2003). Children grow up in different settings learning different life skills. In the documentary 'Babies' about the first year of life of babies in four cultures, we can see how even in the first year of life children are prepared for what they need to learn. What may seem like parent neglect, leaving a Mongolian nomadic toddler to fend for himself in a herd of cattle, is the way Mongolian parents prepare their

children for nomadic life. A Kenyan woman carries her baby all day until she is ready to do her first steps. An American woman brings her baby to a child care facility to be able to work (Balmes 2009).

To explain the settings in different cultural environments, Rogoff uses the Ecological Systems theory by Bronfenbrenner (Fig. 7). The outer circles, the global world, the local community influence the way the child grows up, what skills sets she needs to survive, what her position is in the community. The inner circle is the child within its immediate environment (Rogoff 2003: 46). Rogoff contests that the relationship between outer and inner circles is a one-way street. People are influenced by but also influence their environment by participating and change them over generations. This is specifically the case for parenting, as we will see in the empirical chapters of this thesis. Generational change in parenting strategies, reacting to the changes in the environment is the focus of this study. We will notice in the interviews that parents adept their parenting strategies according to changes in the community and the society at large.

Bronfenbrenner's circle of influence pictures the world a child is growing up in more clearly than Whiting and Whiting's model of learning (Rogoff 2003: 43) as it offers a visual of the conceptualization of the relation between cultural processes and individual development.

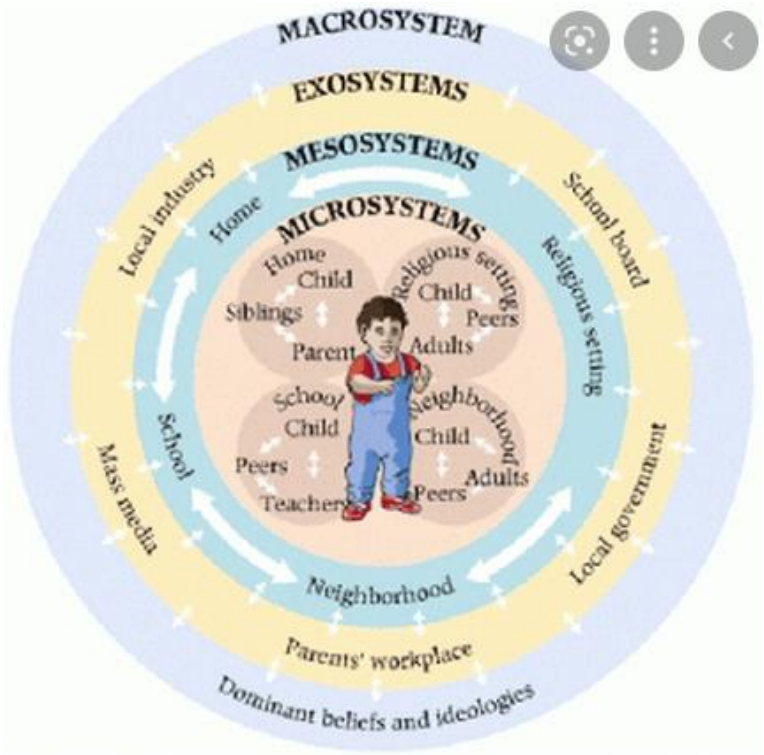

Fig. 8: Bronfenbrenner's Nested Ecological system

Another important aspect of parenting is the position of children in the family and the community. Lancy's schema depicts the importance of children in society. He calls the western society a Neontocracy, where children are being served and revered as cherubs. Children are showered with attention and love by parents, grandparents, nannies, and schools. We could speak of a child centered society, just as Rogoff (2013) noticed.

Lancy's pyramid of Gerontocracy (fig. 9) in predominantly rural societies is a primarily adult focused society. He speaks of a hierarchical relationship, where parents mostly ignore their children in the first years of their lives as the child is not seen as an asset yet. Children respect their elders, are obedient and learn to do chores around the household from a very early age. Lancy sees a coming of age around eight years old where the child becomes useful and therefor precious and worthy of attention. In the gerontocracy children serve the ancestors and serve as chattel, a flexible workforce to help the family economically (Lancy 2015: 3).

He places the Gerontocracy against the Neontocracy of 'western' society. In the Neontocracy children are at the top of the pyramid, treated like cherubs, served by their parents, family and teacher. Children are allowed to play, to develop themselves via formal education. Where the child in an rural society learns to be autonomous and independent, full of agency because they know how to hunt, gather, work and care at an early age, children in western society are babied around until very late in adolescents and therefor have a lack of agency and autonomy (Lancy 2015: 393).

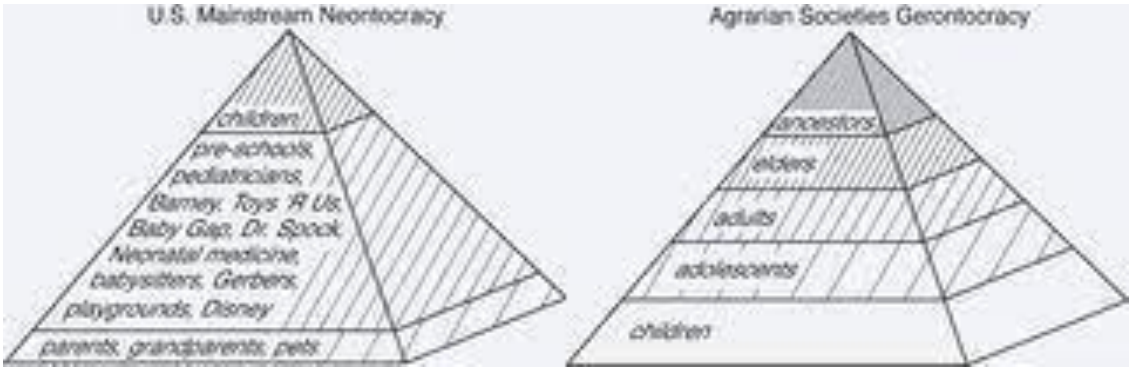

Fig 9: Neontocracy versus gerontocracy (Lancy 2015: 3)

Lancy paints extreme opposites in this model with fixed contradictions between societies. I don't agree with his approach of contradiction between western and nonwestern societies looking with a ethnocentric gaze. But his model is useful as it serves as an explanation for the changes over generations in parenting as the participants of this field research described. The contradiction is not

between western and nonwestern, but between rural and urban, local and global, excluded or included in the process of development in every society.

Indigenous parenting practices

So, what can we learn from how culture matters, looking at parenting practices in Mayan indigenous society? Various researchers, having investigated Mayan communities in southern Mexico mention the fact that the children they observed were very cooperative and helpful (Doucleff 2021; Garcia 2003; de Haan 1999). Doucleff (2021) explored a Mayan village in the Yucatan in Mexico. She asked parents, 'supermoms and dads', as she calls them, about their parenting strategies. The women explained that it is most important to give the child a sense of autonomy, to have them try out things without passing judgement and to include them in everything you do, as small children are natural helper, loving to be meaningful. Doucleff argues, that these indigenous parenting strategies are part of a centuries old system of parenting meant to foster self-reliance, cooperation, and self-esteem. She juxtaposes this form of parenting against the western style of parenting, where the child grows up in a child focused environment, not participating in an adults world.

Gottlieb and DeLoache's book, "A World of Babies", (Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017) explores eight different communities all over the world investigating the theme of parenting, and creates imaginary parenting guides by local mothers, grandmothers, midwives and community workers. These guides focus on the challenges of globalization, on raising children while providing them with traditional life skills, and how these change from generation to generation or by gender. In these imaginary parenting guides they use the voice of a local community member or parent. The values and customs are explained from an emic point of view, the participants make sense of their own traditions, surroundings and changes in society (Rogoff 2003), not compared them or judged them from a point of view of western society.

Doucleff's and Gottlieb and DeLoache's stories about childrearing practices in indigenous cultures resonate with anthropological literature about child rearing in different cultures, starting with Margaret Mead, who studied how children and adolescents grew up in the communities she visited like Samoa (Mead 1927). Mead belonged to the Boas school of cultural relativism, seeing cultures as equal to each other, not as a natural progression from primitive to developed (King 2019). Mead went to Samoa to research adolescence, because she was interested in why in the US/ Western culture puberty seemed to be viewed as 'unavoidable periods of adjustment (Mead 1927: 13)'. Was this problematic adolescence due to nature, or did culture have something to do with it? She described the life of adolescents in Samoa growing up with a sense of autonomy and at the same

time a sense of community and tradition, along with themes that come back in other books on child rearing practices: autonomy, a sense of usefulness, empowerment and community.

Childhood: a time to learn values and life skills

> "In some Indigenous-heritage Mexican communities, children's work contributions are crucial to their place in the community as complete social actors; their work helps to constitute the reciprocal nature of their evolving position in the social group and nurtures long-term family and community relationships (Coppens et al 2014, 117)."

Child rearing as the basis of reproduction of cultural values and socialization is a global theme in anthropology. In every community there are values and behaviors to learn for the child to be part of that community (Lancy 2015; Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017; Haan 1999; Doucleff 2021).

Lancy explored how children are raised in different cultures, what the role is of children in society and how families and communities are structured around them. He defines 4 stages of growing up in traditional rural societies. Toddlers start as helpers, learning by observing and practicing. They don't carry a lot of responsibility yet. When they reach middle age, they become workers, being able to do tasks independently. The next stage Is becoming an artisan, learning a more complex trade, after which they become workers (Lancy 2018: 4-5). His introduction is especially interesting, as he defines the word childhood as the time children need to learn the necessary life skills for their survival. This learning of life skills varies among cultures, as in his view children in small rural communities need less time to learn the life skills they need than the children in complex societies. I don't agree with Lancy on this point as the skills to become a good hunter or gatherer are very complex as we can see in other literature (Hagen 2016, Mead 1929). In preindustrial and agricultural societies children are more involved as workers and helpers, and thus need other life skills than children in western societies (Lancy 2018: 2/3). In Guatemala children are involved in weaving, pottery baking, subsistence agriculture, and animal husbandry (Heckt 1999). The importance of children as helpers, involved in family and community tasks from an early age is also mentioned by Alcala (2014), Doucleff (2021) and Gottlieb and DeLoache (2017).

So, what are the values in highland communities in Guatemala and how are they learned and reproduced over time? Here Heckt (1999) is an important source:

> "The traditions and foundations of indigenous cultures in Guatemala are passed down from generation to generation, including spirituality, moral norms and values, their own systems

of justice, medical knowledge, agricultural and economic practices, and general techniques and practical skills (Heckt 1999: 328)."

Over two decades ago Heckt (1999: 324) made a list, together with her participants, of ideal Mayan values, of what people find important for their children to learn. To name a few: discipline, community spirit, dialogue, respect for nature and elders and self-confidence. She also defines life skills divided by gender, and asked parents how the children learn these values (for the complete list see appendix 1). The parents told her that Mayan identity is learned by teaching children Mayan traditions, and school parenting was considered complementary.

But societies are changing due to migration and globalization. Education becomes more important. So children need to learn different life skills to participate in these changing societies. Childhood for children in Mayan communities is now also the time to go to school and learn to read and write and speak in Spanish. Although the peace accords stated that every indigenous child has the right to a bilingual parenting, it is a discussion point within indigenous communities what language children need to be taught in in schools. Activists in Guatemala saw bilingual parenting in the local language and Spanish as a way to combat discrimination and strengthen the Mayan culture. The idea behind this is that children coming from a solid cultural background integrate more effectively in mainstream parenting (EFA 2010).

Proposals to teach the children bilingually in schools are not always met by approval by the indigenous parents, who are afraid their children won't be prepared to make a good living by accessing professional jobs (Hood 2018). One of the parents said in a school meeting in the highlands of Peru": "They learn Quechua from us, their parents, in their homes with their families. In school they need to learn the skills that will help them become something more than just *campesino* [subsistence farmer] (Garcia 2003: 71)". The Quechua mother argues, that the teachers are there to teach Spanish and not confuse the children with a bilingual curriculum (Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017: 256). Garcia argues that the re-indigenization started by activists in Peru is not supported by the all indigenous communities themselves. Making the national parenting system intercultural is not supported by the some local indigenous communities, who fear that this agenda will exclude them from development. The community members Hood interviews question the value of teaching children in their mother tongue, because Spanish is the language of power and the vehicle for economic security (Hood 2018: 72).

How do children learn in indigenous environments?

How do children learn the values and life skills that make them part of the cultural indigenous community? Is it a conscious and intentional activity, or is it, as de Haan (1999: 90) observes in a Mazahua community in Southern Mexico, an unconscious process of child rearing? This resonates with the definition of cultural reproduction as a socialization process passed on by enculturation, which is a partly conscious, partly unconscious learning experience, with the elders inducing the younger generation to adopt traditional ways of thinking and behaving (Bourdieu 1990).

According to Doucleff (2021) and Coppens (2014) children in indigenous communities generally help their families out without being asked to do so. Doucleff observes this and asks the mothers how they accomplished that as it seems to her that western children need to be enticed to help out. The mothers tell her they teach the children by example and invite them to participate, not by forcing them. 'They love to help if you just let them', they say. Intrinsic motivation to belong to the community is what the parents try to foment. They let them try out new things and make mistakes. Children, they believe, are natural helpers if invited to do so, and they learn by observing, copying and doing from an early age (Doucleff 2021). When Heckt asked the Mayan parents in Guatemala how their children learned, parents mentioned that children learn by observation and imitation, by doing chores together as a team, but also by correcting mistakes and punishment (Heckt 1999).

Rogoff (2014) describes these informal learning practices as LOPI, an acronym for Learning by Observing and Pitching In. Her model describes the 7 facets of LOPI, a coherent system of passing on practical knowledge and life skills, but also conceptual understanding. She shows the interrelationship between individual and community, developing together overtime, from the young child who is motivated to participate and transforms into a community member by that participation. All the facets of the LOPI model interrelate with and reinforce each other. I share her model here, because we will see during the interviews that most participants recognized different phases in their upbringing. Growing up is a step to step process of taking on more responsibility for your extended family and community.

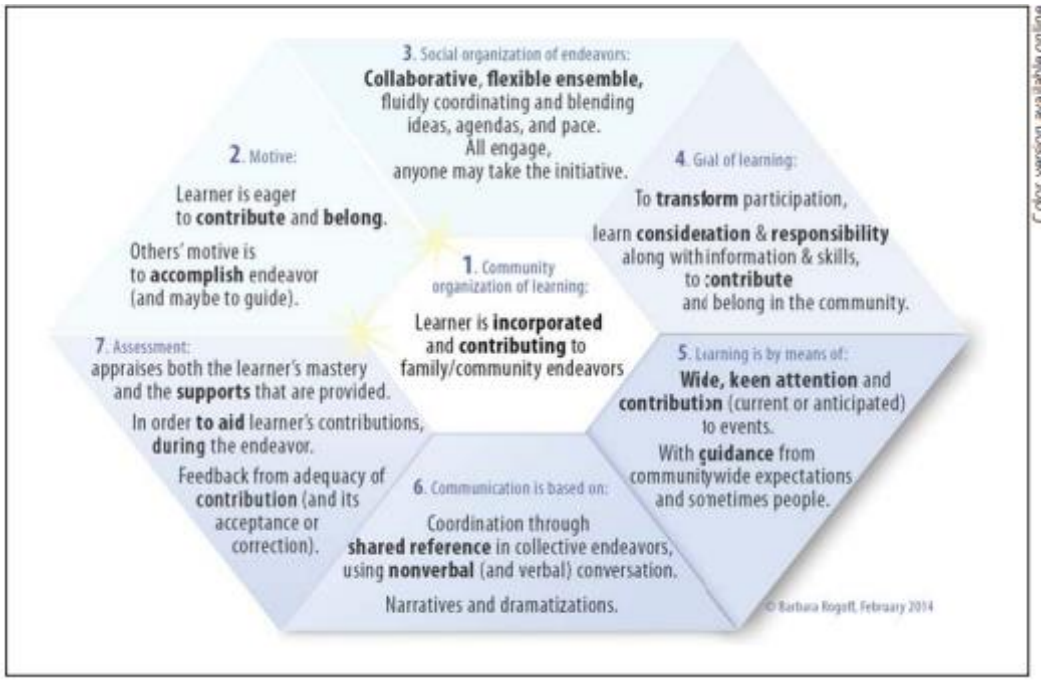

Fig 10: Prism defining the features (Facets) of learning by observing and pitching in (Rogoff 2014: 73)

For example Hagen et all (2016) studied an Agta community in the Philippines to find out how indigenous knowledge is transmitted. They too observed that life skills like hunting, gathering and fishing are learned by observation, imitation and individual experimentation. Moreover they found that the more difficult the task is the more vertical the transmission from parents to offspring. They also noticed that other community members were involved in teaching, and that peers learned together (horizontal transmission) on tasks that were closer to home and easier to learn like fishing.

Rogoff (2014:71) found that this way of teaching children by appealing to intrinsic motivation, immersion and participating is used by indigenous people. She juxtaposes this way of learning by observation and participation against formal assembly line teaching that is used by formal education. Indigenous children raised with the LOPI methodology might have more trouble adapting to this assembly line way of teaching, she argues. She creates a dichotomy between the two ways of learning in her article, but she also says they are not mutually exclusive. The question seems to be not only what children need to learn, but also how they are taught. Intercultural education strengthening indigenous language and culture, while teaching competencies that are useful in their communities to gain a livelihood (Minter at al. 2012: 7), could be a solution to bridge this dichotomy.

Interesting in this learning context are the comments of a young mother on modern versus traditional child raising practices, described by de Haan (1999: 115). The mother criticized the older generation for not paying enough attention to the children and having them tag along versus a 'modern way' which the mother described as actively motivating the children to learn new things.

There is a tension between the elders way of learning by observing and pitching in when you can and the contemporary way of parenting by stimulation, external motivation and praise. We will also notice this with the participants of this research.

Generational change

> "Across generations, some continuities of the past are preserved and built on, at the same time that each new generation transforms what is given (Rogoff 2003: 90)".

Doucleff (2021) argues that indigenous practices are based on parenting traditions, passed on from parents to children over generations. She focuses on those traditional values and traditions to make us understand the difference with western style parenting. She dichotomizes the parenting styles of the three traditional ethnic groups she visits to the 'western' style of parenting, she was taught to raise her daughter with, to make her readers understand the regularities in each community. Because of this genre of writing, she creates awareness about value systems in societies that get reproduced through parenting. However, she doesn't take into account how people strategize around developments that affect their communities like a diversifying economy, as we see happen in the communities around Lake Atitlan for example. She notices that people watch TV and have cellphones, but she doesn't explain how this affects the traditional value system. She mentions children going to school, but we don't learn what that means for the community and the way the local children learn. Changes in parenting over generations on how to adapt to these changed environments are not a topic of her study.

In contrast, Gottlieb and DeLoache's (2017) exploration of childrearing practices in different cultures can be grouped around two main issues. Firstly, how do globalization and migration influence parenting methodology, and what are the strategies parents use to deal with change. The book explores how parents adapt their parenting strategies in a changing global context, like globalization, migration, war, and poverty. Whereas the first version of the book presented the reader with imagined traditional childcare manuals, the new version tells the story about their adaptation to a more interconnected world and how parents adjust their parenting strategies in a changing world.

Secondly, they address the question of how cultural values get reproduced by parenting. Gottlieb and DeLoache and Deloache (2017) focus in their childrearing manuals on reproduction of values, and on parenting as a teambuilding effort. Childcare and parenting are also a way of passing on useful life skills in the community the children grow up in. The question then arises, exactly what are the useful life skills in the context of a world rapidly diverging from the traditional, and how does

one teach them? Where children in rural communities used to learn how to grow food for subsistence, parents now emphasize the importance of school parenting for survival and the need to learn different life skills (Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017).
Rogoff argues that 'humans develop through their changing participation in the socio-cultural activities of their communities, which also change (Rogoff 2014: 11)'. Or as Reyes- Garcia describes the dilemma:

> "…indigenous societies, could be abandoning their traditional knowledge as they perceive that this form of knowledge do not equip them well to deal with the new socio-economic and cultural conditions they face nowadays (Reyes-Garcia 2013)"

Gender specific roles

This brings us to the topic of changing gender roles.

> "From the moment of birth, when the first question asked is whether the child is a girl or boy, gender is one of the most salient features that distinguish human beings. This gender label affects almost every aspect of human social life from birth throughout childhood and the adult years (Best 2010: 534)"

Are gender differences part of nature or nurture, 'biologically inevitable or culturally malleable (Rogoff 2003: 71)?' Rogoff asserts that gender differences are both biologically determined and part of cultural heritage. Because cultures are not static, but change according to changing circumstances, the life skills women need to learn, are also determined by change. The question is if cultural values of gender in the community changes accordingly. Mead (1935) grew to believe that temperaments, or personalities, are variations that either sex can be educated to approximate and are the result of differences in cultural beliefs and activities (Best 2010: 535). "We are forced to conclude that human nature is almost unbelievably malleable, responding accurately and contrastingly to contrasting cultural conditions" (Mead 1935: 280). But it was Whiting and Whiting that researched the role of culture in the development of gender differences (Best 2010: 534). They developed a psycho cultural model for understanding human development, a chain of social and cultural variables that influenced the development of the individual child (Rogoff 2003: 43-44).

In much of the literature the focus is mainly on women and parenting, and on cultural and social values that are passed from mothers to daughters (Coppens 2014; Doucleff 2021; Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017), without explicitly mentioning this gender focus. Since mothers and grandmothers

are often the main care givers of children in their early childhood, one understands the focus on the role of women in early childhood education (Rogoff 2003; Lancy 2015). But acculturation and parenting is much more than just then just caretaking, it involves other family members, and members and institutions of the community (Menchú 1984). Fathers, uncles and grandfathers are important role models especially for boys.

Childhood is the time to learn life skills (Lancy 2015) and those skills are often gender related, he argues. Girls learn their skills from their mother and boys learn their skills from their fathers and other male members of the community (Hagen 2015). Lancy calls the helper stage the early stage of life skills training (Lancy 2018: 59). He describes play as a way to learn life skills, as a first step to becoming a worker, and that this play differs according to gender. For example, girls are given sticks to dig out tubers, while boys are given toy bows and arrows to practice their shooting skills (Hagen 2015). Menchú (1984) also describes the gender specific skills children need to learn, and how the fathers are in charge of the boys parenting and the mothers in charge of teaching the girls. Boys learn from their peers and play with boys work related things, like bows and arrows and fishing pods (Mead 1939, Lancy 2008), while girls do the same in separate groups.

In hunter-gatherer communities women are responsible for the gathering of fruit and roots, the men take care of the hunting. This is reflected in the teaching of the life-skills, so father takes his sons out on hunting expeditions, while women forage the forest with their daughters. Fishing is done by both men and women and girls and boys participate and also teach each other (Hagen et all 2016; Mead 1927). Hunter-gatherer communities were more egalitarian as women made large contributions to the household economy (Rogoff 2003: 184).

However, gender roles are also rapidly changing, and girls need skills to be able to handle adulthood different from the time the female domain was mainly in reproduction and domestic tasks. Men, historically, were more focused on production and the public sphere (Barnard and Spencer 2012:320). Yet Stanzione describes the world of the men and women in Santiago Atitlan differently. He uses the word complementary, as that is how the elders told the story about women and men. The two complementary essences: men are made from white maize and women from the blood red cacao. These blend together the richness of the highlands where corn was grown and the lowland where cacao was grown.

> “The Nawal men were graced in life with Nawal women who complemented their merchant lives in every way, shape, or form. … This is what enabled them to create all the beautiful things that they created (Stanzione 2015: 38).

Women ran the household, the market, the water from the lake and men went out to sell in further places and bring back the merchandise the women needed. Although this is an old story, you can see this reality in Santiago Atitlan of women selling and buying on the market, complementing the men's work, being just as important and equal as that of the men. In his introduction of his ethnography on the Nawales in Santiago Atitlan, Stanzione mentions the influence of fundamentalist Christianity having no tolerance for traditional Mayan beliefs and customs (Stanzione 2015: xvii). This is not only the case for Mayan beliefs and customs, but for gender roles too. In a study on the effects of microfinance on gender roles within the family and women's empowerment, conducted in 2003 in Santiago, the women were asked who was taking decisions in their households as an indicator of empowerment. Although most of them admitted that the man was the head of the household, when asked who had decision power, they almost all mentioned the husband and wife together (Impact evaluation Friendship Bridge).

Fig 11: Santiago women at the market (TrekGuatemala.com)

Main insights

In summary one recognizes cultural regularities of parenting in rural indigenous communities, like the way children learn by observing and participating; the importance of the extended family and the community that surrounds the children from childbirth; how important it is to learn life skills for survival. Values and customs are part of the cultural regularities in a community.

But we also learned that communities change by changes in their environment, its subsistence patterns as societies change from rural to urban; income flows because of remittances; change in political policy. Hence parenting strategies change over generations and accordingly the life skills that children need to learn to survive. Gottlieb and Deloache's book on parenting in

different communities shows us how war, migration, and globalization affects the way parents educate their children and how they try to assimilate, while still keeping their values and traditions alive.

Research Question and sub questions

> "Understanding development from a sociocultural- historical perspective requires examination of the cultural nature of everyday life (Rogoff 2003: 10)."

We can learn about how culture matters by studying the mundane, everyday life; by observing patterns; by understanding culture from within by listening to the insider view, as in the emic approach. The outsider seeks to understand the meaning of the stories of the participants. As this is a single sited research meant to investigate how these changes affect Mayan communities around Lake Atitlan, I set out to investigate what parenting strategies participants used, what values were important to pass on; what skills they learned as a child and if their children learned the same skills or different ones; what gender roles they learned as a child and if they changed overtime. Because of those questions this became a three generational study, with grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers and their children.

During my field research I found that perhaps the most important question was not how Mayan parenting strategies changed but why. What were the underlying reasons for parents to adept a more child focused approach? And what was the most important advice they would give other parents? I thus I came to the following research question and sub questions for my research:

How are Mayan parenting strategies in Solola, Guatemala, affected by changes in the social environment?

Sub-questions

1. What are important values for Mayan parents to pass on to their children and how have they changed from values from past generations? What were the underlying reasons for this change?
2. What are the life skills children have to learn to prepare for adult life? And how do they differ from life skills parents and grandparents had to learn?
3. How would parents describe their parenting style? Who is involved in the parenting of children? Do young parents take parenting advice from grandparents, and/or do they adjust their parenting style incorporating contemporary ideas about parenting?

4. Are changing gender roles reflected in changing parenting styles and the passing on of values and skills?
5. What advice would my research participants have for other parents?

Chapter 4: Methods and Techniques of Research

In this chapter I describe the research methodology I used during my field research and my analysis. Following Marcus' assessment of multi and single sited ethnography(1996) I planned a strategically situated single site ethnography, adding to the body of knowledge about indigenous parenting. I also explain what research strategies I used and how these affected the outcome of my research. Furthermore, this chapter will address data management and the ethical concerns of this field research.

The strategically situated single site ethnography

Marcus (1996: 111) describes the goal behind a strategically situated ethnography as research that by studying a single site tries to analyze systems in a bigger context. In this way the strategically situated single site ethnography sets itself in a local setting, but adds to a body of knowledge about worldwide patterns or systems. There are regularities to be found in indigenous communities all over the world. But indigenous knowledge and customs are only to be understood in local context (Ellen and Harries 2000). My research on Mayan parenting in the highlands of Guatemala means to add to the anthropological body of knowledge on parenting practices and the ways parents cope with globalization and diversity in the twenty first century.

Single-sited ethnography creates spaces to study the mundane, everyday life (Marcus 1996: 99) of indigenous parents. This is a single-sited ethnography, but also it is contextually situated, as the knowledge gained from single-sited research can feed into the body of knowledge about indigenous parenting. This study delves deeper into the history of indigenous Mayans in Guatemala, their ways of reproducing Mayan values and life skills, and how they deal with changes overtime in their communities. And it connects Mayan child rearing strategies to the broader context of discrimination, exclusion and violence conducted against the Mayan people.

Research methodology

The research strategy I used is a qualitative approach doing in depth interviews with participants. It is a combination of an inductive study, using the point of view of the participants in a natural setting with a deductive one departing from the theory on indigenous parenting. An inductive approach develops theory on the basis of observations and findings (Bryman 2012: 26). I went into the field to listen to the stories of people, using the theoretical framework as a tool and guide, not as the theory

that guided my observations and interviews. I used the point of view of the participants as a method to understand the contextual setting (Bryman 2012: 408) in this case the context of Mayan communities around Lake Atitlan.

Sample and access during Covid times

The field research for this study took place during the months of January to March 2022. I lived in Panajachel on the north side of the lake. It took a lot of effort to get there, as the world was ravaged by the covid pandemic and it was difficult to get permission for this research. Because of the pandemic people were more reserved and hesitant to meet up. Most of the interviews took place outside with participants and me having facemasks on.

The sampling method I used is purposive sampling (Bryman 2012: 418-19), using opportunistic sampling to start off with interviewing women I knew because of former work relationships, when I was working in a micro finance program. These women were young girls then in 2000 and stood at the start of their lives and careers. Now they are all in middle age with adolescent children. They studied and work as professionals in development, but come from a background of small farmers and merchants. In addition to this original group of participants I looked for people who came from different backgrounds and occupations, like working in the service industry, selling *tipico* merchandise, and subsistence farming or gardening. As I planned a generational study it was also important to find participants who were grandfathers and grandmothers, to get a three generation perspective.

As you can see from the table (Fig.12) I conducted 17 interviews with women (n=13) and men (N=4) from a wide range of age, occupation and community. As my opportunistic sample consisted of ex-colleagues, friends, and workers in the service industry that I knew, the sample is skewed on gender. This was not because of lack of effort, but also because the men I asked felt hesitant to participate in an interview due to the topic of parenting. Their answer was often that the children were the women's job. I don't know if this changed the outcome of the research a lot as I didn't notice a big difference between the men and women I interviewed.

The sample represents a spread over age, the biggest group being of middle age between 30 and 50. There was a big difference between the younger and the older participants. The people of age over 60 had more vivid memories of exclusion, discrimination, and poverty. Notwithstanding they also felt melancholy for the past, when life was simple, cheap and recognizable. The middle age participants, in the middle of raising children themselves and in the middle of their career were more forward looking, while still remembering the past but more with resentment. The young women

reflected the changes in society right now, talking about equity and equality. In the rest of this study I will make use of these three generational categories for analysis.

The sample is also, I believe, representative on education level and occupation. I would have liked to interview more participants living of subsistence farming and fishing to get a broader range of occupation. But almost all of my participants grew up in families that lived on subsistence farming, service industry and handicraft business. I conclude that my combination of interviews, participant observation and focus groups was enough to get an impression of parenting styles over generations.

The family size differed greatly, with especially the older participants having had or grown up with more than 5 siblings. The families of the middle age women averaged between three and four children, while some higher educated women made the choice of only having two children, because of higher costs involved in parenting.

Main Characteristics of research participants n=17		
Gender	Women	13
	Men	4
Youngest generation	-30	1
Middle generation	31-50	9
Older generation	51-80	7
Education	University	5
	Highschool	4
	Primary school	5
	None	3
Work	Blue color jobs	4
	Small business	7
	Service industry	4
	Home stay mother	2
Family size	1, 2 children	5
	3, 4 children	3
	5 or more	8
	No children	1

Fig. 12: Main Characteristics Research Population

Conducting Fieldwork

Interviews:

Prior to my field research I made an interview list for in depth, qualitative, semi structured interviews [Appendix 2] (Bryman 2012: 471) . The objective of the interview was to talk about childhood experiences, reproduction of values and life skills in the past and in the present. The interview guide was set up to look at the past, present and future. It consisted of three parts: a section on parenting

values; a section about life skills in the past and in the present; and a section on parenting advice. This guide served as a topic list, with a lot of freedom for participants to tell stories about their childhood. The interview process was flexible and unexpected topics came up, but I followed the guide and asked the questions in the same wording. The interview guide worked well keeping track of time and subjects I wanted to address.

I did all the interviews in Spanish as I am fluent in that language and it is also the lingua franca of Guatemala. But the first language of almost all the participants is either Tzutujil or Cakchiquel. I don't believe the language was a barrier during the interviews with the participants. All of them spoke Spanish well as it was part of their occupation to be able to communicate in Spanish. I do think it influenced the sampling in the way that older people, who still lived on subsistence farming and making handicrafts, were more difficult to reach. My goal was to increase the sample by asking participants if I could speak to their parents, but in the Tzutujil villages on the South side of the lake the older people are not comfortable talking about difficult themes in Spanish (comments by younger participants).

I started every interview by reading the introduction text of the interview (Appendix 2), explaining who I was, what the purpose was of the interview and that all the data would be managed anonymously. I decided not to record the interviews out of fear that the start of the recording would disturb the informal setting of the interviews. I took notes of key words and quotes, that I found crucial in the story line. I worked out the interviews in a field log right after every interview. Taking notes at the same time while watching the faces behind the facemasks to capture emotion was sometimes a challenge. This was easier with the women because they were more expressive about emotions. After I came back from Guatemala and started writing this thesis I asked permission of participants if I could use some of the photos as illustrations.

I sometimes experienced that the interview guide formalized the interview process so much that it felt it disturbed the intimacy of the interview setting. Participants became often quite serious when I put out the paperwork and the note book. I experimented with leaving the guide in my bag, just showing the skill and value cards. I also did two second interviews with two women talking about childbirth and customs around babies for the child guide I want to write. Those interviews were more fluid, like oral story telling.

The skills flash cards (Fig. 13) with drawings for tasks children did in the household I had prepared also worked well because of the drawings. At the start of the interview I would spread them out on the table and ask participants to choose the ones of the tasks they did when they were children. People loved choosing them and seemed proud the more cards they collected. Some even added cards and had fun making drawings themselves and made the start of the interviews really relaxed.

Figure 13: Skill cards used during interviews

The cards on Mayan values (appendix 1) I used, meant to illicit a conversation about which values were the most important to reproduce. The cards were difficult to understand for the participants who had little schooling and had trouble reading. There were also too many of them to choose from. Participants found them to be too abstract and general and had trouble understanding why these concepts would have something to do with being Mayan. They understood them to be universal and couldn't understand that other people would have different values. Rogoff (2003) explains that it is difficult for an insider to be able to see how special or singular customs are in one's own setting, if you don't have reference of another culture. I also noticed every life story and context is different and participants wanted to add their own values based on what they wanted their children to learn. After a few interviews I decided to use the value cards as conversation starters, just

choosing a few that seemed connected to the themes participants were bringing in during the interview.

I did double interviews a few times: with a mother and a daughter (2x); a father and a son; the medicine woman mother and daughter. These were not the easiest interviews, because younger participants seemed to be more on guard, not wanting to criticize the parenting strategies of the older generation. But it also seemed that the younger generation found it interesting to listen to the life stories of their parents and what guided them in their parenting decisions. It was interesting to see the respectful interaction between parent and child.

To triangulate data on Mayan culture, I did two interviews with two Mayan medicine women. One of the interviews took place in their clinic outside Chichicastenango, where they treat community members using traditional Mayan remedies and ceremonies. The other one took place in my garden while they collected herbs for use in their clinic. Both interviews were a great opportunity to do participant observation while talking to them. They were helpful explaining me the contradictions I encountered in the stories of the participants, but also the change in society that brought about the changes in child rearing practices.

Participant Observation:

Participant Observation is part of the research toolkit of anthropologists providing a way to participate in daily interaction to learn about aspects of people's lives and culture (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011: 1). It is a process of immersion culture in a different way experiencing the mundane, taking notes and use these fieldnotes as data to analyze and see regularities. (Emerson et al 2011: 21).

Halfway through the field research I felt unsatisfied with the outcomes of certain interviews, especially the ones done in a more public setting as the interview topic brought up a lot of emotion. I had meant for the interviews to be participatory and empowering to the participants, to learn about parenting strategies and how these men and women tried to cope with the present and the future. But the interview setup invited people to talk about their past and that past was often not a happy time to reflect back on. Most participants grew up in poverty, discrimination and during the violence of the civil war.

Participant observation helped me to bridge the gap between the stories about the past and the life in the now and more uplifting than listening to the heavy storytelling. Thus the participant observation and interviews became a useful Synergy for Research. I learned how the extended family takes care of smaller children by following an aunt of a three year old around for the day. I watched the interaction between mothers and children. I cooked with women, while interviewing them. And I observed in the bus, in the clinic of the Mayan medicine women outside of Chichicastenango, during

my visits to two NGO's working with children. I got to experience the observation and pitch in method (Rogoff 2003, Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017, Douceff 2021). The observations gave me the opportunity to ask about parenting practices I had observed. It was easier to have a conversation about how children learn after observations, so I could check what I had witnessed. In that way participant observation and interviews were complementary as a synergy to gather knowledge and understanding.

Focus group discussions:

The focus group method makes use of group discussions with multiple participants to share their view on a specific topic. This gives the researcher the opportunity to explore the topic more in depth. Participants discuss the issues as group members, helped by the researcher, who has a facilitating role. The most important objective of a focus group is the interaction within the group and the construction of meaning (Bryman 2012: 501-2).

As I wanted to deepen my understanding of parenting in Mayan communities from the point of view of the participants I organized two focus group discussions. These were very illuminating as the conversation was less individual and emotional and a great way for us to analyze the dichotomies in upbringing then and now and what could be the reasons for the changes over time.

The first focus group took place during a lunch with three participants. It was really interesting to see how they complemented each other and developed ideas. For example: when I asked how the change from being too strict to being too lenient came about, one of them mentioned the introduction of children's rights policies. That started a discussion on changes over time in parenting and the effects of focusing only on rights and not on obligations.

The big challenge was taking notes during the interaction. The women were very talkative and interrupted each other a lot. It started off as an informal get together with a pot luck. Everybody brought something to eat. I was the facilitator, asking questions, guiding the discussion back to its focus. Instead of jotting down notes I wrote extensive fieldnotes after the women left.

Fig. 14: Focus group 1: photo Sophy Wolters (February 2022)

I organized a second focus group during the end of my stay. The goal was to discuss the outcomes of my interviews, especially the part of the parenting advice section. Learned from my first focus group I prepared posters with the 49 parenting tips I had collected. I asked the eight women, who attended the lunch event to stick ten stars by their favorite or most important tip. I had expected a lot of discussion between them but the process was really fluid. They read the tips and stuck their stars on in silence. As far as I noticed nobody put more than one star at each tip, so one star reflects one advice. After they did the exercise they went on discussing parenting with each other, but more in the way a women's group would discuss their children. How are they? Where are they at? How is the studying going? The results of this exercise will be discussed in chapter 6.

Fig. 15: Favorite tips exercise; photo Sophy Wolters (march 2022)

Fig. 16: Focus Group 2. Photo Nancy Lopez (March 2022)

NGO visits:

I did two visits to NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations): ODIM (Organization for the Development of the Indigenous Maya) and Nuevos Horizontes n(New Horizons). These visits were insightful, as both NGO's worked with adolescents to foment empowerment in Mayan Adolescents. I went to these NGO's as it gave me the opportunity to talk to youth workers and teachers, while at the same time doing some participant observation with adolescents. The two projects also worked on gender equity and equality, bringing boys and girls together to talk about mutual respect.

The first visit was to a health clinic in San Juan La Laguna, called ODIM, on the Lake Atitlan. Part of their programs is a project on sex and gender education for adolescent mixed groups, giving after school workshops on reproductive health, gender equality and communication.

The second visit was to an NGO called Nuevos Horizontes in Chajul in the Ixil triangle in the upper north of the department of Quiche. Their focus is on girls' education in a remote Ixil Mayan community. They started off by giving scholarships to girls in existing schools, but decided they could reach their goals on gender equality, empowerment and opportunity better in their own setting. They also run a local library where children in primary school can come to read books and do games. It was a great opportunity for participant observation as the children being shy at first turned out to be really curious and loved doing games. As I did not interview children these sessions taught me about how empowering it can be for children to be told to be curious about taboo subjects, that asking questions is ok. The following vignette elaborates on this:

> "Two groups of younger children are in reading class. We join the group of I guess 9 and 10 years old. After being somewhat timid they are very curious about who we are and even ask if my friend (who accompanied me on this trip to the Ixil Triangle) is my wife. I am happily surprised the program is even addressing homosexuality, when one of the boys asks me (we are all having facemasks on) if I am a man or a woman. I am wearing pants but do have a huipil on. I think perhaps it is the pants or the short hair, but no, he explains. It is because I don't have earrings on. I buy earrings in a market store in Nebaj that same afternoon (Field log 2022).

Fig. 17: Visit to Nebaj Sophy and Hester. Photo by Ana Rivera (February 2022)

Data management and analysis

To manage the data I gathered during interviews, participant observation and focus groups I kept an extensive field log and managed an excel sheet. The excel sheet was very useful to keep track of where I was in terms of reaching a balanced sample. After 17 interviews and participant observation, I felt I was reaching a point of saturation.

My field log was more useful in detecting patterns and themes, especially after open coding the log. I used the questions Emerson et al. (2011: 177) suggest to examine the fieldnotes and deepen my understanding. What are people doing and what they want to accomplish? What strategies they use? For the analysis of the interviews the question about how people give meaning to their stories was insightful. The most difficult part was finding a focus. So many themes came up during interviews that I had to make a selection and leave other themes for further investigation. I categorized the coding according to the sub question of my research questions and gave each a different color. In the margins I wrote down the concepts I encountered, words people used often while describing their youth. That way I was able to distinguish recurring themes that helped me with the analysis.

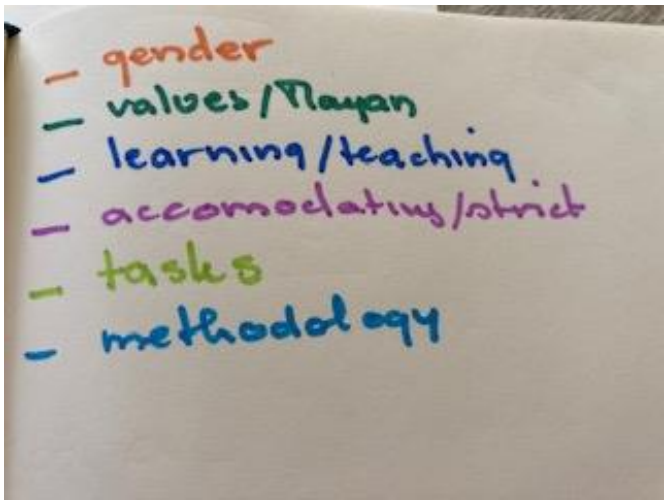

Fig. 18: Open coding categories- Sophy Wolters

(March 2022)

The themes on cultural reproduction, values, skill training and parenting that I did select form the main body of research findings in chapter five and six. I used the inductive method to help find regularities, themes, that participants recognized. But I did go into the field with preconceived ideas from the theoretical framework about parenting strategies to foment cooperation and tried see if what participants say was corroborated by theory. It turns out the field turned some of those preconceived ideas around, which came as a surprise, but also shows how field work can be helpful to shed a different light on reality.

One of the themes that came up during one of the interviews was growing up during the violence of the civil war and being a refugee for years being on the run for both the military and the guerillas. Although this is a really important context of the reality of Guatemala, I decided I would keep my focus on parenting.

Ethical concerns

The interviews I did were all quite emotional with participants expressing their sadness or resentment about their hard lives of poverty and hard work. As I had intended for the interviews to be fun and empowering about Mayan culture and upbringing, that came to me as quite a shock. I sat with people holding their hands, comforting them sometimes on the side walk. I learned how harsh life was for the older participants to grow up in a time of exclusion, discrimination and violence. I turned to my supervisor and another teacher at the institute for advice.

> “This ritualized weeping is a catharsis that seems to lurk under the surface of stories, feelings and yearnings long repressed, including the lake's Caqchiqueles. So there is something about the way that this legacy of the past is passed on, or not to the next generation (Fogarty 2022).”

When talking about the now and the future the mood seemed to change and people found themselves appreciative and understanding of how their parents had suffered. The culmination of each interview with three tips for our childrearing guide turned out to be a great way to end the interviews on a positive note.

A second concern I have is related to how to manage individual stories and generalization of data. The Mayan people in Guatemala have often been portrayed as being dirty, poor and badly educated. One of my participants mentioned this in an interview in a way he had internalized those feelings. I don’t want my findings concerning exploitation, resentment and use of spanking with the chicote to color my thesis and strengthen prejudice.

Perhaps the best way to bring home what I mean is the following example: I read in Lancy (2015) that people in the south often see children as chattel, a workforce for the family to rely on. In one of the interviews the participant was telling me about how hard she had to work and that she was afraid of her parents. But when I asked her if she felt exploited, she got upset and confused and explained that family members help each other out and support each other. She got defensive about her parents and told me they had loved her a lot.

It is my goal to portray the participants in an honest way, representing their stories and emotions, and their strategies to change. It will be a challenge to give voice to all the different emotions that came up during interviews, while at the same time being respectful and understanding of the context.

Chapter 5: Life skills and how you learn them

According to Lancy (2015) the learning of life skills is what defines childhood. Life skills differ by social and economic context and cultural community. This research meant to investigate the context of growing up in Guatemala, which life skills were and are important and how they were taught these life skills. Additionally this chapter means to address gender differences and gender specific skills. This chapter is the first of two empirical chapters, where the participants tell their stories.

Family as an economic and social unit

> "Everybody helped, planted corn, cooked, took care of the animals, and carried fire wood. I did all those jobs voluntarily as I knew and understood my mother needed our help. We were very poor and we didn't have a dad around to do the heavy tasks. The only thing I didn't like was getting up at 4 in the morning to start making tortillas for breakfast. We didn't have a mill in the village so we had to grind the corn with a stone (Woman 51) ."

In all the interviews it becomes clear that the family including the children is the economic and social unit for people. The basic structure of Mayan communities is the extended family as a social and economic unit, where all members participate and help out. Sixteen participants currently live in a form of extended family compound. Family compounds consist of multiple generations living together: parents and grandparent, aunties, uncles and siblings are involved in taking care of the children and providing food and shelter. In indigenous families it is the woman that moves into the family compound of her husband. The participants that migrated from their birth communities are creating new family compounds in the village where they settle.

Children help out with chores and go out to work to help increase the family income. When the parents are getting older, the children start taking care of them, while at the same time they are still actively contributing to the family by baking tortillas and helping out with child care. Grandparents are also important to teach the grandchildren in the traditional customs and skills sets (Stanzione 2016). What did change over the generations, is the skills set children are provided with to prepare themselves for the future, as we can see in the following chapters.

Helpful children

> **"**Respect goes both ways, I say. Your parents made you, clothed you, fed you, and loved you. So you owe your family a debt, to be helpful, to participate, to see when your parents are tired and you need to step in and take over (Woman 63)."

The sub-title of Doucleff's (2021) book is: *the Lost Art of Raising Happy, Helpful Little Humans*. She described a Mayan community in Yucatan Mexico. This thesis started off as a quest to understand if this is also the case in Mayan communities in Guatemala. What is it that parents do to raise children as cooperative members of the family and the community (Doucleff 2021; Gottlieb and DeLoache 2017; Lancy 2015; Rogoff 2004). So, I questioned the participants on what chores they did when they were young, how they learned to do them. Moreover, I asked them if they participated voluntarily or if their participation was mandatory. The following vignette of an interaction between myself, an aunt (45), her niece (3) and me (66) is illustrative of what this sort of parenting looks like.

> "The woman teaches me to make the tortillas, but mine come out smaller than hers and a bit fatter. She doesn't mind and I put them on the plancha to bake. It is a good example of how woman teach their children. She is so patient with us and laughs at our funky looking tortillas. She does the same with her little niece, who has not been a bother the whole morning, she trots along, keeps herself busy. After she eats her lunch she goes and plays with the balance bowls they use in the market to weigh things. She puts old beans on one side and corn in the other. She makes a little packet and sells it to us for imaginary money. There are no toys around. Her aunt tells me:
> "She always wants to help, do whatever I do. When I cut vegetables she wants to do the same. I asked my sister to get her a toy knife as I worry she will cut herself. When I make tortillas she does too. She is never a bother, always willing to help (Woman 47) ."

Fig. 19: Maria and Amsy on their way to the market:
photo Sophy Wolters (February 2022)

The mothers in the Mayan village in Yucatan tell Doucleff (2021) that toddlers love participating, that it is important to keep them engaged. A naughty child is a child with not enough tasks to do. They stress that it is important that the child comes out of its own will. It is her own learning process and it is important to learn voluntarily (Haan 1999). If a child stops with a task, without finishing it that is not problem, the medicine woman tells me.

> "Our parenting system is handed over from generation to generation. Children learn by observing and by storytelling and explanation. A mother might invite the child over to try to make a tortilla, or wash some clothes, without obliging. She will show how to do it and when

> the child tires, she will finish the job and show her how that is done. Everything is a learning lesson. Children observe and pitch in. Participation is key, doing things together (Interview medicine woman 57)."

All the participants agree on the importance of the child joining voluntarily and that it is important to teach children with patience and slowly, adding new tasks according to age. Children grow up faster with more responsibilities than children do in most western cultures, being able to handle a knife, or being close to open fire to help cooking (Rogoff 2003). All of this is done with adult supervision and by assigning age-appropriate tasks. A good example of this is the following story:

> "My mother gave me a bag when we walked home after cutting firewood. I would ask her if I could carry some too and she would give me three logs to carry when I was five years old. She didn't give me too much, and I myself would ask for more when I was ready. It is important when you teach kids something that the task is fitting their age and then you do it step by step (60, male)."

Learning by Observing and Pitching In

As we have seen, researchers found that children from indigenous people learn in a way called the Observe and Pitch in Method. The life world of children is not separated from the child world in an adult focused setting, unlike the children in societies where the child's world is different from the adult's world (Rogoff 2003). Toddlers learn by observing, practicing and pitching in when they can according to their ability and interest with very little parents intervention (Lancy 2011; Rogoff; Haan 1999). During the training of toddlers and young children not much is said or explained. The parent shows how it is done and the child copies (Haan 1999).

> She explains me how she learnt all those things. Her mother would show her and tell her what to watch out for. You would observe and practice. Her father did the same for her. He took her to the fields and to the coffee finca and showed her how to tend the onions, how to water, how to only pick the ripe coffee fruit without harming the plants. She started to weave narrow waistbands as it is heavy work for a small girl to backstrap weave a huipil. Her mother would patiently explain how to separate the threads, how to make the pattern (Fieldlog Feb. 2022).

The participants recognized this way of teaching, as described in the literature, but also said that it was equally important to explain the task if it was more complicated, like weaving. They also mentioned that it was important to take the character of the child into account. A good example of this came up during two interviews, done separately with a father, and a double interview with the mother and the daughter.

> The father: "Children are not of the same character. Some children are *acomedida* (accommodating) and others less helpful and more rebellious. It also changes overtime. Children change a lot when the reach adolescence. For example: one of my children (1st boy) was a rebellious kid and turned out really well and is now very obedient and respectful, hardworking and doing well in everything. My daughter was a sweet, helpful child when she was young, but changed into a rebellious adolescent, who wouldn't study and is not very helpful in the house, forgetful and easy distracted from the tasks that are her responsibility now (Man 42)."
> The mother: "Sometimes a child doesn't want to learn something, like my daughter, she didn't want to make tortillas. She doesn't like cooking or household chores. And that was okay (41)."
> The daughter: "When I was growing up, I was expected to do the girl tasks, like washing the dishes, clean house and help take care of the younger siblings. But I didn't really like to do household tasks. I don't like cooking for example, so my mom always did. So I couldn't cook when I married my husband (22)."

The process of learning consists of steps with subtasks that become more and more difficult, when the child becomes more able. Children observe and copy, learning to do the tasks taught by their parents with a lot of patience, especially with tasks that require difficult skills like weaving, spinning, and, as the example shows from my field log, cutting trees down.

> The father shows up this morning with his eleven year-old son as his assistant. He climbs in the tree and cuts down branch by branch with his machete and carefully lowers the cut branches with ropes to avoid the internet line that hangs under the tree. This is where the helper comes in. The son grabs the branch, lowers it, unties the rope and drags the branch to the firewood shed in the back of the garden. When the father needs more rope the son ties it on a little string for his dad to pull it up. The father carefully guards him if a situation is tricky, soft spoken, patiently. The eleven year old waits patiently for every branch unlike his little brother (6) who is observing when he is not distracted by play.

Both boys listen well, they do as told. At some point the father gives the younger boy of 6 easy tasks to do. He looks for tiny branches and puts them next to a log and gives the younger boy a smaller machete and shows him how to cut the branches in pieces that will serve to light the fire. The child does this for a while until he gets distracted and starts kicking a ball around with his brother. They play hide and seek, run through the garden and demolish the hammock using it as a swing. Not a word from the dad though. And when I comment on the boys' behavior when they leave in the later afternoon, he starts laughing and says: "Boys are boys, what to do?"

One day I walk in and see the boy of 11 pulling himself up with a rope. He is quite high already. I shout at him and ask what he is doing as he is in a tree that is not on the list for demolition. He shouts back: "Practicing." The dad laughs proudly and says: "That is why I bring them. Look at him. Before too long he will be able to do the job by himself." He tells me he started off as a young boy of 8 years old, helping out his grandmother, cutting branches down from an old avocado tree. He had no dad around so he offered to go up and do it himself (Garden Panajachel, January 2022).

This emphasis on the importance to look at the individual child and see how you can accommodate his strengths and interests, was surprising to me, as I didn't encounter this as a parenting strategy in any of the books I read. The medicine woman explains about how Mayan cosmology takes into account the sign in your Mayan calendar, called your *Nawal*:

> "It is really important to know what the *Nawal* is of the children and where he or she stands in the family composition… A person is who he is and his parents have to pay attention to cater to his special needs …The nawal is not your destiny, it is a way to understand the psychology of a person. It can make you understand. And that is very important in the raising of children (medicine woman 57)."

The *chicote* (whip) symbol of authority

Doucleff (2021) introduces the term *acomedida* in her book, the term meaning a child accommodating his/her parents by participating and contributing voluntarily. Only one participant in my study knew what the term meant, probably because the word is used in studies about Mexican communities and the word is not used in Guatemala. When I explained that the term stands for helpful and cooperative children, everybody knew what I meant. They confirmed they were accommodating as children and that they would like for their children to be helpful and cooperative.

But they explained that children used to be more accommodating in the past and that children nowadays are growing up differently. As a grandmother explains:

> "My grandchildren are constantly on the phone. They don't want to help out. They cry when they have to put their plates in the pila. I finally put the rules down and said no more telephones during dinner. But I had to give up looking at my own phone too so I would be a good example. They should pitch in more. I have them washing their own clothes now (Woman 47)."

I expected the reality of children growing up in Mayan families to reflect the picture that Doucleff (2021) painted of children happy to help, taught from an early age to be accommodating. It was what I had noticed living in Peru and Guatemala: children standing in a bus for 3 hours without complaining because the mother didn't have the money to buy a ticket for a seat. Girls helping out making the tortillas, laughing, joking, happy to be meaningful. Babies in a sling on the back of a mother selling her tomatoes on market day. An adolescent filling up hacky sacks with plastic kernels, crocheting them, while the radio is playing, laughing with his peers. The picture I had in my head was pretty much the same as the scenes described by Douceff (2021). But when I asked the participants if they helped out voluntary, most of them told me they did it out of respect, obligation to the family, and out of fear of being punished:

> "My parents were so strict I was afraid of them and did what they wanted before they even asked, so they never had to use the chicote on me. I would never have discussed my parents authority. I was an obedient child. But I also understood that we were poor and that I had to contribute to the family with my work. My brother was not that way. He would talk back or tell my parents to do the work themselves. Then he would be hit with a chicote (woman 47)."

Participants introduced the term *chicote*, a leather strap used for spanking hanging in the kitchen. Some mother told me they threatened the kids: "wait until your father comes home!". The following excerpt explains the confusion I was in observing and listening to the stories about parenting and growing up in Guatemalan communities.

> A family gets on the bus in Sacapulas, a grandfather, grandmother, a daughter in law carrying a baby and 4 boys, sons or grandsons of the older couple. The driver is out for lunch having driven to Guatemala City and all the way back. They take their time settling in. The man is sent out by his wife to buy drinks and sweets for treats. The young mother is silent and

> doesn't bother with the boys so I think she is not the mother. Once the bus gets going up the steep hill towards the valley of Nebaj, our destination, the younger kid sitting with the man keeps staring at us. Or at the landscape. It is like the perfect example of this harmonious family I was promised I would find in Mayan communities: obedient and accommodating kids and parents and grandparents being softspoken. The boys don't whine. Until tomatoes start rolling through the bus. I pick up a few and tap the older man on the shoulder. "Are these yours." It turns out the merchandise they are taking up topped over and lots of tomatoes fell out. More people in the bus help picking up the tomatoes, even the bus driver's assistant, laughing, as people often do here when something bad happens. The older man is pretty angry though, perhaps embarrassed and says something under his breath to the older boy sitting next to him. The boys shies away and starts crying. When they get out of the bus he has a bloody nose. The man clearly hit him right in the face, although I didn't see that happen (observation in the bus to Nebaj, fieldlog 16-2-2022).

The medicine woman explains that the chicote is a symbol for authority of the parents.

> "Most parents don't use it often, only as a way to scare children. Some children need more authority than others. Restless kids need to be focused. We do rituals here outside by the ceremonial fire. We once passed a chicote over the fire while praying and then passed the disobedient boy over the fire and prayed. The chicote became a symbol of authority. The ancestors blessed the chicote. The parents took the chicote home and put it on the wall in the kitchen. They never once had to use it and the boy became obedient without a single slap. The chicote is a didactic strategy."

But the following excerpt from an interview also shows how wise and loving parents can be towards their children, when I asked a mother of ten what she does when a child has a *berinche* (temper tantrum). She explains children that have a *berinche* have a very heavy pressure on their soul, but when she says this she presses her hand against her heart.

> "You need to hold them and talk softly to them and tell them it will be alright. They can get angry, lash out, throw themselves on the floor. Sometimes it is because they are confused, or too much is asked from them, or somebody gave them 'ojo', the evil eye. So they are frustrated and don't understand the heavy load that is pressing them down. If you can't calm them, you give them mineral water, half a cup, with seven drop of lime juice, a pinch of salt and half an Alka-Seltzer. It will sooth their burning stomach, it is too hot and you need to cool

it down. You feed it one t spoon at the time. The next day they will be calm, the feverish feeling will be gone, but you give them the same remedy again. If this doesn't calm them you can give them a mixture of *ruda* (green herb used is traditional healing) and Alka-Seltzer. But that is a stronger medicine. I did this with my children and do it with my grandchildren. Or you pass an egg or if you don't have that or it is evening and the shops are closed you can also quart a lemon and pass that over their body. Then you throw it away behind you back without looking at it (Woman 63). "

In summary the findings show that early childhood is a time of learning together, parents, peers and children, with patience and eye for the individuality of the child. But when the child enters in middle childhood, life becomes more serious and the relationship with the parents consequently more vertical and hierarchical. Play time is over and responsibility begin. So, the question is what does middle childhood look like?

Coming of age at eight

'I am the oldest of the family. I can't remember I ever played, perhaps I did, but I can only remember working. From 8 years on I was expected to make petates together with my parents. I learned by observing, copying and doing. I didn't like to be working all the time. I feel I lost out on being a child.."

Middle childhood is the time when a child stops being a helper and starts being a worker (Lancy 2018; Rogoff 2003; de Haan 1999). In most of the interviews I heard a version of this coming of age story. Participants mentioned a change in responsibility at the age of eight. As Babies and toddlers they were cared for and loved, allowed to learn by make believe play, taught to be a participant family member with patience. But when entering middle childhood children are expected to work, obey and finish tasks. Middle childhood is the time when children start to make sense of life, to know things, to be able to carry responsibility, to have a sense of social understanding. It is the time you start your serious learning experience, so parents pay more attention to children during this age. It is the time when they can follow directions and take initiative (Lancy 2011: 296). As one man explains:

"From 8 years old you learn to do more and more difficult tasks. Cutting firewood for example is difficult as you need to be able to handle the machete and it is heavy work (man 42)."

Rogoff also sees this change from early to middle childhood. Children are supposed to perform and finish a task and work independently. This is the time when children get trained seriously (Rogoff 1975: 354). Where participants spoke about the patience their mothers had while letting them learn at an early age, they tell me that from 8 years on, you could get hit with a stick on your fingers if you got the weaving wrong. Boys at this age were supposed to go with their father to the field to work or to the woods to cut firewood, because now they can use the machete, where before they would be with their peers and mothers. Lancy speaks about the middle childhood of the time boys and girls get separated and learn their specific tasks and trade. So what did participants tell about the gender roles Heckt (1999) describes as part of the Mayan value system?

Gender specific tasks and changing roles

> "My father was in charge of the boys and my mother of the girls. We all had to work, to make *petates* (reed mats) though. But on top of that I had to cook and clean and do the laundry. I loved doing the laundry, because to wash we go down to the lake. Lots of other girls my age did the same so it was a time for socializing. Boys would show up too and flirt. It meant we could giggle and also get to know boys, as I was not allowed out by my parents (Woman 47)."

At the start of the interview participants looked at skill cards that showed tasks to be done around the house. As I only interviewed 4 men and 13 women it is difficult to draw conclusions about gender specific tasks but the table does show a pattern. Some tasks are exclusively the realm of women, but all the other tasks were performed independently of gender, as we can learn from the table of chosen skill cards (Fig. 19). A realm exclusive to women and girls seemed to be the tortilla making process. The cooking of the corn, the grinding, and the baking of the tortillas is done by women, not men. With more women working outside the house tortillas are bought in tortilla shops, but those are always run by women too.

> A woman tells me the baby was born with a caesarian and that she started bleeding again, that why she came to the clinic. I ask her if nobody told her to not lift things for 6 weeks. She looks at me puzzled and says: "So who would go to the mill with the *mixtamal* (corn cooked in lime water?" I ask her if her husband could go and she laughs quickly covering her smile with black front teeth. "That would totally embarrass him, that a woman's job. But perhaps we can go together and he carries the bucket, would that be okay (young woman 18 in clinic Chichicastenango)?"

Most literature on childhood in indigenous communities describe that there are gender specific tasks within families and communities. Participants corroborated that boys and girls in adolescence start to have their social lives separately from each other. But I found little evidence that boys and girls performed very different tasks from each other. There were not many examples of tasks that were gender specific, in fact it seemed that more tasks were gender neutral performed by whoever was available at a certain time. The following table (Fig. 20) shows which chores participants did at home based on the chore cards they chose at the beginning of the interview:

Tasks	# chosen	Done by
Doing errands	16	Boys and girls
Washing dishes	14	Boys and girls
House cleaning	14	Girls
Working outside the home	14	Boys and girls
Doing homework	13	Boys and girls
Cutting firewood	12	Boys and girls
Cooking	12	Girls
Fold clothes	12	Boys and girls
Washing clothes	11	Girls
Looking after children	10	Girls
Weaving	9	Girls
Growing vegetables	7	Boys and girls
Sowing corn	6	Boys and girls
Taking care of animals	6	Boys and girls
Making tortillas	5	Girls
Pick up toys	5	Boys and girls

Fig. 20. Table: tasks divided by gender, according to participants (N=17).

When asked if their kids were doing any of this work, the results became even less gender specific as boys were supposed to help out after they finished their homework and husbands participate in cooking and cleaning to help out their wives if they have jobs outside the household. The female participants did mention that some of the tasks were normally performed by boys, but that because there were no boys in the family or the father was absent, they were expected to do those tasks anyway.

One of the male participants explained, that the world is rapidly changing. When he was young tasks were divided along gender lines. But nowadays he expects all of his children to participate in every task. He said he had to learn that it is actually the woman who does most of the work and needs to be respected for that. He finds it important his boys participate in cleaning,

cooking, washing clothes, cleaning the house. His first daughter was raised more traditionally as a girl but he wished now they had done so differently.

> "It is important for girls to know how to change a light bulb, to have a job and earn money. So although the Bible says the man is the boss in the household he finds that there should be gender equity (man 42)."

A woman explains about which chores are gender specific:

> "Girls and boys have different tasks in the household. At least it used to be like that in the past. Boys worked outside the home and helped their dads watering the vegetables, bringing firewood home, plant the *milp*' (corn), sell merchandise outside the town. And the girls went with their mothers, washing, weaving, cooking, selling food in the market, grinding the corn, making tortillas. But it is not that women only worked at home, they often had their own business going on, selling food, merchandise, running a store, weaving huipiles and embroidering them, making macrame or beaded bracelets, keeping a cow for milk or meat. So it is not that women don't make money, they have their own money and help out in the family or help the kids through school (Woman 52).

As we learn from this participant gender differences are recognized but in real life, all family members are part of a unit and do what needs to be done. Twelve of the female participants mentioned that it was really important to be independent. One woman in the sample is a stay home mom with three small children. She told me she would love to work and make her own money, but doesn't see how she could do that while taking care of the children, one still nursing. She wanted to study architecture and finished college prep school, but the children got in the way. Another woman in her thirties always worked from an early age and loved it. Her husband wants her to stay home and take care of the children.

What all these stories reflect is that there is a traditional division of labor in families with women being in charge of the home and the market, and men the world outside the community, agriculture and inter urban trade. But in reality it was often the family composition that defined the gender roles in the family. If a father was absent or unreliable because of an alcohol problem or a divorce or death, the mother would take over and expect all of her children to participate. If a family consisted mostly of daughters, especially the older children, they would be expected to do 'boys' tasks too. When asked about women's and men's tasks participants will say there is a clear division. But when shown the cards there was hardly any difference noticeable.

Changing life skills in a changing world

> "I never got a new *huipil* (woven blouse) or *corte* (wrap around woven skirt). There were holes in my clothes and the only shoes I got were those plastic sandals you can buy on the market for really cheap. Your feet were always sweating in them. When they broke my mother would tape them together again. I only went to school for one month. You had to bring sugar for the *atol* (corn drink) that they served at school. But sometimes my mother didn't have money for sugar. The other well to do children would laugh at me, because of the holes in my clothes and because I couldn't speak Spanish (Woman 52)."

When we arrived in Guatemala in 1987 the majority of Mayan children were kept at home, as their parents believed that it was more useful to learn skills as subsistence farmers, merchants, and weavers. But the world is changing and more and more parents and children believe that a solid education is the way to move out of poverty. As we can see from this table in the Human Development index on Guatemala numbers of school enrollment have been climbing since 1990.

	Life expectancy at birth	Expected years of schooling	Mean years of schooling	GNI per capita (2017 PPP$)	HDI value
1990	62.3	6.5	3.1	5,417	0.481
1995	65.1	7.0	3.5	5,967	0.511
2000	67.8	8.5	3.7	6,428	0.549
2005	69.8	9.8	3.5	6,636	0.574
2010	71.5	10.5	4.3	7,143	0.606
2015	73.3	10.8	6.4	7,932	0.652
2016	73.5	10.7	6.4	8,029	0.653
2017	73.8	10.6	6.5	8,143	0.655
2018	74.1	10.6	6.5	8,274	0.657
2019	74.3	10.8	6.6	8,494	0.663

Fig. 21: Table Human Development Index Guatemala HDI 2020

All of the participants told me they were doing their best to send their kids to primary and secondary school. They sacrificed and worked to make it possible. Although there is free public education at primary and lower middle school level, most of the higher education is private and very expensive.

> "Education is really important, to develop your capacities. Teach them how to fish, don't give them hand-outs, that is the best inheritance you can leave your kids (Man 42)"

Despite this tremendous effort parents expressed their doubts about all this education effort. Especially the male participants argued that too many kids entered the work force with a diploma, but that there wasn't any work for all these professionals. They wondered if it wouldn't be better to teach them a trade, something that they could find work in or be self-employed. Miguel the tree cutter explains:

> "My son has to learn to work, he has to learn the trade. It is ok for him to go to school. But a trade like cutting trees in populated places is valuable. That way he can earn his money when I am old."

The tipico vendor, sitting in his shop, reminiscing about the time the business was booming, wonders about the future of his business. None of his children want to take over. Some of them went to San Francisco to work and live. The others finished high school and work as professionals. He sighs:

> "I know people put a lot of value on education, but so many children study, get their titles and then never find a job as a professional. But managing a good business like this shop with so many clients, that is what I want them to learn (Man 64)."

Especially the women participants see the value of education, not only as a means to get a job, but a way to develop, to become empowered, to learn things about the world. The women who couldn't go to school because they were not allowed, struggled through adult education programs to be able to get a diploma. One participant told me the following story and I am quoting her extensively because she was the only one of the participants who went through such a traumatic time during the civil war. The Ixil triangle, an area in the north of the Department of Quiche suffered tremendously from the civil war, especially in the start of the eighties:

> "I wanted to go to school. I was jealous of my brother who was allowed to go for a while. When I was 10 years old the civil war came to our community. The soldiers burned our houses and destroyed our corn fields. For years we were refugees, fleeing the army, fleeing the guerillas. We were caught in the middle in the valleys while they fought on the mountain tops. People were killed, sometimes I had to step over their mutilated bodies. When we didn't know where to go anymore, we went to the army barracks at the airfield between Nebaj and Chajul. We asked for help and were placed in a refugee camp (La Pista, Chajul). It was a time of settling down and a little bit of peace for me. We were given a place and plastic and corrugated iron roof plates and built a shack. We were given corn and beans. But what I

> loved most is that the army forced the parents to send their kids to school. Finally at age twelve I was allowed to start primary school. I was a quick student so I went through two or three years of school in one year and finished primary school when I was fifteen. I also made a lot of friends in the camp and replaced my mother for community tasks. This was also the first time I took on the role of community leader. I had picked up some Spanish and would translate for people. We did community work and the tasks the army assigned to us to clean up and organize the camp. It started very early with me to want to be a leader. It came naturally to me (Woman 51)."

She married young and had 6 children. She is an Ixil teacher at a school and a representative for the Council for Indigenous affairs. And on top of all that she is doing a dual master: law and pedagogy.

Having received an education and having a job means empowerment for women, explains one of the participants.

> "I learnt how to speak up in my marriage because of my job in the microfinance program. We were trained to give talks about empowerment and family planning and so I learned also to speak up, be empowered and follow my own way. My husband didn't like that at all but for me it was the start of freedom. And my second relationship is so much better now because I know I can talk to him (Woman 45)."

Surprisingly when asked for parenting advice (see list appendix 3), not many tips were about school education. Most of the tips were about skills and values for family life, apart from number 3: teach your children to read and write. The three participants that didn't go to school mentioned the fact that they had not received formal education quite casually, not seeming bothered or seeing it as a handicap in life. One has a good tipica business and sells merchandise on the main street of Panajachel. One is a maid and a healer.

Since Guatemalan schools have been closed for two years since the pandemic started in 2020 it might be that education has become less of a focus for parents. The children are all at home and having an online class for an hour every day that they have to follow on a mobile phone. Parents having their children around started to involve them into the running of the household and the business. Some adolescents dropped out of school entirely and started working. The children help more at home and can spend time learning a trade from their fathers and mothers. It might be a time of revival of traditional skills and jobs. Unlike the panic over a lost generation in the Netherlands, I did not get the idea that parents thought the children were missing out. On the contrary it felt as if parents were very comfortable having the children at home and teaching them the life skills they

learned. Having had a gap for 2 years now due to the pandemic it seems like people are returning to traditional knowledge transmission.

In conclusion of this chapter I think we can say that some of the theory has been confirmed, especially about learning by observing and doing. We can also conclude that children all described themselves as helpful and cooperative, because they felt the obligation towards the family. All of the participants worked hard and learned a lot of skills. But over generations the role of the children has changed. Parents with adolescents complained that the youth nowadays expects golden apples falling from a tree, as one of the participants told me. So, now we will go on to the chapter about reproduction of values to see if there also we can see changes in parenting over generations.

Fig. 22: Children at school. Photo Sophy Wolters 2005

Chapter 6: Parenting Values

As this thesis explores the cultural nature of parenting strategies in Mayan communities, the second section of the interview were dedicated to finding out if people identified as Mayan and if they could explain what was specifically Mayan about the values they want to reproduce in their children. It turns out this was very difficult for people to answer. Some participants answered that the values, I presented them with, were universal. For others it was difficult to express what values they were raised with and what they wanted their children to learn in terms of values. It was easier for them to answer this question in the form of parenting advice (section 3 of the interview guide: appendix 2), as they were asked to give at the end of the interview. I integrated the results of the parenting advice exercise we did in this chapter. The different sub sections reflect the key themes that came up.

Identifying as Mayan

> "A child asks his father after learning in school about indigenous people: "When am I going to meet an indigenous person, Papá?". The father answers : "Look in the mirror and you see one" (Man 42)."

Two aspects of experiencing Mayan identity stood out from the interviews. Firstly, all participants I talked to expressed being proud of being Mayan. Most of my middle age and younger participants liked the term because it is more specific to context than the term indigenous. The older people, over 50, often used the terms indigenous and *naturales*, or 'being from the earth', as they explained. They mentioned the richness of their culture, their woven and embroidered clothing, language, food, and customs.

Secondly, participants did also talk about being exploited and discriminated against, but this was always mentioned as a thing of the past. One participant expressed resentment that Mayan people were viewed as backwards and lazy, while indigenous people had been used as free or cheap workforce to keep the plantations going. "Where would Guatemala be if it wasn't for us?" he asked me. "But still we were called dirty Indians". He told me that 'his people' were dirty in the past and badly educated, as if he had internalized the criticism, as DuBois (1905) mentions when he talks about 'double consciousness'. Sebastiana, the younger medicine woman from Chichicastenango explained, when I asked her about the dichotomy of being proud and being ashamed of being Mayan:

> " Those were different times. It was before the peace accords. We felt we were inferior. The teachers were ladinos and not from our town. They felt superior. After the peace accords everything changed. We felt heard and valued. Children were allowed to speak in their own language. They could wear their 'traje'. And I think the attitude of parents towards children also changed (Interview Mayan medicine woman: 16-2-2022)."

Especially the older people I spoke to remembered the 'castellanizacion' program in public schools and how indigenous children were humiliated. Children weren't allowed to wear their *traje* to school and couldn't communicate in their own indigenous language. The teachers would check on their nails in the morning although they knew all of the children started the day out in the field or working at home. Or the teacher would comment on their long hair, while there was no money for a haircut.

Another male participant explained how working at a cotton *finca* had colored his view on life, even though it was in his youth some 50 years ago.

> "We were very poor. We ate only tortillas and beans and a bit of meat on Saturday when it was market day. We added *hierbas* (green herbs), that I found between the corn stalks. I worked really hard from a very young age, as I was the only man in the house. I didn't get my first rubber boots until I was 14. You couldn't make any money in Todos Santos and if you did they paid you 25 cents for a day. So to pay for my school supplies I went down to the coast to pick cotton. We were transported like cattle in trucks. You could make 75 cents a day on the *finca* if you worked hard. I went once a year for two months. You had to sleep on the ground and they would feed you 6 tortillas with every meal. It is difficult to learn how to pick coffee or cotton. The people that are used to it do it way faster. It was not fun to be on the finca. I was always happy to come back home (Man 64)."

He was hesitant about rating values, when I asked him to choose some parenting values he found important, as if the dehumanizing experience at the *finca* had colored his opinion about himself. He was the only male participant that was still in full *traje,* proud to be Mayan, proud of the successful store he had set up with his wife, proud of his children who studied to have a degree, while at the same time expressing his insecurity about his Mayanness.

Especially in the interviews with older participants I noticed a sense of melancholy for the past, even though the past was hard. Life is rapidly changing and becoming more complex, as we learn from one participant:

> "I remember how happy I was with just tortillas and beans and just a little bit of meat on Saturdays. Life was simpler then and I was a lot happier (man 64)."

Traje as a cultural expression

Especially the women participants (11 out of 18) chose language, customs, and dress as the cultural values they wanted to pass on. It is mostly the women that use the *traje* from their village. Macleod (2004: 285) explains that Mayan women became the representation of the Mayan movement, because of this expression of cultural heritage in dress and language.

> "Mayan women's clothing is thus a sign, which has both a form (signifier)—what we see—and diverse (signified) meanings for different people or groups, and operates like a language. For most Mayan women in Guatemala, traditional dress (*traje*) forms part of and expresses their identity, although this does *not* imply that if a woman stops using her traditional dress she stops being Mayan; rather, that *traje* constitutes one sign among many through which identity is expressed (Macleod 2004: 681).

The women participants were proud to wear their *traje* and even wear huipiles from other villages as a show of solidarity of Mayan indigeneity, positioning themselves in a collective identity (Macleod 2004: 685).

The youngest generation of women don't identify with being Mayan the same way as their mothers do. They don't speak their mother language, they often don't wear *traje* anymore, but jeans and t-shirts. They seem to assimilate to 'main stream' culture in dress, outlook, behavior and use of language. Mothers wearing a huipil bake the tortillas in the store, helped by their daughters in jeans and t-shirts (See photo x). A mother who sells *tipica* (handwoven skirts and blouses) to tourists tells me her daughter owns a *paca* store (second hand clothing from the US).

> "I know lots of girls don't wear their huipil and corte anymore. Pants and t-shirts are perhaps way more comfortable. A huipil is expensive and heavy to wear and wash. But it is our way, the way we identify with being us (Woman 52)."

And another woman expresses her frustration at her own children:

> “Children can’t understand their grandparents who speak Cakchiquel. At home we speak our mother tongue but sometimes when we go out to the market and I speak Cakchiquel to my children they will respond in Spanish, like they are ashamed to hear other people hear them speak our own language. That hurts me, because it makes me feel like the olden days when it was a shame to be Mayan, when we were not allowed to speak our language or when the pastor in the church say we have to leave our pagan ways behind (Woman 47).”

The next vignette is an illustration of how cultural expression is changing around Lake Atitlan:

> “Waiting for the boat to leave from Santiago Atitlan back to Pana- it has to fill up with 24 people- I am watching three young girls sitting on the bench near the boat with baskets on their laps to catch tourists to sell their little trinkets to, a few bracelets, a few hacky sacks, some beads, a little wooden statue, hand carved. They lean back and watch something on one of their mobile phones. They are not aware of the people coming by to get into the boat, so mesmerized are they watching. They don’t wear their Santiago ‘traje’. Two of the girls have those hip ripped jeans on with a t shirt, one wears a corte and a huipil. They all wear a black facemask, because of the pandemic. Their hair is cut in a hip bob. I know their mothers are at home, with their huipiles on with exotic birds embroidered on them, with their long black shiny braids. They probably prepared the baskets and told their daughters to make some money at the dock, where the boats lie with tourists coming in for a daytrip to see Maximom. But the girls have more urgent matters to attend to, just like our adolescents in Holland. (Participant Observation 15-1-2022).”

Fig. 23: mother (41) in *traje*, daughter (22) in jeans and t-shirt and grandchildren (6 and 4) in princess dresses: photo Hester van Kruijssen 2022

We can see from the above series of family portraits that younger people overtime don't find *traje* important as an expression of Mayanness. Although the indigenous *traje* is not worn anymore by this younger generation, the daughter still identified as being Mayan.

Interesting in this context is the story that Tomasa, the older medicine woman in Chichicastenango I interviewed, told us of a meeting with parents and school teachers. In the meeting the adults were wondering why the youth was so disrespectful and rebellious.

> "I stood up and told them: I may not be an educated person. I have never been to school. But I tell you this. The youth is lost, because we didn't pass on our Mayan values to them. We let them wear western clothes. We talk to them in Spanish, they don't even know the Mayan word for respect for elders. We didn't teach them in the traditional ways. And we wonder why they are lost? It is our fault, we haven't passed on our heritage (interview 2 Medicine women 3-3-2022)."

Fig. 24: Tomasa y Sebastiana, the medicine women of Chichicastenango. Photo Sophy Wolters 2022

Parenting values identified

So, what are these values Tomasa is talking about? During the interview (see appendix 2) one of the questions was: "can you choose three of the value cards that you find most important?". Most of the value cards were derived from the list of Mayan values Heckt (1999) defined in coproduction with Mayan elders in Guatemala. Some participants took the opportunity to add some values they found important (for Heckt's list see appendix 1). The cards proved very useful, not so much as a tool during interviews (see Chapter 4), but as a context to interpret the interviews and participant observation.

Some of the participants chose more than one value, or added more values during the interview. In the following table (Fig. 25) we can see what values were chosen most. The cards that the participants added in the course of my field research, namely equity and equality, were chosen more often by the younger participants. Religion, language and traje were added more by the older participants. But we can conclude from the sample that a majority finds respect, responsibility, education, productivity, and discipline the most important values to pass on to their children.

Values	# chosen	Brought in by
Respect	11	Heckt
Responsability	9	Heckt
Productivity	6	Heckt
Education	6	Participant
Obedience	5	Heckt
Discipline	6	Heckt
Develop your capacities	5	Participant
Equity	5	Participant
Solidarity	8	Heckt
Honesty	4	Participant
Voluntary help	4	Participant
Traje	4	Participant
Respect for nature	4	Heckt
Selfesteem	3	Participant
Independence	3	Participant
Religion	3	Participant
Language	3	Participant
Gender roles	2	Heckt
Equality	2	Participant

Fig. 25: Frequency with which values were top three chosen during interviews. Sophy Wolters 2022

So let us look at the values participants recognized in their own upbringing and which of the values they found important to reproduce.

Productivity and working skills

All 17 participants mentioned, that they had to work hard when they were young. They had to help out doing household chores. When they were young this was encouraged in a playful way, but when they became older they were forced on to take more responsibility. In some way or another every participant expressed that life was hard and stressful, when they were young. They say too much was

expected of them at too early an age. The following quotes from participants shed light on how they remember their youth:

> "We were very poor when we grew up. I am one of six children, I was a middle child. My father worked on a coffee plantation up in the valley of Panajachel. We all had to work hard and help him. We had to carry big bags of fertilizer way up the hill when I was only 8 years old. The bag of 50 kilos would be hanging on a band on my head. It was so heavy that sometimes I fell backwards because of its weight. Then we had to fertilize the coffee plants and walk back down at the end of the afternoon (woman 52)"

> "My mother worked doing laundry for the ladino families in town, so often I had to grind the *mixtamal* (cooked corn with calcium) on the *piedra* (grinding stone), because we didn't have enough money to go to the mill. That was very heavy work for a skinny 8 year old. I also had to help caring for my younger brothers and sisters and wash the laundry (woman 63)."

One of the participants answered when I asked him if hard work was a Mayan value:

> "I think so, yes. Ladino kids grow up very spoiled. Everything is given to them. They don't learn to be hard working and responsible. I think it is because indigenous children grow up poor. They don't get anything for free. They have to work double hard to get ahead. So then when you got somewhere it strengthens your self-esteem and don't squander what you have."

One participant tells the story that her father was a drunk and that she would go out into the coffee lots in her village to pick up the fallen fruit to sell and give the money to her mother. That children felt responsible for the running of the family comes back in almost every interview in different forms. One woman stopped going to school at nine years old as her mother was sick and she had to take care of the siblings. Two participants told me one of their parents died and the took over the responsibility of the household.

Most of the older participants express resentment about the way they grew up: they didn't have time to be young and play. Nonetheless, when I ask them what they want their children to learn, they mention discipline, hard work and responsibility as the life lessons they want to pass on. They learned to be independent and responsible and are appreciative of this lesson, they say. As one woman said during a focus group discussion:

> "I am the person I am right now, because of what I learned when I was young. I am raising my children the same way. They help out with cooking and cleaning and wash their own clothes. I learned to work but they also clipped my wings. I love my father and mother dearly. Perhaps they acted the way they did, because of my character, I was wild, wanted to play basketball and play. God knows how I would have ended up, if they hadn't restrained me." She laughs again. "But I did play in the basketball league in my town (focus group 1)."

However, not all interviews reflect bitter memories. While all of the participant remember having to work hard and carrying a lot of responsibility, some of the participants liked the work they did, like bringing *tamales* (rice wraps with chicken) to the houses of customers, or going out with siblings to the woods to collect firewood together. One woman tells me how happy she is her grandmother taught her to spin and shows me the spinning pin she inherited from her. Another woman even tells me laughing, that when they were naughty, her mother would send them to water the terraces with vegetables as punishment. She preferred work over school, found class boring and loved to learn to weave. When asked about her own children, she answers:

> "My children live a very different life from how I grew up. There are no tablones anymore, there is no firewood, children don't weave. The most important thing you can give your children now is a solid diploma so they have a good start in life. They have to learn that nothing comes for free though. So they help me clean and cook and wash clothes. They help my husband cleaning and fixing the car. One day they might become a taxi driver like my husband. They are learning English in school."

Extended family network

In the list of Mayan values by Heckt (1999) 'Community Spirit: solidarity, social cohesion, consensus' is considered really important in Mayan communities (see appendix 1). Seven of the participants chose a card that could be registered under the umbrella of community spirit. Some called it: help your neighbor in need, or having empathy as an important value. One participant (47, female) found other values important for herself more than for their children. She chose the value cards for herself: respect, empathy, and honesty. But when I asked her about the values she wanted to pass on to her children, she came up with another list: self-esteem, responsibility, solidarity, and being of service for people and animals around you. One participant said that solidarity was an important value, but that there was not enough solidarity in the community, that people used to care more for each other.

> "The suffering of others moves me, that's my motivation in life, to help the people who have less than me (man 42)."

Some of the participants mention what they do themselves for the community. One woman participant (45) who knows how to cure children of 'mal de ojo' and other ailments with natural medicine, tells me mothers know how to find her and she will cure their children for free, receiving only a token of gratitude, like a tamal, a pound of onions. Another participant (67) makes tamales for her church every week. Ana from Nebaj is member of a council for indigenous affairs for the Ixil area.

But the extended family more than the community takes a prominent role as network and safety net in a society because in Guatemala there is no governmental support system. Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings are the important people in their lives. Sixteen participants live with their extended family in a compound, taking care of each other, each other's children, cooking together and sharing meals together and functioning like an economic unit. One of the women told me that both her parents had died last year and that she was never home for lunch and dinner as she was the oldest sister and had to cook for her brothers every day. Another told me her alcoholic brother lived with them until he passed away, because nobody else would take care of him. A grandmother told me she is helping her daughter in law raising her four kids after her son died in a cross fire. Around the corner four daughters help their mother in her tortilla shop every day.

Respect and Obedience

> "It was a hard life. My father wanted us to work harder than anybody else, as we had to set a good example for the rest of the workers. If we as his daughters had to work so hard he could expect the same of others (Woman 40)."

Most older participants told me that that children showed more respect for their elders in the past. They tell their children and grandchildren stories about how they grew up, what their youth was like and what they were doing all day to make them conscious where they are from.

> "When I was young, if an older person came onto your path you had to step aside and pay your respect by kissing the persons hand. That's how children learned, my parents thought. Sometimes they needed the 'chicote'. They believed that if you didn't treat them harshly, they won't learn to be obedient. We now give the children a choice. We don't call it the *chicote*, but *chocolate* and ask them what they'd rather want: obey or … I think you have to

be patient with children and loving. But… (smile) nowadays youth are less respectful of their elders."

Participants explained that working for the good of the family helps your parents get ahead. You had to learn, work hard and participate in family life. But when I ask them if the instill this hard work attitude in their own children, they mention how they have to help their children follow their dreams, that they need to study to get ahead, that their work serves to create a future for them.

One of the women said she was so stressed because she didn't know how to pay for college for her two children. I commented: "But you got yourself through college without help from your parents. Most of you did work and study at the same time. Perhaps you even value your diploma more, because it cost you so much to get it." This started a discussion about raising your children to be independent self-starters; about how much to give them and what to expect in return. The discussion reflected the same thought patterns as I have noticed in the interviews (Field log reflection on Focus group 2)."

During the first focus group we discussed how this change came about:

"It went from one extreme to another extreme, from being way too strict to being way too lenient. Children get away with not helping out, they lay in their beds and wait to be called to come for breakfast. They don't work, play games deep into the night as if there is a tree in their bedroom that drops money in their laps. I sometimes say: if you find that tree let me know. It's like the parents are the servants now to their children, instead of the other way around (Woman 45)."

When asked for an analysis one of the women mention the introduction of children's rights. They explain that parents are confused about parenting, because they feel they can't punish their children anymore, as people used to do when they were young. Neighbors could complain and children learn in school that they have rights and that they are not supposed to work. It shows a change of times and attitudes.

" My younger sister talked back and told my mother that she was a child and that taking care of children was a parents job. I was shocked. I didn't know you could talk back to your parents. And the funny thing was, my mother didn't even get angry, but agreed with my sister. After that, things changed for the younger siblings, as if they learned a lesson then and

were nicer to my siblings and brought them presents. My sister even got shoes, while I only got plastic sandals (Woman 47)."

One of the participants of the focus group is a youth promotor. Her job is to teach children about their rights. But she tells the group, that when she finishes with her lesson on rights she starts asking the children about obligations too, like helping out in the house, respecting your parents as they love, cloth, and feed you.

Respect for nature and your environment

A recurring theme during the section on Mayan values was the love and respect for nature that surrounds us. When asked how to define their Mayanness participants all mention something that reflects their close contact to nature, to traditional medicine, to being appreciative of what nature brings them in sustenance.

> "I want them to be helpful and respect elders and what nature is giving us. We should not depreciate our corn and tortillas (47 Woman)."

When the medicine women come to my garden to collect herbs for their medicine collection, before cutting the leaves they say a little prayer, kiss their fingers and touch the plant to ask forgiveness and permission to use their leaves. Four participants mentioned the respect for nature as specifically Mayan:

> "We Mayans have our own customs and religion. We don't only learn to respect the elders but also nature, the world that surrounds us. When we cut a tree for firewood we do a little ceremony to ask for forgiveness and promise to plant a new one, to appease god, so no harm will befall us. When we plant corn, or harvest the apples we do the same. We ask a Mayan medicine man to come and do those ceremonies. We also almost never go to the doctor, but use the medicine woman to cure the children, when they have 'mal de ojo' (the evil eye) for example (Man 60)."

Another participant explains how she teaches her children about how to respect nature:

> "I teach my children it is a sin to walk by a spoiled corn and not pick it up. When we cut down a tree we have to ask permission and pardon, that we need this resource to live. You have to

work hard if you want to get anywhere and to be able to eat. Don't take what is not yours (Woman 51)."

Fig. 26: Sebastiana at Mayan Ceremony in Chichicastenango: photo Sophy Wolters 2019

Additional values

Apart from showing the participants the value cards, I asked them if they had other values they wanted to add. Especially the younger parents with small children and young adolescents agree that sometimes change is good, that life is different now and that they have to adapt. The parenting advice they gave was: listen to your children and love them; be patient; and teach them step by step. When asked for parenting advice the younger parents said loving your children and listening to their sorrows and happiness was really important. The youngest woman explained to me that creating opportunity for everyone, giving them what they needed was very important and added the two cards equity and equality. She showed this drawing to explain what she means.

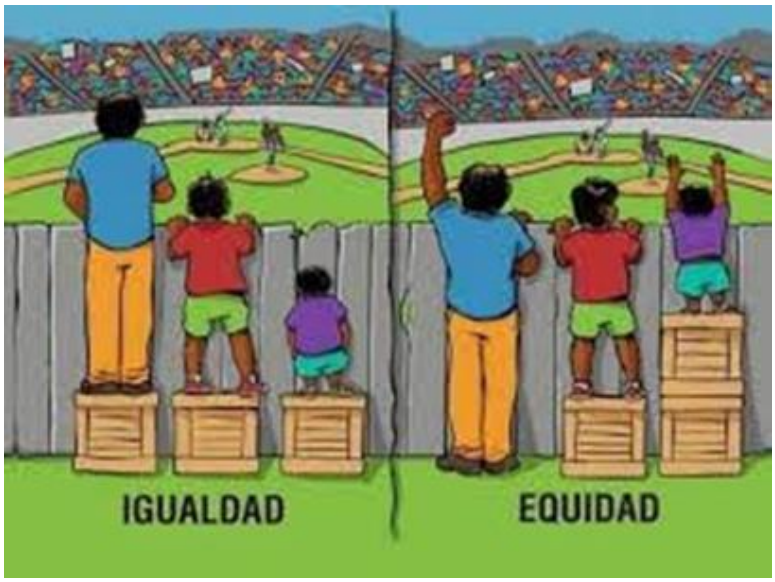

Fig. 27: Equality and Equity (Connecticut Education Association)

Others were reflecting back on what they had missed most in their childhood.

> "I didn't mind the work so much, that was part of how we grew up, but I would have liked to grow up knowing I was loved and cared for, I would have liked to have a hug and be told how precious and responsible we were. I wrote him a letter once to tell him that. My mother said my father cried when he read the letter, but he never apologized. Parents didn't apologize as they believe this undermines their authority (Woman 40)"

The mother of ten mentions how she gave her children the advice not to repeat what she did.

> "I love them all dearly. They are my children but it is hard work to have to raise ten children. You work and work and still can't leave them anything. I tell my kids that two children is enough. That way you can shower them with love and attention (Woman 63)."

Especially interesting is to see that the parenting advice the interview ends with is often the contrary of what they lived through themselves. A woman who complained she got stuck with a man because she didn't know she could get pregnant, wants her children to grow up in a world where talking about sex and what happens to your body is not a taboo.

> "Keeping secrets about where the children come from is not good. Girls need to know what a period is and not get surprised because a neighbor points out your corte is stained. You girls

need to have a choice about your life so you need to know to stay away from boys until you are ready to start a family (Woman 45)."

Or as another woman explains when I ask her for parenting advice:

"I didn't know how babies were made until after I was married and I decided then I wanted to do that differently from how I was raised. So when I was pregnant with my second child I told my daughter about the new baby and held her hand on my stomach so she could feel the baby kick and move around (Woman 52)."

The man who didn't get any love from his parents and struggles now with his own fatherhood, says: "love, love, love, those are the three parenting tips I have for you." It is not that they didn't think their parents didn't love them, but that they didn't express that. Mayan mothers believe praise is not good for children. Children need to be self-starters, have to find their intrinsic motivation Doucleff 2021: 110). Participants complained about their parents not being positive and supportive. As a reaction they express wanting to raise their children differently, to be more open and show more interest, and motivating them by offering a prize, pocket money or a treat.

I collected 49 parenting tips during my interviews. I asked the participants of focus group 2 to choose their ten favorite values by allocating stars to choose their favorite parenting advice. The parenting advice asked at the end of the interviews didn't differ much by gender, although the men's tips often included something business-like, as in learning a trade and financial management. They chose the following top ten:

#	Parenting advice	Stars
1	Children need to learn to do chores to become independent	8
2	Let children follow their dreams	6
3	Children need to learn to learn and read	5
4	Teach your children to work and save	5
5	Teach your children to be respectful to elders	5
6	Be loving with your children	4
7	Be open to change	4
8	Tell your children every day you love them	4
9	Children need to work hard to realize their dreams	4
10	Be fair with your children	3

Fig. 28: Favorite parenting advice: Focus group 2 (for whole list see Appendix 3)

The outcome of this exercise was a surprise to me. During the interviews when asked for parenting tips people often chose the ones that contrasted with the parenting values they were raised with, particularly choosing values as love and attention. But when asked to choose the favorite ten tips out of 49 the top ten reflecting a mix between the values they grew up with and the values they added (see for the whole list appendix 3). What we learn from this, is that the goals of value reproduction didn't change, but the method by which to get there.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

In the discussion and conclusion section I will discuss the findings of the empirical research in relation to the theories around the concepts used during field research, using the dilemmas participants face in their daily life as a starting point and answer the research question. It will also be covering what further research needs to be done in areas important for the theme addressed by this thesis to deepen the understanding about indigenous parenting in a modern world and how historical, economic and social context influenced the parenting strategies used.

Dilemmas

In this section I want to address some of the dilemmas the participants faced while talking about their own childhood and the changes they encountered in their current lives.

Ashamed and Proud to be Mayan**:**
Since the end of the civil war there was a big shift in self appreciation of the Mayans. The older people remember the times when indigenous people were shunned and exploited by *ladinos.* Menchú (1984) describes how plantation owners exploited Mayan labor and appropriated Mayan communal lands. During the war the Mayan communities fought against forced assimilation and exploitation. So the middle generation with adolescent children of their own express pride of being Mayan and the wish to pass this on to their children. Despite of this newly acquired pride the third generation of this research sample is growing up in a globalized world appreciating western dress, speaking Spanish, and aspiring a higher education.

The women participants mentioned discrimination less than the men did. Perhaps this is because not all of them went to school and were faced with forced assimilation. Perhaps they experienced discrimination less, because their work took place within indigenous communities. Or it is because they women represent Mayan indigeneity, wearing their *traje* and teach the children their mother language (Macleod 2007: 686). Mayan culture is carried by them into future generations, while men had to assimilate more to be able to compete in the workplace.

Voluntary versus forced participation:
All participants told me they had been helpful and worked hard to contribute to the family's income, either by working with the parents or outside the home to earn an income. What they didn't recognize was the voluntary aspect of this cooperation, as mentioned by Doucleff (2021). They

participated because they were part of a social and economic unit, the family. They understand that their participation was necessary for survival. But they did so because they had to, not because they liked to, as we learned from the interviews.

Some participants felt like didn't they have a happy childhood, that they would have liked to play more. When reflecting on these memories about their youth, the hard work, the fear not to be good enough, of the sternness of their parents, the humiliation, the horror of going to school and being beaten by the teacher for who you are, participants regularly got emotional. Their growing up doesn't resemble the description of the children Doucleff describes in her book. Her version of Mayan upbringing seems to be a romanticized in the light of my findings.

Resentment and resilience:

While the participants expressed resentment about having grown up working hard, they were also proud of who they had become. Having to work hard and be responsible as children, made them into the adults they are now: disciplined, hardworking, responsible. Their stories felt like a dichotomy, looking backwards and looking forwards, because the way they grew up was not the same as the way they want their children to grow up. Yet they like the person who they became, because of their upbringing.

When the parents told Doucleff (2021) what they wanted their children to learn they used key concepts as self-esteem, resilience, autonomy and community orientedness. All the participants to my study indeed mentioned those same values as being important to teach their children. And when having to choose between 49 tips on parenting, they chose learning to do household chores and participate as the number one golden advice. This confirms Rogoff's (2021: 34) argument that there might be very different parenting practices between cultural communities, but that the goals are similar.

The past and the present:

Confronted with a rapidly changing world around them the middle age generation (age 31 to 50) was looking at the future and trying to prepare their children with different life skills. Their gaze was forward looking, trying to understand how their children (age 10 to 30) could assimilate to 'main stream culture' to be able to participate. The older generation (age 51 to 75) expressed they were melancholic for the past, even though life was harsh and poor then. Communities were more united, they felt, and people identified as one of theirs.

On the one hand participants identified as Mayan and found it important to reproduce Mayan values as *traje,* language and customs. In Santiago Atitlan on the other side of Lake Atitlan, one of the biggest indigenous cities in the Western Hemisphere, people have preserved more of their

ancestry and the lingua franca is still Tzutujil. *Atitecos* (inhabitants of Santiago) are proud of their ancestry and participants didn't express melancholy for the past as much. They seem to have assimilated main stream culture within their Tzutujil culture. On the other hand, the younger generation is losing their Mayanness, especially in a village like Panajachel, where the globalization is visible on every corner and where young people try to become mainstream professionals.

Gender roles and their fluidity:

Anthropological literature (Lancy 2015; Rogoff 2003) often describe gender roles as being fixed, either because of the biological nature of differences in reproduction and tasks related to that reproduction, or because of cultural norms. So it was surprising to find that gender roles in the communities around the lake were rather fluid, not only in present times, under influence of women entering the work force, but also in past times, when our participants were growing up. As we have seen in the chapter on gender specific tasks, family composition was an important factor on what boys and girls were assigned in the household. There is an common discourse on gender and its assigned roles, while at the same time in practice girls were doing boys' jobs and, admittedly less, boys were also assigned 'girls' jobs, like taking care of siblings if needed.

Chattel versus Cherubs:

The dichotomy between cherubs and chattel (Lancy 2015) was not confirmed by this research. Although participants sometimes mentioned craving love and attention from their parents, they all expressed love for them and described the close ties they had with them. They respected the choices their parents had to make to maintain the family. They often did blame the circumstances that affected their families as the reason for their harsh life, mentioning poverty, discrimination and exploitation of Mayans by the ladino landowners. The concept of inequality is useful here to interpret the reality of Mayan families in Guatemala and helps understand the interpretation of the participants how the harsh lives their parents lived were reflected in the parenting practices.

Learning a trade versus formal education:

As we have learned from the chapter on Life Skills, formal education is becoming more and more important. The middle generation of parents finds it important children get an education to be able to make a living and find a better paying job. There is very little future in subsistence farming and making handicrafts, they find. But because of the requirements of formal education children don't have time to learn the traditional life skills by observing and pitching in. This sometimes worries their parents as we have seen from the example of the boy learning the tree cutting business from his

father. The *tipico* vender expressed his concerns about if it was worth it spending so much money on education while there were no blue collar jobs around the lake.

Conclusion

As one of the objectives of this study was what we can learn from traditional parenting strategies as described in Doucleff (2021), I would like to return to the question if participants recognized the parenting strategies she described. Her key finding was that autonomy, self-motivation and community responsibility create helpful toddlers and children. So, considering the outcomes of the interviews, what is the answer on the research question: How are Mayan parenting strategies in Solola, Guatemala, affected by changes in the social environment?

The most important finding of this research was to learn that Mayan child rearing strategies were connected to the Guatemalan context of discrimination, exclusion and violence conducted against the Mayan people. The feeling of not being good enough, being excluded from opportunities, poverty, illness, and structural violence due to the 40 years of civil war, influenced the way parents raised their children. One concept I hadn't considered was the fact that official Guatemala policy of assimilation, called *castellanizacion* meant to wipe out indigeneity from Guatemala by using the same policy of cultural genocide the US and Canada used to try to assimilate First Nation people into mainstream western society. The importance of the peace accords is to be understood as a tool to empower and emancipate indigenous people in Guatemala.

Another important outcome of this study is that gender roles depend on the family composition. Mayan values define women to be responsible for the house and the selling of merchandise on the market and men responsible for the outer realm of family life, but it turns out families compositions are fluid and therefore gender roles too. Most of the literature I read and used for the theoretical framework described gender roles as fixed. Notwithstanding most of the women I interviewed also did tasks that according to custom were boys tasks, if for example there were no brothers or the father was absent or if the economic situation of the family forced the girls to look for work outside the home.

The communities I visited and the people I interviewed seemed to be on the cusp of a pyramid of Lancy (2015: 3) turning upside down, a traditional society trying to adapt. Where in the past elders were respected and children were part of an economic unit where everybody had to participate, now children are allowed to play and study. Where the parents exercised authority over children by the use of the 'chicote'', the younger parents spoke about motivation by showing love and appreciation, or by promising a prize, treat or pocket money to entice the children. Where

woman were the center of the household, they have become breadwinners working outside the house.

This field research taught us more about the lives and struggles of parents in Mayan communities, about their background and their suffering because of poverty, exclusion and forced assimilation. Although every family had its own story, dynamic, and development, there are some things they had in common. Every parent wanted the best for her children, wanted to pass on the life skills they learned and the Mayan values they grew up with. They all wanted their children to be prepared for life. It is just that the way to get there is different from older generations. We can learn from this research, that the new generation of parents wants to teach their children resilience and responsibility, just as the previous generations wanted, but want to do that by means of love, attention, and a supportive environment. That change of methodology in parenting seems a common theme in all the interviews. Mayan communities around the lake are going through a pivotal change, because of modernization, globalization and migration.

The signing of the peace accords at the end of the civil war brought about a movement of empowerment and emancipation of the Mayan population. In that way the outcome of the civil war brought about change in the position of the Mayan communities with rights to self-rule and the right to speak your indigenous languages in school. This Mayan emancipation process created an environment of indigeneity in participants and this was intergenerational. The participants still returned for their guidance in life to their ancestry. Reproducing the values of their own childhood was a recurring theme during the conversations. Although the young generation expressed their Mayanness in a different way, the process of acculturalization seems to have taken a turn. They become part of mainstream culture without leaving their own culture behind. While I realize that the Mayan parenting strategies Doucleff (2021) describes as team effort, resilience, and autonomy, may be somewhat romanticized, it was great to experience that although parenting strategies are changing, but in that process indigeneity isn't lost.

Further research

To deepen the knowledge and understanding about parenting and value reproduction in Mayan communities I suggest themes for further research that were beyond the scope of this field study.

Church and reproduction of values: In his book about Santiago Stanzione mentions that the younger generation is more confused and less proud because of the influence of Evangelical churches, that condemn Mayan ceremonies. The Catholic church had a policy of syncretism, including traditional ceremonies within the church. Further research is needed to explore the influence of Evangelism on the reproduction of traditional values.

Economic autonomy of Mayan women: In 2002 Friendship Bridge, the microfinance NGO I worked for at the time did an impact evaluation on the effect of small loans on income but also on empowerment of women. Most of the women, who filled out the empowerment from at the time stated that family decisions on management of money, but also children's parenting were based on decisions they made either alone or together with their husbands. What we didn't follow at the time was the effect of money flows as women were selling the produce at the market and how that affected the position of women. I think this is an important subject in the study into gender, equality and empowerment, especially since such research could shed light on how gender roles are complementary.

The end of assimilation policy and revival of indigeneity: More research needs to be done on the effect of the signing of the peace accords in 1996. Some of the participants argued that that was a pivotal moment in history that started a revival of indigenous values and emancipation. It would be interesting to understand how this moment in time affected families and communities. Globalization, the increase of immigration to the US and families being dependent on remittances, the professionalization of the workforce, changes of policies in human right for example took place around the same time. How did all these development influence and reinforce each other? Guatemala was not the only country in the world where emancipation of first nation people and worldwide interest in indigenous values took off and gained in momentum. How do these local developments cohere with developments in the world and how can indigenous knowledge be incorporated in policies of development (Briggs and Sharp 2004)?

Effects of the covid pandemic: As we saw in the end of the chapter in life skills, the closing of the schools for two years brought parents and children closer together. Having the children at home all day created opportunities for parents to teach them the life skills they knew. Children were more comfortable speaking their mother language. Working for a living instead of trying to get a diploma seemed to have gained in popularity. This might be an interesting topic for another study: how covid affected education and Mayan value reproduction in indigenous communities like the Mayan in Guatemala.

Sometimes the interviews became oral storytelling, explaining how life was in the past. It is important that these stories stay alive. It would be good to set up a project to record all these oral stories from the elders to save them.

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Appendix 1 List of Mayan values (Heckt 1999: 324)

1. Work: Productivity, Discipline, Determination
2. Community Spirit: Solidarity, Social cohesion, Consensus
3. Respect: Obedience, Courtesy, Authority, Place in Universe
4. Place in Community: Gender roles, Respect for elders
5. Working skills: Responsibility, Independence, Self-confidence

Appendix 2 List of Interview Questions and introduction

Good morning. How are you today? My name is Sophy Wolters. I am here for an interview about indigenous parenting. I would like to learn about how children grow up here in your community. I am doing a master in Anthropology in the Netherlands for the University Leiden. I came here to Lake Atitlan to talk to you about how your children grow up here. I am not making an audio of the interview, I will only jot down notes in my notebook so I won't forget what you are telling me. The interview will take around two hours. But you are free to not answer questions or tell mi if you don't like to answer what I am asking. I am just going to keep the notes in my notebook, without your name just with some personal information. You can stop the interview at any time you want to. Do you have any questions so far.

Personal Information:

- Date of Interview
- Age
- Gender
- Municipality
- Parenting
- Profession
- Children
- Age children
- Gender children

Life skills/Chores

Now

- I have some cards here with household chores. Could you choose a few that are important to you? Cooking, cleaning, washing dishes, washing clothes, taking care of animals, weaving, sewing, cut firewood, harvesting coffee, doing homework, taking corn to the mill, making tortillas……..
- Are there any chores that are important to you that are not on a card and that you would like to add?
- Which of the chores do you do and which are the ones your spouse does?
- Do your children help you with household chores?
- Which chores do they help you with?
- How did you teach your children to do these chores?

- Do they help you voluntarily or do you have to ask?
- Do you have special chores for your boys and girls?
- What toys do your children play with?
- Are they going to school?
- What grade are they in?
- Do they like to go to school?

Before

- What kind of chores did you have to do when you were young?
- Did you like to do them?
- Did girls have to do different things in the household than boys?
- Could you give me a few examples?
- Did you play when you were young?
- What toys did you play with?
- Your current occupation is …… What did/do your parents do for a living?
- Your parenting level is …. What is your parents' parenting level?

Value parenting

Now

- How would you describe yourself: indigenous, Maya, natural or according to your municipality?
- Do you speak Tzutujil, Cakchiquel, Quiche with your children?
- Do the children get taught in school in indigenous language?
- Could you tell me some characteristics of being indigenous?
- What are the most important values to teach your children.
- I have a few cards here with values. Could you choose the most important ones?
- Are there any value cards missing, would you want to add a few?

Before

- Which were the values that your parents taught you?
- Do you think those values were different from the ones you are teaching your children?
- Are the values you were taught specifically indigenous values? Could you explain?
- Did you speak Cakchiquel, Tzutujil, Quiche with your parents?

Parenting Style

Now

- Who helps you with the parenting of your children?

- Are your parents involved in your children's parenting?
- Are their differences between the way you were raised and how you raise your children?
- How would you describe your parenting style? For example: do you tell your children what to do, or do you ask them?
- When you are in doubt about your parenting, who do you ask for advice: your parents, your parents in law, your friends, your colleagues, the internet?
- Could you mention what parenting advice was the most important to you?
- Do you know the word acomedida/ cooperative? Like the opposite of naughty.
- Would you describe your children as being cooperative?
- Are girls more cooperative then boys?
- When your child is naughty and doesn't want to listen, what do you do?
- Are their chores your children don't like doing? What do you do to motivate them?
- Who do your children listen more to, you or your husband/wfe?
- Could you tell me what you do on a normal day? What chores do you do? What does your family life look like?
- Could you tell me what your children do on a normal day?

Before

- How did your parents teach you, do you remember?
- Were you a cooperative child?
- Looking back to your youth, what were the most important things you learned?
- Who were the most important people in your life growing up?
- Were there chores you didn't like doing and how did your parents motivate you to do them?

Parenting advice

- If you would be helping to make a parenting guide for new parents or if your friend or sister would want advice from you, what advice would you give them?

Appendix 3: List of tips for the parenting guide, according to popularity

1. Children need to learn to do chores to become independent	8 stars
2. Let children follow their dreams	6 stars
3. Children need to learn and read	5 stars
4. Teach your children to work and save	5 stars
5. Teach children to be respectful to parents and elders	5 stars
6. Be loving with your children	4 stars
7. Be open to change	4 stars
8. Tell your children every day you love them	4 stars
9. Children need to work hard to realize their dreams	4 stars
10. Be fair with your children	3 stars
11. Give them advice using your own life as an example	3 stars
12. Women have to develop their capacities	3 stars
13. Teach children the importance of gender equality	3 stars
14. Look for God in your heart	3 stars
15. A child learns by observation, practicing and making mistakes	2 stars
16. Be respectful with your children	2 stars
17. Always ask nature for permission when you need to use her	2 stars
18. Be grateful for your life and rejoice	2 stars
19. Have your children wear their traje to identify as Maya	2 stars
20. Chores have to be age appropriate	1 star
21. Chores have to be done voluntarily	1 star
22. Create a peaceful environment at home	1 star
23. Use the 'chicote' as a symbol or parents' authority	1 star
24. Value the Mayan cosmovision	1 star
25. Live in the now day by day	1 star
26. Listen to your children when they are sad	1 star
27. You have to gain respect, you can't demand it	1 star
28. Teach them how important it is to serve your community	1 star
29. Don't forget where you came from	
30. Talk to your children in your mother – Maya- language	

31. Every child had his/her own Nawal, that why all children need a different treatment
32. Be strict
33. Do things right so you don't have to repent
34. Invite them to participate without obligation
35. Talk to you children about their bodies and sexuality
36. Don't watch videos during dinner time
37. Teach them to be obedient
38. Talk a lot with your children
39. Teach them good financial habits
40. When pregnant live healthy and look out for yourself
41. Talk to your other children that there is a bay on the way
42. Be patient, one step at a time
43. You first have to learn to love ourself before you can love others