

Winner of the 2014 Maccoby  
Book Award from the American  
Psychological Association

# DEVELOPING DESTINIES

## A MAYAN MIDWIFE AND TOWN

Barbara Rogoff

Born with the destiny of becoming a Mayan sacred midwife, Chona Pérez has carried on centuries-old traditional Indigenous American birth and healing practices over her 85 years. At the same time, Chona developed new approaches to the care of pregnancy, newborns, and mothers based on her own experience and ideas. In this way, Chona has contributed to both the cultural continuities and cultural changes of her town over the decades.

In *Developing Destinies*, Barbara Rogoff illuminates how individuals worldwide build on cultural heritage from prior generations and at the same time create new ways of living. Throughout Chona's lifetime, her Guatemalan town has continued to use longstanding Mayan cultural practices, such as including children in a range of community activities and encouraging them to learn by observing and contributing. But the town has also transformed dramatically since the days of Chona's own childhood. For instance, although Chona's upbringing included no formal schooling, some of her grandchildren have gone on to attend university and earn advanced degrees. The lives of Chona and her town provide extraordinary examples of how cultural practices are preserved even as they are adapted and modified.

*Developing Destinies* is an engaging narrative of one remarkable person's life and the life of her community that blends psychology, anthropology, and history to reveal the integral role that culture plays in human development. With extensive photographs and accounts of Mayan family life, medical practices, birth, child development, and learning, Rogoff adeptly shows that we can better understand the role of culture in our lives by examining how people participate in cultural practices. This landmark book brings theory alive with fascinating ethnographic findings that advance our understanding of childhood, culture, and change.

Barbara Rogoff's previous books *Apprenticeship in Thinking* (OUP, 1991), *Learning Together* (OUP, 2002), and *The Cultural Nature of Human Development* (OUP, 2003) have received awards from the American Psychological Association and the American Educational Research Association. Rogoff received the 2013 Award for Lifetime Contributions to Cultural and Contextual Factors in Child Development from the Society for Research in Child Development.

\*\*Royalties are contributed to the Learning Center and other projects in this Mayan town.

"The beautifully written narrative is highly accessible, even gripping. ...It has very broad reach, illuminating some of the most profound themes of human development. The book truly is a must-read for all with interests in development or culture."—Susan A. Gelman, *PsycCRITIQUES*

"A rare glimpse into the changes in people's lives and environment over the course of seven decades.... Recommended."—A. H. Koblitz, *CHOICE*

"Very moving, and highly informative. Bravo!"—Jerome Bruner

"Vividly rich."—T. Berry Brazelton

"Captivating and original... finely wrought book."  
—Robert LeVine

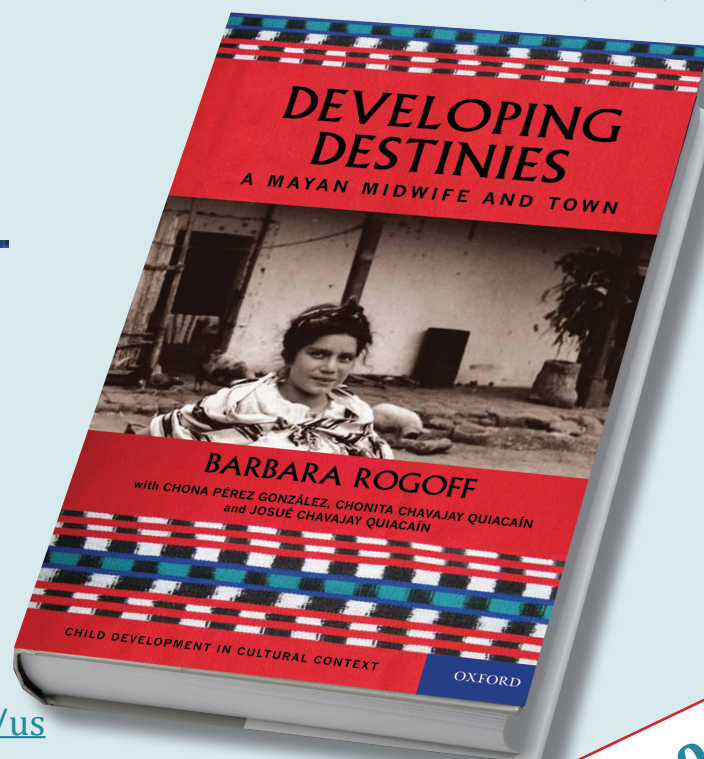
"Brilliant... A compelling narrative that illuminates key theoretical advances!"—Kris D. Gutiérrez

"One of the most extraordinary books ever written on human development... superb writing... highly original... A gem for both the scholar and the general reader."—Joseph J. Campos

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