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College Transition Experiences of Homeschooled Women

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Abstract

College Transition Experiences of Women Who Were Homeschooled:

A Phenomenological Study

by

Jeanine SanClemente

MA, Seattle University, 1991

BA, University of Washington, 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

During the past 40 years, the U.S. homeschooling population rose exponentially. The results of homeschooling need to be studied further so that parents, legislators, and higher education leaders can make prudent and well-informed decisions regarding homeschooled students. No studies have been completed that focus on the unique experiences of homeschooled women as they transition to college in terms of academics, forming new relationships, and individuating from their families. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore academic and relational processes during the transition to college. In this qualitative dissertation based on constructivist design and in the conceptual framework of feminist essentialism, 11 female second- and third-year college students who were homeschooled for all of high school were chosen using criterion sampling. NVivo software was employed for data analysis using Moustakas' modification of the Van Kaam method of data analysis. Findings for this study were, a) homeschooled women felt substantially similar to traditionally schooled students in terms of academics and relationships, and b) homeschooled women felt as though they were raised in a different culture, but they felt equally or slightly more capable academically, more self-directed in their studies, and closer to their families than their traditionally schooled peers did. The results of this study may contribute to positive social change by helping parents, legislators, and college professionals empower homeschooled college women by altering curriculum, by developing supportive programs and policies to help homeschooled women transition to college, and by understanding how to tailor college programs and classes to maximally benefit homeschooled women.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who supported me every step of the way. Your understanding and unwavering encouragement sustained me. This research is also dedicated to the eleven research participants who took the time to share their lives with me and whose sincere, balanced, and thoughtful answers made for a fascinating project. I wish all of you the best of luck as you graduate and take on the world.

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank Dr. Ruth Crocker for her patience and support during my research. She has been my cheerleader, my ally, and my advocate. I also wish to thank Dr. Donna Heretick, my committee member, for her advice and assistance throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Debra Wilson for her assistance. My committee has held me accountable for producing excellent work, and this dissertation is a testament to their skill. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Homeschooling is increasingly becoming a viable option for U.S. families. During the past 40 years, the U.S. homeschooling population rose from 20,000 to 2,000,000 students (Murphy, 2012). Reasons behind this increase include the ability to increase academic rigor and individualization, interpersonal reasons (such as family unity and parental control regarding friend choice), and intrapersonal purposes (such as personal and spiritual growth) (Beck, 2010; Gaither, 2008; Kunzman, 2009; Seago, 2012; Snyder, 2013; Spiegler, 2010). Homeschooling empowers families to meet these goals and for students, their parents, or both to have control of students' academic and social lives.

Several theorists have expressed interest in the specific challenges of adolescent girls and whether homeschooling can address these challenges. As girls proceed through adolescence, they focus less on their personal passions and strengths and more on their peers (Pipher, 2005). They begin to hide their intelligence out of a need to blend into their peer group and to be in peer relationships (Cohen et al., 1996). At a time when girls are becoming increasingly self-aware and trying to fit in with their peers, bullying behavior increases concurrently among girls, in particular at school (Pipher, 2005). In addition, teen girls may experiment with sex, illegal substances, and unsafe choices their parents might want them to avoid. Although some of these behaviors may also occur in adolescent boys, girls have specific academic and social needs that may not be met by traditional schools (Cohen et al., 1996; Pipher, 2005).

Homeschooling is one way for parents and young women to choose a different path away from the peer pressure inherent in more traditional schooling. A study focused on the female homeschooling experience and the effect of this experience was needed in order to comprehend whether homeschooling meets girls' needs. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the effect, if any, of homeschooling on college transition, as well as the academic and relationship-building experiences of college women who were homeschooled. The results of this study may help parents to determine whether homeschooling is a smart decision for their daughters. The study may also help college transition professionals to better plan for the needs of homeschooled girls. In addition, this study may assist homeschooled girls in better predicting their own college transition experiences and may influence legislators in making informed decisions about laws that pertain to the homeschooled.

In this introductory chapter, I provide a brief background of research in the area of the college transition outcomes of homeschooling. I present the research problem and explain why this problem is current, relevant, and significant, and how the research question addresses a gap in the literature. I describe the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the conceptual framework of the study. I then address the nature of the study by explaining the rationale behind the research design selection. Next, I summarize the methodology. I define constructs, outline assumptions, explain the scope and delimitations of this research, and outline the limitations of the study. Finally, I address the potential significance of the findings.

Background

Few qualitative or quantitative studies focus on the transition from homeschool to college (Kranzow, 2013), and no studies focus on women's transition experiences. Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) qualitatively describe the experiences of five male and female homeschooled students as they transitioned to college. Although Bolle-Brumond and Wessel's (2012) study is a valuable start in examining the topic of college transition experiences of homeschooled students, the study has several shortcomings. This study had only five participants (three women and two men), which, according to Creswell (2007), is possible in a phenomenological study, but not preferable. Creswell mentioned that several theorists believe that phenomenological studies should include closer to 10 participants. The Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) study was completed using both men and women, which could yield different results than a female-only sample. Results were not differentiated by gender, so it is difficult to know how and whether the three women's experiences were different than the two men's experiences. I discuss further methodological problems with Bolle-Brummond and Wessel's study in the Nature of the Study section of this dissertation.

Riley's (2015) study of 99 college students (32 male, 66 female and one gender unspecified) showed that homeschooled students exhibit more satisfaction with their autonomy and competence than traditionally schooled students. In addition, Riley (2015) found that homeschooled and traditionally schooled students had no significant difference in their level of satisfaction with relationships. While Riley's (2015) study informs my research, it again focuses on both women and men without differentiation

between genders. In addition, it employs a quantitative measure, which does not lend itself to describing the experiences of homeschoolers as they transition to college.

A widespread concern amongst the general public is that homeschooled students may have social difficulties once they leave the homeschool environment (Gathercole, 2007; Hauseman, 2011). As a result, several recent studies address the social skills attainment of homeschooled students. White et al. (2007) studied the College Adjustment Scale scores of homeschooled and traditionally schooled male and female students in a Christian college. Homeschooled students score significantly lower in overall anxiety and have comparable scores in other areas of adjustment. Homeschoolers are equivalent to their traditionally schooled peers in social skills, number of friends, and self-efficacy (Alvord, 2003; Dumas, Gates, & Schwarzer, 2010; Jones, 2010; Saunders, 2006).

Other concerns regarding the outcomes of homeschooling include low academic outcomes and whether the lack of educator accountability affects student achievement after homeschooling (Barnett, 2013; Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Jennens, 2011; Olsen, 2009). Jones (2010) quantitatively studied the academic outcomes of homeschooling in a college population, and found they achieved at a slightly higher level than their peers on entrance tests and grade point averages. Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse (2011) found that homeschooled male and female students whose parents believed in a more structured educational philosophy scored higher on standardized tests than students from public schools.

Homeschool research is relatively nascent and many gaps exist. The focus of most homeschool research is on demographic trends and comparison of test scores (Ray, 2005). Although the amount qualitative research regarding homeschooling is increasing, there is little qualitative work that describes the experiences of homeschoolers after their homeschooling experience. None focuses on the experiences of homeschooled women as they transition to college. Given that research describes the differing educational and social needs of adolescent boys and young women (Gilligan, 1993; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Braje, & Meeus, 2009; Robnett, 2013; Sadker, Sadker, & Zittleman, 2009; Van der Graaff et al., 2013), a focus on women will likely yield different results than one that includes both women and men. This study addressed this gap by qualitatively focusing on the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. By addressing this gap, this study added to the knowledge base regarding homeschooled students (in particular, homeschooled women), allowing parents, students, college professionals and legislators to understand the outcomes of homeschooling for women, encouraging those working with this population to make more informed decisions.

Problem Statement

At this time, 3% of U.S. school students are homeschooled (U. S. Department of Education, 2014). This number is growing by 7% to 15% annually (Ray, 2005). Parents increasingly see homeschooling as a viable academic and social option for their children. Girls have different educational experiences than boys do (Klimstra et al., 2009; Robnett, 2013; Sadker et al., 2009; Van der Graaff et al., 2013). Researchers have a significant interest in determining whether homeschooled students are able to adjust

adequately once they leave the homeschool context (Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Goodpasture et al., 2013; Jennens, 2011). In the only study similar to my study, Bolle-Brummond and Wessel (2012) qualitatively explored the college transition experiences of homeschooled students. However, their study focused on both men and women, which likely yielded different results than by solely studying women (Klimstra et al., 2009; Robnett, 2013; Sadker et al., 2009; Van der Graaff et al., 2013). Riley (2015) quantitatively studied the difference between homeschooled and traditionally schooled students using a measure of psychological needs, but due to the nature of quantitative study was not able to delve into the experiences of the participants.

The problem is clear: lack of knowledge regarding the outcomes of homeschooling exists at the same time the number of homeschooled students markedly increases (Murphy, 2012). This problem is current, relevant, and important. The dearth of research in this area means that parents are making their decisions to homeschool based on specious evidence. Much more research needs to be conducted to generate a thorough base of knowledge. At this time, lawmakers are designing homeschool policies without sufficient evidence-based information regarding the outcomes of home education. In addition, information regarding the outcomes of homeschooling may help homeschooled students to recognize that they are not alone in their transitions to college. Knowledge that the college transitions of homeschooled students are ultimately successful will also help these students. Although few scholars research homeschooling, the influx of homeschooled students makes this area significant to educational psychologists, K to 12 educators, and college education professionals.

Purpose of the Study

Although researchers have conducted (primarily demographic and comparative) studies regarding the outcomes of homeschooling, insufficient phenomenological inquiry exists that focuses on the experiences of homeschoolers as they transition to college. To date no research exists that concentrates on homeschooled women. Homeschooled women are a distinctive population with experiences that differ from those of homeschooled men. Given the concern regarding whether homeschoolers are able to adapt to posthomeschooling experiences, additional research in this area is needed to understand both how homeschooled women adapt and how their adaptation experience is unique to their homeschooling background. The purpose of this study was to address the research gap and to increase understanding of the effect, if any, of homeschooling on the college transition, as well as the academic and relationship-building experiences of women who were homeschooled.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. Qualitative: What are the experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new romantic relationships and friendships and individuate from their families as they enter the launching phase and transition to college?

2. Qualitative: How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school believe their homeschool experience influenced them socially,

academically, and in terms of family relationships as they entered the

launching phase and transitioned to college?

3. Qualitative: What differences, if any, do women who were homeschooled

    perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled?

Theoretical Framework

Feminist essentialism underlies my beliefs that women and men understand the

world in different ways. Feminist essentialism, according to Stone (2004) describes

characteristics that are similar among women. This theory can be difficult for some to

digest as it could be used as a justification for sexism and it paints women with a wide

brush, ignoring the individual differences between women. However, the framework can

be useful when assessing groups strategically. In this study, women are viewed as

individuals who make their own reality using the constructivist mindset (see following

section) and who have their own unique paths and beliefs, but who have some similarities

that make their experiences different from those of men.

Conceptual Framework

The contextual lens for this research project is constructivism. Constructivism

focuses on the meanings people make (Patton, 2002). Culture, language, and personal

proclivities can all affect the way one sees the world. Constructivists maintain that

people actively create the reality they perceive (Crotty, 1998). Vygotsky (1978) viewed

reality construction as a social process, in which people work together to create reality.

Piaget (1972), also a constructivist, asserted that people create their own understanding

of the world by interacting with it and assimilating new knowledge with prior

knowledge. In constructivist theory, the focus is on the meaning that people take from their world. In line with constructivism, I concentrated on the meanings that homeschooled women make of their world and their beliefs regarding how homeschooling helped or hindered their adjustment to college. With this focus on the meanings that participants make of their current experiences and how their past ties into these experiences, the constructivist mindset fell in line with the tenor of this research. I provide a detailed explanation of constructivism in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

This study was qualitative in nature. I focused on the college transition experiences of the participants, which is a fundamental intention of phenomenological study. Much of the current research in the area of homeschooled students is quantitative in nature, focusing on comparing test scores and grades, and on scores from various measures of student adjustment to college. I included quantitative research in the literature review, but quantitative data is outside the scope of this study.

Arnett (2004) defined *emerging adulthood* as the period between approximately age 18 and 25 years, so all participants were in this age range. Homeschoolers tend to be less conventional in their approaches to school (Kunzman, 2009; Merry & Karsten, 2010). Homeschooled students may, for example, be more likely to finish high school at a later age, meaning that they would start college later. As a result, including older students up to age 25 years was appropriate for this study.

Participants were female college undergraduates who were homeschooled for all 4 years of their high school career. Second- and third-year college students were accepted

for this study. Many homeschoolers take college credit courses prior to enrolling in their baccalaureate studies, so they may enter their four-year college as sophomores or juniors in credits. Participants with at least 1 year's adjustment to college can reflect on their transition, yet have recent memories of their homeschool experience. Only women who lived away from parents participated in this study to gain a clear understanding of the effect of homeschooling once a student has gained independence from her parents. I only selected women attending a 4-year college or university.

I used criterion sampling in my study and I recruited participants through email forwarding. I coded information gleaned from participants using NVivo software and I discovered themes based on the participants' experiences. I employed Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Van Kaam method of data analysis. In line with Creswell's (2007) beliefs regarding sample size and the need to cover this topic thoroughly, this qualitative phenomenological study included 11 participants.

Definitions

The following terms were used frequently throughout the study:

Attachment theory: The tendency in humans to form strong bonds with others from whom separation brings about feelings of sadness, anger, and fear (Bowlby, 2005).

Emerging adulthood: Emerging adulthood refers to the time between the ages of 18 and 25 years, during which most people are neither children nor fully independent adults (Arnett, 2000).

Homeschool, homeschooling, home education: A form of education in which parents assume control for and responsibility for their children's schooling (VanGalen & Pitman, 1991).

Homeschool cooperative: A group of homeschooling families. Homeschool cooperatives frequently offer classes to their members (Kunzman, 2009).

Individuation: The expression of an individual's unique and whole self (Jacoby, 2006). This is frequently seen as a separation from the parents and a move toward recognizing and celebrating the self.

Unschooling: Student-led, child-centered learning that focuses more on child interest and freedom to learn more than on a set curriculum (Holt & Farenga, 2003).

Assumptions

Assumptions in this study are primarily related to the choice of participants. All participants in this study were emerging adult college- or university-enrolled women. They all lived on the campus of their college or university. Women who were living with their parents were eliminated from this study because there was a potential for a different individuation dynamic. I assumed that participants were being truthful in their answers in all areas, including student status, living arrangements, reported age, and gender identification. I chose not to verify self-reports as this was onerous for the participants and I believe this would set up an atmosphere of distrust prior to interviewing.

Delimitations

A lack of information regarding the outcomes of homeschooling, in particular outcomes related to gender, exists. Creswell (2009) commented that a qualitative approach is useful as an exploratory tool when there is little research on a topic. My qualitative study explored homeschooled women's college transition experiences to further develop and enrich the knowledge base of homeschooling outcomes. This study, in conjunction with other research in this area, may provide decision makers with a solid base of information from which to make evidence-based evaluations.

This study had the following delimitations: all participants were college enrolled undergraduate women, ages 18 to 25 years, who homeschooled throughout high school. Although some of the participants may be older than typical college undergraduates, this age span covered all of the years considered part of emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2005) and allowed for students who were homeschooled longer than typically accepted in traditional schools. Educational practices such as extending the number of years in high school are not unusual among homeschoolers (Kunzman, 2009; Merry & Karsten, 2010).

I accepted only second- and third-year college students in my study because students in these years could reflect on their transition to school, but were likely not yet focusing on life after college. Only women who lived away from their parents were included in this study. This was to gain a clear understanding of the effect of homeschooling once a student is living independently from her parents and in the social milieu of college. Only women attending 4-year colleges were included in this study. By

choosing this group, I ensured sufficient similarity between participants to be able to examine the constructs central to this study, while allowing for sufficient variety to gain a wide understanding of these constructs between different people. Although the results of this study apply specifically to homeschooled women and are not transferable to homeschooled men, they will be part of a wider canon of research on the outcomes of homeschooling.

Limitations

This study was limited by its specificity. Men were not included in the study; neither were women who did not attend college or who attended a community college. Women who lived at home were not included in the study. Women who homeschooled for only a portion of high school were not included, as were those who homeschooled for elementary or middle school but went to traditional high schools. I also chose to exclude women below the age of 18 and above the age of 25. Women who were first- and fourth-year college students at the time of interviews were excluded (see Nature of the Study). I made all of these decisions to better understand the experiences of a specific group of people, and further study could include a focus on the groups this study excluded to understand a wider spectrum of homeschoolers. In addition, I did not include non-Caucasian women because none responded to the request for participants. Indeed, the participants were much alike in their demographic profiles. This was not my choice but was due to the lack of interested participants. Homeschoolers are known to be hesitant with researchers (Goodman, 2008). Goodman (2008) explained that this lack of interested participants skews results toward those who want to herald their experiences.

The results in this study were also limited because the participants frequently had a difficult time separating their homeschool experiences from their religions, their homeschooling communities, and their families. These areas intertwined and it was difficult for participants to make distinctions between them.

Researcher Bias

As a homeschooling mother, it is possible that I have unknown inherent biases. In order to eliminate preconceptions, I focused on the unique experiences that each participant brought to the research and checked with them to be sure I made accurate interpretations. I kept a journal of my responses to the interviews and to the data once interviews were complete. I was reflective and when I was surprised by something a participant told me I made a note, explored my expectations, and revealed any underlying bias. This is in line with Creswell's (2009) recommendations for qualitative research. I discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter 3.

Significance

The homeschooling movement has major financial implications for parents, college students, public schools, and state funding. Although there are no reliable appraisals of homeschool costs (Belfield, 2004), Ray (1999) estimated that parents spend approximately $550 per child annually on homeschool products and services. More than 2,000,000 students are homeschooled in the United States, so this totals approximately $1,100,000,000 annually spent by parents who homeschool. Belfield (2004) pointed out the cost of having one parent stay home from work to homeschool is an additional opportunity cost worth factoring.

Approximately 1,000,000 U.S. homeschooled students are enrolled in higher education (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014; Ray, 2004), spending an average of $29,408 per year (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014) for a total of about $30,000,000 annually. The combination of paying for homeschool resources and paying for college is an expensive investment. Knowing that these children are prepared for their transition to college is in the parents', students' and colleges' best interest to make the best use of this large sum of money.

U.S. public schools spend an average of $12,608 annually per student (U. S. Department of Education, 2014). This money is lost to the public school system when families choose not to send their children to school. A decrease in funding can cause districts to hire fewer teachers and to purchase fewer educational supplies, and decreased funding may slow the pace at which schools are updated and built. Therefore, homeschooling can have an overall slowing effect on the local economy.

Many states are considering legislation that affects homeschooling families, including mandated testing for homeschooled students, allowing these students to participate in extracurricular activities in the public schools, and requiring that homeschooled children receive a behavioral health assessment (Home School Legal Defense Association, 2013). Such legislation costs the public money in testing fees, proctor fees, and funding for school psychologists to evaluate the test scores. A more comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of homeschooling and the needs of the homeschooled may help legislators to make informed decisions about these laws.

Summary

During the past 40 years, the U.S. homeschooling population rose from 20,000 to 2,000,000 students (Murphy, 2012). Reasons behind this increase include interest in academic individualization, interpersonal reasons that include family unity and parental control over friend choice, and intrapersonal purposes that include personal and spiritual growth (Gaither, 2008; Kunzman, 2010; Seago, 2012; Snyder, 2013; Spiegler, 2010). Homeschooling is a way to empower families to meet these goals and for students, their parents, or both to have control of students' academic and social lives.

As popular as homeschooling is becoming, little data regarding the outcomes of homeschooling exists, and much of this is demographic or quantitative in nature. Qualitative research is lacking, and to date there is no research that focuses on the outcomes of homeschooling for college-enrolled women. Given that women have different learning experiences than men have (Sax, 2005), a study with a female-only focus is needed. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to close this gap by addressing the college transition experiences of homeschooled women.

I interviewed eleven undergraduate women for this research. I transcribed the interviews into NVivo software. I identified and recorded both trends in the data and in outlying information. Constructivism drove data collection and questions focused on the formation of romantic relationships, friendship formation, individuation from the family of origin, and the experience of launching into this new phase of life.

In Chapter 2, I focus on the strategies I used to search for literature. I present a review of the literature on topics related to this study, and I provide an explanation of

the conceptual framework underlying the study. Specific topics include the history of

homeschooling, concerns about homeschooling, motivations to homeschool, methods of

homeschooling, and the outcomes of homeschooling. In addition, I include a thorough

discussion of constructionism and attachment.

In Chapter 3, I explain the methodology of the study, including reasons behind the

phenomenological qualitative design. I describe the role of the researcher, specific

methodology, and plans for data analysis. Further, I outline issues of trustworthiness and

ethical procedures.

In Chapter 4, I describe the setting of this research, the demographics of the

sample, and the method of data collection and analysis. In addition, I produce evidence of

trustworthiness. I present results of the study, along with evidence of these results.

In Chapter 5, I offer an interpretation of findings along with limitations of the

study, recommendations for future research, and implications of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

More than 2 million students are being homeschooled in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2014). The percentage of homeschoolers increases every year, with homeschoolers making up 3% of the school-age population. Parents choose to homeschool for many reasons, including an interest in protecting their children, an interest in instilling specific values, an interest in providing individualized education, as well as the lifestyle flexibility allowed homeschooling families (Atkinson et al., 2007; Erickson, 2005; Harrison, 1996; Montes, 2006; Schnaiberg, 1996; Smedley, 2005; Spiegler, 2010). Another group chooses to homeschool to empower their daughters (Scheffer, 1995). Homeschooled women as a separate, distinct group have rarely been studied, and the outcomes of homeschooling on college women have not been studied at all.

Women going to college have different interests and needs than men (Derby, 2006; Freel, 2011; Wallpe, 2010). They tend to be more interested in remaining close with their families as they establish their own identity (Kenyon & Koerner, 2009). Creating fulfilling relationships is important to women making the transition to college, especially relationships with roommates and professors (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011; Reio, Marcus, & Sanders-Reio, 2009). Forming supportive, healthy relationships with family, friends, and the academic community are key to female college freshmen feeling successful at college and avoiding loneliness, depression, and self-efficacy issues

(Bernardon, 2012; Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011; Permuy, Merino, & Fernandez-Rey, 2010; Selby, 2000).

Many homeschooling critics are concerned about whether children who are homeschooled are able to form friendships (Gathercole, 2007). They fear that too much time spent with their parents and away from peers (especially peers with different worldviews) creates an overly dependent parent-child relationship. No studies to date focus on the attachment styles of homeschooled parents and their children. Although most studies substantiate that homeschooled children are socially capable (Alvord, 2003; Jones, 2010), concerns and assumptions about the social efficacy of homeschooled students remain (Reich, 2002).

The purpose of this study was to address a gap in homeschooling research regarding qualitative data on homeschooled women and to increase understanding of the effect, if any, of homeschooling on the college transition, as well as on the academic and relationship-building experiences of homeschooled women. I cover the following topics in this literature review: (a) literature search strategy, (b) homeschooling, (c) women's development and emerging adulthood, (d) attachment theory and significant relationships, and (e) transition to college.

Literature Search Strategy

The databases that I used to identify articles were ProQuest Dissertation database, Thoreau, ERIC, Educational Research Complete, PsychInfo, and PsychArticles. I completed searches on each topic until I reviewed all of the displayed articles, until it became clear that the search was not on topic, or until two-thirds of three pages in a row

displayed only articles I already reviewed. I limited searches to research published after 2009 (with the exception of foundational research, which went back several decades) and used only peer-reviewed research. I cited several websites. These are primarily government websites that provide homeschooling statistics or websites that provide online peer-reviewed articles. I read several foundational books for basic background information. In topic areas with few search hits, I performed searches on similar topics and clarified in the literature review that little or no research had been done. Searches were conducted between September 22, 2013 and March 8, 2015.

Table 1

Summary of Research Results by Topic

Topic	Articles	Books
Homeschooling	40	20
Family Psychology	49	6
Transition to College	26	1
Development	36	4

Theoretical Framework

As I mentioned in the Theoretical Framework section of Chapter 1, feminist essentialism was an underlying theory for this study (Stone, 2004). Feminist essentialism (also known as gender essentialism) is the descendent of essentialism, a theory that espouses there are certain similarities between members of a group (Heyman & Giles, 2006). Essentialism in many ways rose as a theory that was used to justify

biological determination and overgeneralizations about all people of a category. It was also used as a way of proving the members of subjected categories as morally and biologically superior to groups in power (Buhle & Buhle, 1988; Gilligan, 1982; Montague, 1999; Stoper & Johnson, 1977). I describe Gilligan's ideas further in the Women's Psychology section of Chapter 2. However, without some sense of similarity among members of a category, there is no way to determine common interests, common backgrounds, and common needs of the category (Bordo, 2013). In many ways, feminist essentialism can be seen as the examination of common differences from men (Bordo, 2003). Many influential works in the psychology of women spring from a feminist essentialist point of view (Belenky et al., 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Jordan et al., 1986; Miller, 1986). I see usefulness in finding the essential similar traits in women, as these help to understand the experience of being female. However, in the vein of Stone (2004), I believe that this essentialism is similar to chains that partially overlap. Any one woman's experience is connected to the history of all women, yet branches out in its own unique direction.

Conceptual Framework

I used constructionism as the conceptual framework for this study. This philosophy considers the experiences of the participants to be paramount. Crotty (1998) described constructionism as knowledge and understanding that arises from personal experience with the world. In constructionism, people actively seek out knowledge of the world and try to make sense of it based on their current understanding of the situation and interpretations of their experiences. In constructionism, objects and

experiences do not have inherent meaning. These are given meaning by people. A researcher using constructionism would be primarily focused on the meanings that the participants assign to their present situation and the past understandings that inform these assignments of meaning (Patton, 2002). The researcher would view participants' experiences as real and valid, and would focus research questions on finding out as much as possible about the meanings participants make and the history that led to the participants' interpretations.

I used the constructionist view because it focuses on the experiences of homeschooled women. Rather than come to the study with expectations, I learned from the women about their history with homeschooling, how they believe their homeschool experience affects them now, and how they believe their homeschooling affected their relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners.

Homeschooling

The History and Future of Homeschooling

Homeschooling was the primary schooling method prior to the 19th century (Cutler, 2000; Ray, 2005; Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Most parents taught their children the information needed to survive; this consisted of basic survival skills such as hunting, farming and skills needed for a specific family trade (Gaither, 2008). Wealthier families hired a governess or master to teach their children in the home. In the 1600s, a group of English Pilgrims found their homeland was not tolerant of their sect of Christianity (Gaither, 2008). They moved to Amsterdam, having heard that the Dutch were more accepting of religious diversity. Upon moving there, the Pilgrims found that the people

of Amsterdam were too tolerant of differing life choices and that the Pilgrim children were becoming more liberal and less religious than they preferred (Stratton, 1986). This group began homeschooling to avoid their children straying even more from their religion. After a time, the Pilgrims decided to sail to America to build a holy colony away from what they saw as vice and worldliness.

Between the 1650s and 1680s, laws were passed in the colonies of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Virginia that required parents to teach children to read, write, and to behave well (Gaither, 2008). Parents who did not meet this duty were given consequences. For example, the *tithingmen* of the Massachusetts Colony reported unruly and under-educated children to the local government and could remove children from their parents if they deemed it necessary (Bremner, 1970). The tithingmen were responsible for the moral and religious standards of the community and held parents accountable for their children's education because a well-educated religious community could read and discuss the Bible more effectively.

Once the colonies were established, The Massachusetts Bay Colony decided that children needed community support to be taught how to read Scripture (Gaither, 2008). They opened the first public school to teach children to read and write. The 1647 Old Deluder Satan Bill required that any town with 50 or more people have a public school (Hazlett, 2011). Whether or not this law was enforced is unclear. At this time, dame schools were also popular. Dame schools were in-home schools in which a woman would watch over younger children and teach them basic skills and lessons for a fee (Wyman, 1995). Tutors were also popular as a way to teach children reading and writing

(Gaither, 2008). For those who had little money, parents would organize an apprenticeship for their boys.

Thoughts regarding the efficacy of public schools were divergent. During this time, public schooling in the northern colonies thrived (Gaither, 2008). Free education was considered quite beneficial to early Americans. Protestants of the time considered education necessary to understand the Bible, so they were happy to have a public entity support this vital responsibility (Morgan, 1988). Families were happy to have their children educated because second sons, in particular, needed to have an education to make a living once they had left their childhood home (Gaither, 2008). Farmers wanted a more stable life for their children; mothers needed time to tend to their homes, and people trusted teachers because they knew the teachers as community members.

However, philosophers at this time extolled the virtues of schooling at home. Penn, Locke, and Rousseau all believed that schools would teach children bad habits (Locke, 1693/1996; Penn, 1682/2003; Rousseau, 1762/1979). Abigail Adams was an avid homeschooler (Gaither, 2008). At the end of the 17th century, public schools were available in her area, but she found homeschooling a preferable option.

Public schooling was not popular in the southern colonies (Gaither, 2008). Most children were raised on farms far away from the nearest population center, making it difficult to have centralized schooling (Jernegan, 1919). The southern colonies also had a highly dichotomized society because most citizens were either wealthy landowners or quite poor. The disparity led to an interest in class-differentiated education (Gaither,

2008). Children in this region were either homeschooled in life skills and trades by their parents or they were taught to be ladies and gentlemen by governesses or tutors. After the Revolutionary War, the founding fathers began to envision a new union. They supported public schooling as part of this vision (Gaither, 2008). Thomas Jefferson believed that education of all citizens was necessary for a knowledgeable electorate (Jefferson, 1760/1950). Benjamin Franklin (1749) argued the importance of state-sponsored schooling to encourage a happy and thoughtful populace and a healthy government. These men and other framers of the United States Constitution felt that education was vital to creating a prosperous and well-informed citizenry, and made a point of focusing their writings on the formation of a public education option. By the late 1800s, a public school system began to form across the country (Mondale, 2002). The purpose of the public schooling system was to give an equal education to all future citizens, regardless of socioeconomic class.

Between the late 1800s and the 1930s, compulsory schooling increasingly became the norm (Cutler, 2000). All but those who lived in very isolated areas and those who were given special dispensation for physical and mental difficulties were expected to enroll in either a public or a private school. In the early 1900s, students who were not going to public school had the option of completing correspondence courses at home (Ray, 2005). By mid-century, public schooling began to take on a more professional tone (Gaither, 2008). Teachers were seen as the experts on children, and parents took a background role as supporters of their child's education. Parents were shamed if their children were not ready for school (Cutler, 2000). The state government could take

children away from their parents if the children were truant or considered unfit for

school. These children were most frequently put in a government-run boarding school.

As a result, the sense of trust was broken between teachers and some parents (Gaither,

2008; Mondale, 2002), which had a part in forming the adversarial educator-parent

relationship that feeds some homeschooling decisions today (Gaither, 2008).

In the 1970s, social change based on antiestablishment trends became prevalent in the

U.S. In large numbers, young people began to question the ways of the past and to

envision a different future. John Holt had reservations regarding the methods of public

schools (Stevens, 2001; Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). He saw public schools as a product

of the industrial age and uninspired, homogeneous students as the result of this

mechanized process. He believed that children should be free to explore their own

interests and developed a theory and method of homeschooling called unschooling (Holt

& Farenga, 2003). Unschoolers follow their own lead and are encouraged to find their

own passions. The belief underlying unschooling is that children who are raised in this

type of atmosphere will be active participants in their own learning and more engaged in

determining the course of their lives.

Concurrent with Holt's unschooling movement was a revival of the conservative

movement (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2009). Conservatives found the hippie movement of the

1970s distasteful and yearned for tradition. Rather than look to government to fix the

problems of society, they wanted a small government and mistrusted government

intrusiveness (Gaither, 2008). This discomfort with big government meant that they did

not trust schools, the most local and pervasive form of government. Rather than have

teachers from liberal colleges shape their children's minds, they preferred to influence their own children.

These far left and far right influences birthed today's homeschooling movement (Gaither, 2008; Murphy, 2012). Along with the rise of suburbanism and the resulting individualist sentiment, the "cult of the child" in which parents subvert their own needs to take care of their children's interests, and the bureaucratization of public schools with the consequent alienation of parents, homeschooling is making more and more sense to many of today's parents (Gaither, 2008). Homeschooling is a fast-growing movement that is changing the face of education in the United States.

Schools today are taking cues from the homeschooling movement. Online classes are allowing schools to be more individualized and more tailored to specific needs and schedules (Horn & Christensen, 2008). Some theorists believe that the future of schooling will look much like homeschool. Classes will be student-centered and will allow for much individualization based on interest (Van'T Hooft, 2008). Computer-based learning will encourage customization based on knowledge and skill levels. Parents and school counselors will play a larger role in these schools as the facilitators and organizers of student's schedules, ensuring that children have both an individualized and a basic core curriculum (Horn & Christensen, 2008).

Motivation to Homeschool

Parents make the choice to homeschool for a variety of reasons. Some are concerned about societal pressures and want to have a primary role in the moral decisions that their children make (Atkinson et al., 2007; Montes, 2006; Schnaiberg,

1996; Spiegler, 2010). They fear their children will be detrimentally affected by negative socializing that occurs in the public schools and would prefer to shield their children from peers who would lead them down the wrong path. Some had bad experiences as students and believe public schools are detrimental to their children (Erickson, 2005; Smedley, 2005). Other parents want to instill their religion in their children and feel that the homeschool environment provides an optimal environment for imparting religious values (Apple, 2006; Harrison, 1996; Isenberg, 2007; Kunzman, 2010; Montes, 2006; Spiegler, 2010). Many of these parents are concerned about having secular humanist teachers as the role model for their children. Some are concerned about physical and emotional violence in traditional schools and want to keep their children safe (Arora, 2006; McDowell, 2000; Morton, 2010). With knowledge of the Sandy Hook and Columbine shootings, parents feel concern over their children's safety and want to protect them from school violence and bullying. Wyatt (2008) believes such concern is largely a manufactured crisis, however, fueled by easy access to news sources that repeatedly discuss school violence.

Some homeschooling parents have children with specific educational needs that they believe could be met better in an individualized environment (Arora, 2006; Harrison, 1996; Kendall & Taylor, 2016; Lois, 2008; Patterson et al., 2007; Spiegler, 2010). This group includes parents whose children are gifted as well as those who are struggling in school. Frequently, these parents feel that schools lack the resources and one-on-one attention that their children need to thrive. Racial and religious bias in the schools is a motivator for some homeschooling parents (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009;

Ray, 2005). A thriving and growing group of African American parents are choosing to homeschool out of concern that teacher and administrator bias will sideline their children. They see the tendency to track African American students into lower academic groups. They see the higher rates of discipline of African American students, so they choose to homeschool to convey an expectation of success to their children (Taylor, 2005). Some African American parents choose to homeschool in part because they want to teach their children about African American history and culture, and traditional schools are not seen as adequate in this area (Ray, 2015). Some Muslim parents choose to homeschool to avoid anti-Muslim sentiments present among educators and students.

Parents occasionally have pedagogical differences from traditional schools and want to teach their children in a manner that is consistent with their beliefs regarding education (Harrison, 1996; Morton, 2010). These include both unschoolers, who believe that traditional schools reinforce hierarchy and squelch a love of learning and traditionalists, who believe that schools are too unstructured and lack discipline. Many homeschoolers believe that homeschooling strengthens families (Erickson, 2005; Harrison, 1996; Wyatt, 2008; Smedley, 2005). This group of homeschoolers feels that contemporary society leads children away from the family unit and they strive to create a cohesive and close family. Some homeschoolers enjoy the flexibility offered by homeschooling (Harrison, 1996; Webb, 1999). These homeschoolers may choose to travel with their children, may have ill family members, or may just enjoy having a schedule that is based on their children's needs instead of on institutional calendars.

An increasing number of parents are choosing to homeschool their children in order to add academic rigor to their children's schooling (Harrison, 1996; Schnaiberg, 1996; Spiegler, 2010). These homeschoolers frequently feel that traditional schools have a watered down curriculum and they make the choice to homeschool in order to challenge their children academically.

Theorists have different views of how and why the decision to homeschool is made. Anthony and Burroughs (2010) found in a case study that homeschoolers go through specific stages as they decide to homeschool. At first, a catalyst is present; it can be a bad academic or social situation at school or it can be a negative parental experience with school. The parent decides to homeschool because of this catalyst. Next, the parent sees that their family life could become more flexible and, as a result, they choose to continue homeschooling due to this increased flexibility (Anthony, 2009; Anthony & Burroughs, 2012). Knutson (2007) agreed with this; in a phenomenological study, he discovered a prior step in which the parent sees that something is wrong at school and attempts to correct this wrong.

Collom (2005) established that five basic reasons are behind the choice to homeschool: critical feelings toward public schools, ideological reasons, religious reasons, family needs, and child needs. Using an experimental design, Collom found parents of color were more likely to be critical of public schools and parents who had been homeschooling longer were more likely to choose to homeschool based on ideological or religious reasons. In a phenomenological study, Goodman (2008) found that parents' motivations were complex and that the parents' and students' personalities

and interests were as important as their motivations to homeschool. Goodman found the

homeschool environment was the key to understanding original motivation and

continued motivation.

Practices of Homeschooling

       Methods. The curriculum chosen for homeschooling is dependent primarily on

parent philosophy, student needs, and student interests (Anthony, 2009; Clements, 2002;

Ray, 2000). Parents take learning style into account as they plan curriculum and

individual lessons (Bannier, 2007; Clements, 2002; Ray, 2000). Homeschoolers typically

use reading throughout the curriculum as it encourages independence in the student and

allows the parent to work with other children (Anthony, 2009; Clements, 2002).

Homeschooling parents find curriculum thoroughness important and they consider

curriculum choices based on the amount of academic rigor (Clements, 2002). Parents

constantly reassess curriculum to determine its efficacy for individual children (Bannier,

2007; Ray, 2000). Homeschoolers use videos, online learning, and books as learning

tools (Clements, 2002). Recently, McGuffey Readers entered the homeschooling market

(Hazlett, 2011). They are textbooks from the 1800s that are popular with homeschoolers

because of their Christian content and focus on memorization. Unfortunately, these

textbooks exhibit sexism and unkindness, show that perfection should be expected from

children, have morbid and frightening stories, and encourage poor teaching methods

(Hazlett, 2011).

       Many teaching methods are used for homeschooled children, although no single

homeschooling theory or method underlies this research. These include classical

education, multiple intelligences, constructivism, Montessori, Waldorf, distance

learning, media, e-learning, mastery learning, unit studies, cooperative learning, and

unschooling (Davis, 2011; Ray, 2000). Unschooling, developed by John Holt (2003) is a

method that assumes children are curious and eager to learn (Merry & Karsten, 2010).

The schedule is not prearranged and the curriculum is flexible and based completely on

the child's interests (Kunzman, 2009; Merry & Karsten, 2010). Holt believed that

children are natural learners and that perceptive adults teach children by following the

child's lead, listening and building upon the child's curiosity and interests (Holt &

Farenga, 2003).

Methods used in homeschooling include focusing on mastery, repetition and

retention (Bannier, 2007; Cai et al., 2002; Ray, 2000). These areas are important because

homeschool teachers want to be sure that their children master the content taught and

because the time constraints placed on traditional schoolteachers are not placed on

homeschool teachers. Technology and hybrid teaching (part-time public school and part-

time homeschool, part-time homeschool and part-time e-learning) are popular with

homeschoolers (Jackson, 2007). These methods are popular because they allow students

to work independently while still individualizing and encouraging accountability

(Christensen et al., 2008)

Homeschool teaching is different than traditional school teaching. Mothers who

taught school previously understand and use current methods and tend to teach using

effective methods (McMullen & deAbreau, 2011). They are up-to-date on current

methodology and more capable of individualizing methods to meet their children's

needs. However, homeschool teachers as a group are generally more controlling and more conservative than traditional schoolteachers (Cai et al., 2002).

Resources. There are many resources available to homeschoolers. Homeschool organizations are available throughout the United States (Atkinson et al., 2007). These organizations can be particularly helpful to beginning homeschool teachers as they have access to curriculum resources, local homeschool cooperatives, and the opinions and help of other homeschooling parents. Many of these are ideological in nature, however, and some parents are driven away by religious or pedagogical differences (Atkinson et al., 2007; Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). In fact, the religious nature of well-known organizations such as the Home School Legal Defense Association may lead to the incorrect assumption that all homeschoolers are conservative Christians (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013).

Cooperatives are also helpful to homeschooling families (Atkinson et al., 2007). Cooperatives frequently offer classes and extracurricular activities for homeschoolers. Parents see these as helpful because of the readily available curriculum resources and because of the socialization that cooperatives provide. One cooperative, CASA (Community Assisted Schooling Alternatives) Vida, is run by the Kyrene School District in Arizona (Eley, 2002). In this homeschool cooperative, students meet weekly for classes, field trips, and social time. Parents get the opportunity to socialize and to discuss the trials and tribulations of their homeschool. The support that parents and children get in this environment is important to them.

Educators have their own opinions regarding homeschooling. Local educators can be helpful, but this is somewhat dependent upon the district's support of homeschooling and the teacher's personal views (Atkinson et al., 2007). Some districts (such as the Kyrene School District mentioned above) host homeschool coops (Eley, 2002). Others have intensive homeschool programs that allow for choice in classes and put responsibility for learning in the hands of parents (Monroe School District, n. d.). Sky Valley Education Center, a homeschool program in Washington State, hosts both classes and several 3-day per week schools, including an Environmental School, a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) program, and a Montessori program.

Homeschooling families also make use of resources outside of the home or school. Homeschoolers frequent libraries for help with texts and research (Atkinson et al., 2007). In some areas, libraries even host homeschool events (Pikes Peak Library District, 2013). Homeschoolers also make liberal use of gyms, which are increasingly tailoring daytime programs for homeschoolers (Kent State University, 2014). Museums are also frequented by homeschoolers (Museum of Fine Arts Boston, 2014; National Building Museum, 2014).

Individualization. One of the primary reasons why parents choose to homeschool is to individualize their child's curriculum and learning experience (Dumas et al., 2010; Peterson, 2009). Parents who have gifted children and children with special needs may find that homeschooling allows more curriculum adjustment and differentiation to provide their child with a better learning experience than traditional schools (Arora,

2006; Duvall et al., 2004; Peterson, 2009). Homeschooling families with special needs children have many stories of their public school refusing to recognize special needs or to provide adequate programming for children (Arora, 2006; O'Neill, 2013). These parents are able to individualize curriculum, choosing curricula that can target areas of deficiency and build up areas of strength even further (Duvall et al., 2004; Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). In fact, homeschooling allows these children to make greater gains than they do in traditional school settings (O'Neill, 2013; Peterson, 2009). Homeschooling parents can plan the school day around their child's internal clock, planning more intellectual lessons at times that the child has a greater ability to focus and easier lessons for times when the child is less able to focus. Duvall (2005), who studied this phenomenon quantitatively, found the lower teacher-student ratio and higher rates of academically engaged time can help students who would struggle in traditional schools.

Outcomes of Homeschooling

Experiences of homeschoolers. Students' experiences of homeschooling are dependent upon the personalities of the students and the teaching styles of their parents (Jackson, 2007; van Schalkwyk & Bouwer, 2011). Successful students have expectations that are in line with their parents' abilities and styles. When students are unsuccessful, it is either because parents have values that are not in line with their children's interests, or they are unable to teach their children well (van Schalkwyk & Bouwer, 2011). Parents who find themselves discordant with their children are better off asking their children how homeschooling is working for them and asking themselves how they can change their strategies to meet their child's needs (Jackson, 2007).

Religiosity. Uecker (2009) found in an experimental study that religious faith is not significantly affected by homeschooling. Given that many parents choose to homeschool specifically to instill their religious values, such a finding is particularly unexpected (Apple, 2006; Harrison, 1996; Isenberg, 2007; Kunzman, 2010; Montes, 2006; Patterson et al., 2007; Spiegler, 2010; Uecker, 2009). Homeschoolers are more affected by their peers' religious beliefs than by their parents' (Uecker, 2009). Youth groups and church have a larger influence upon children who homeschool because communities affect children more than parents. Indeed, children who go to Protestant schools where there is a community of religiously minded students are more likely to feel religiously motivated than homeschoolers (Uecker, 2009).

Achievement. Medlin (2010) found in an experimental study that most homeschooling parents are relatively aware of their children's learning styles. Achievement scores are higher among homeschooling families whose parents are sensitive to their children's learning styles. Homeschooled students have a well-documented edge on achievement tests such as the SAT, ACT, and PSAT, as well as superior scores on standardized tests such as the ITBS and the CTBS (Dumas et al., 2010; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2004; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2009; Jones, 2010; Ray, 2000; Ray, 2004; Snyder, 2013). Martin-Chang et al. (2011) found in their survey-oriented quantitative study that the more structured the homeschool atmosphere, the higher the test scores will be for the students. In terms of test scores, homeschooling mitigates many factors that typically lower scores. Socioeconomic class, race, income, and parent education do not significantly affect the

test scores of homeschooled children (Basham, Merrifield, & Hepburn, 2007; Dumas et al., 2010; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2004; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2009; Ray, 2000). Homeschooled boys and girls have similar test scores, whereas traditionally schooled boys and girls have differing test scores dependent on the subject area (Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2009; Ray, 2000).

Some researchers dispute these results. It is unclear whether higher standardized test scores for homeschoolers are due to different testing conditions (Basham et al., 2007). Some point out that most homeschoolers have parents who are Caucasian, wealthier than average, and well educated, which would influence test scores (Burns, 1999). Random sampling is considered nearly impossible, given the lack of information about the homeschooling population and the hesitancy of several subgroups of homeschoolers to volunteer for research (Martin-Chang et al., 2011). Yet other researchers found the results of these tests to vary from year to year. Traditionally schooled students scored better on the math portion of the ACT test (Qaqish, 2007). Other criticisms of research on homeschoolers are the biases of the researchers, overgeneralization of the results, and design limitations (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013).

Homeschooled college students. From the point of admissions forward, homeschooled students have a different experience at college than their traditionally schooled peers. Typically, homeschooled students do not have grade reports from teachers outside the family, so college admissions officers have to find other ways of determining eligibility for these students (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004a; Sorey & Duggan, 2008). Criteria can include weighing test scores more heavily, interviewing students,

asking for alternative forms of documentation, and requiring more essays of homeschooled students than other students. College admissions professionals actively seek homeschool students because they have a spark and a different voice (Haan & Cruickshank, 2006; Jones & Gloeckner, 2004; Ray, 2004).

Once homeschooled students begin college, they can have different transition issues than traditionally schooled students. At first, they may feel a little awkward as they begin to socialize outside of the homeschool, but as time goes on, their transition away from the home is as successful if not more successful than traditionally schooled students (Bolle et al., 2007; Bolle-Brumond & Wessel, 2012; Pool, 2010). Phenomenological studies have been conducted with those who homeschooled throughout high school (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012), and who graduated from a homeschool (Bolle et al., 2007). Survey studies have been completed with those who were homeschooled for "at least some of their primary and secondary education" (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012, p. 23), who homeschooled for an indeterminate number of years (Ray, 2004), and with those who homeschooled for at least a portion of their high school years (Saunders, 2006). Socially, these students are as capable as traditionally schooled students and credit their homeschooling as either a neutral or a positive influence on their social capabilities (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Pool, 2010; Riley, 2015; Saunders, 2006;). They are similar in terms of self-esteem and self-efficacy as traditionally schooled students (Alvord, 2003; Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). Homeschoolers have lower rates of depression and anxiety (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). In addition, homeschoolers are less likely to consume alcohol and to get drunk than

traditionally schooled students (Thomson & Jang, 2016). Homeschoolers are more involved in college activities and hold more leadership positions (Ray, 2004). Overall, homeschoolers feel better regarding their college experience than traditionally schooled students (Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012).

Academically, homeschooled students fare as well or better than their traditionally schooled counterparts (Alvord, 2003; Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012, Jones & Gloeckner, 2004; Ray, 2004; Saunders, 2006). Survey and experimental results show that they have better overall grade point averages, have better relationships with their professors, are more committed to getting their degrees, have higher retention rates in college, and receive higher professor ratings (Alvord, 2003; Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012; Golden, 2000; Jones & Gloeckner, 2004a; Klicka, 2003; Kranzow, 2013; Kranzow, 2004; Ray, 2004; Saunders, 2006). Experimental results show that they feel successful academically and credit this success to their homeschooling (Duggan, 2010). Given this success, some homeschooled students have notable areas of difficulty. They are less confident in their writing than traditionally schooled students (Jones, 2010; Kranzow, 2013). They contribute to classroom discussions less often (Jones, 2010; Kranzow, 2013) and feel less confident when giving speeches (Jones, 2010). Upon transitioning to college, they have to focus on learning to balance studying and outside activities more than traditionally schooled students (Kranzow, 2013). Researchers do not yet know the reasons why, but survey results show that homeschoolers also tend to spurn science majors, choosing liberal arts majors instead (Phillips, 2010).

Concerns Regarding Homeschooling

   Civic perils of homeschooling. Reich, the Secretary of Labor during the Clinton administration, recently began expressing concern regarding the homeschooling movement. He and other homeschooling critics are particularly concerned about the civic implications of homeschooling such as a differentiated education system, isolationism, possible defunding of public education, ignorance of children's needs for autonomy, and the undermining of democracy (Anderson, 2007; Apple, 2007; Goldberg, 2013; Reich, 2002). According to Reich (2002), homeschooling caters to those who are interested in giving their children a highly individualized education, and the concept of a fair, equal, universal education is dismissed when we encourage homeschooling. Parents who homeschool their children are more likely to be skeptical of the public education system. They are not taking advantage of public schools, so these parents are less likely to want to fund schools with their tax dollars. A lack of funding makes public schools less able to function properly, which further discourages wealthy or involved families from enrolling their children. This promotes a two-tiered education system in which wealthy children get individualized attention and poor children are put in substandard schools (Apple, 2000; Apple, 2005). Not all homeschoolers provide an individualized education; educators have concerns regarding educational neglect among a small group of homeschoolers (Willard & Oplinger, 2004). The concerns are addressed in the "Child Abuse in Homeschools" section of this literature review.

   Homeschool critics are also concerned about whether homeschooled students are ideologically isolated or not. Homeschooled students have less contact with people who

have different worldviews (Anderson, 2007; Apple, 2007; Marzluf, 2009; Reich, 2002).

Contact with people of different backgrounds and the sense of commonality that can

result among diverse groups who spend time together are considered the glue that holds

society together (Reich, 2002). One of the reasons parents choose to homeschool their

children is to have some control over the people to whom their children are exposed

(Smedley, 2005; Webb, 1999). When children are only exposed to people whom their

parents choose, they lack experience with diverse groups and can become extreme in

their viewpoints (Apple, 2005; Reich, 2002). Reich argued that this polarization is bad

for a pluralistic society. Other researchers agree, pointing out that homeschooling

encourages a sense of "us" and "them," in which homeschooled students learn to be

suspicious of others (Apple, 2005; Apple, 2007; Lubienski, 2000). People outside the

home may be seen as threats that undermine the moral stability of the home (Alberta

Education Special Programs Branch, 2007). With this attitude, homeschoolers lose

opportunities to discuss differences and to work out problems with people of diverse

backgrounds. This separation of people with different views undermines democracy

because these children are not allowed to discuss differences and to try to understand

one another (Reich, 2002). One recent study disputes the idea that homeschooled

students are politically intolerant (Cheng, 2014). Indeed, this study found that the more a

student was homeschooled, the more likely they were to be politically tolerant.

　　　Reich (2002) also argued that children's rights to autonomy are undermined with

homeschooling. He sees that schooling has three different audiences: parents, the state,

and children. In Reich's mind, homeschooling focuses almost solely on the parents'

interests, ignoring the states' and, most importantly, the child's interests. Although many argue that parents have their children's interests as their top priority (van Schalkwyk & Bouwer, 2011), Reich believes that children need to be given the opportunity to become independent of their parents and to choose their own path.

Some scholars believe that homeschooling encourages oppression because of the hierarchical nature of the homeschool system, and inherent sexism because women become entrenched in their position as the primary caretaker in the home (Alberta Education Special Programs Branch, 2007; Apple, 2006; Cai, Reeve, & Robinson, 2002; Vigilant, Trefethren, & Anderson, 2013). These researchers believe that children who only see hierarchy and oppression learn to accept it as normal. They believe that without the addition of opposing viewpoints, this relationship of domination and submission is perpetuated.

Homeschooling advocates disagree with Reich and other homeschooling critics. They point out that the nature of homeschooling includes adventures into the real world in a way that traditional schooling cannot (Holt & Farenga, 2003; Seago, 2012). Homeschoolers work with people of multiple ages, instead of spending most of the day with people in their own grade. Homeschoolers have more opportunities to participate in internships and community service work and are introduced to diverse groups of people in a more natural setting than school. In fact, the argument can be made that suburbanization and the loss of bussing intended to combat segregation have made public schools increasingly less diverse (Goyette, 2008; Holt & Farenga, 2003).

Researchers who disagree with Reich argue that parents are the primary caretakers of the child, and that parents have primary responsibility for their children's education, not the state (Conroy, 2010; King, 2005). It is not yet proven that public schools do a better job of creating autonomous students than home schools; indeed, these researchers believe it can be argued that public schools teach students to quiet their inner passions and thoughts rather than express them (Glanzer, 2008; Holt & Farenga, 2003). Some researchers believe that Robert Reich's (and other critics') true motivation is a fear of the religious right and they ask homeschooling critics to trust in the United States' democracy and its ability to be inclusive of different opinions (Glanzer, 2008).

Child Abuse in home schools. A great concern of homeschooling critics is whether homeschooling can contribute to or help cover up child abuse. Many states have lax or nonexistent regulation regarding homeschooling, so an abusing parent may be able to hide the abuse from authorities (Barnett, 2013; Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Goodpasture et al., 2013; Jennens, 2011; Olsen, 2009; Pollack, 2012; Waterman, 2016; Willard & Oplinger, 2004). Between 1999 and 2004, 116 homeschooled children died of abuse. The rate of child abuse in homeschooling families is unknown due to a lack of outside contact, but reports abound of sexual abuse and extreme punishments, including leaving children outside in harsh weather conditions for long periods (Barnett, 2013; Goodpasture et al., 2013). Some homeschooling parents provide a substandard education for their children, a practice which opened debate regarding whether children have the right to an education (Willard & Oplinger, 2004). Yet other parents use homeschooling as a way to cover up kidnapping (Willard & Oplinger, 2004c).

In response to reports of abuse in homeschooling families, the Badman Review was issued in England (Badman, 2009). The report outlined incidences of abuse and made recommendations regarding homeschool oversight. The Badman Review suggested that homeschoolers register their children with the education department and that homeschooling families have regular visits by education department employees. These visits do not need to be in the home because the Badman Review recommended that the government take a light touch when dealing with homeschool families to preserve their freedom to homeschool.

The Badman Review laid the groundwork for homeschool regulation efforts and the backlash against these efforts in the U.S. (Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013, Goodpasture et al., 2013). In recent years, several articles outlined the need for homeschool regulations to ensure that children are receiving a solid basic education and that they are not being abused (Barnett, 2013; Goldberg, 2013; Jennens, 2011; Romanowski, 2001). Some argue that parents of traditionally schooled children do not need to prove that they are not abusing their children and that parents are allowed to have school choice without the interference of the state (Olsen, 2009; Pollack, 2012). The discussion regarding homeschool regulation needs to be inclusive of homeschooling families and advocates if it is to have success (Jennens, 2011).

Socialization. One widespread concern regarding homeschooling is whether homeschoolers are socially capable (Gathercole, 2007). In a phenomenological study by Hauseman (2011), the author found that the stereotypical homeschoolers are socially awkward and do not quite fit in with their peers. According to research, however, this

stereotype is largely unfounded. Alvord (2003) found in a survey study that homeschoolers show the same level of self-esteem as traditionally schooled students. They feel the same amount of social self-efficacy (Alvord, 2003; Jones, 2010). Both quantitative and qualitative measures show that homeschoolers have equivalent social skills to the traditionally schooled (Dumas et al., 2010; Saunders, 2006) and the same number of friends (Reavis & Zakriski, 2005).

One experimental study shows that communication skills of homeschooled students are dependent upon their parent's communication skills (Scott & Johnson, 2009). Homeschool parents who model good communication have children who are successful at communicating. Former homeschoolers tend to speak up less in class and feel less confident when giving speeches (Scott & Johnson, 2009). Although these negative social influences affect homeschoolers, positive outcomes are many. Formerly homeschooled students exhibit more positive behavior (Brady, 2003), avoid negative peer influences (Brady, 2003; Lebeda, 2005), avoid negative behaviors, and are in more leadership positions in college (Jones, 2010). As younger children, homeschoolers show better social skills than traditionally schooled children (Medlin, 2011). Homeschooled children are less reliant on peer approval (Lebeda, 2005; Reavis & Zakriski, 2005). According to one mixed-method study, their parents think that they have better social skills than do traditionally schooled children's parents (Naughton, 2007), and homeschooled children's parents feel that they have more integrity and make more moral decisions than do the parents of traditionally schooled students. Homeschooling can even affect the personality of children. According to one

experimental study, homeschoolers are more open (in fact, the longer a child is homeschooled, the more open they are), more agreeable and more conscientious than traditionally schooled children (White et al., 2007). Homeschooled children are more satisfied with their lives than traditionally schooled children (Basham et al., 2007).

Much of the positive social outcomes of homeschooling can be attributed to the more natural, personal nature of homeschooling (Gathercole, 2007; Wyatt, 2008). Homeschoolers as a group are not socially deprived, and in fact have rich family lives. They spend their social time in clubs, classes, and on teams, and have friends of multiple ages (Gathercole, 2007; Ray, 2005; Wyatt, 2008). They are given time to grow up at their own pace and do not push themselves to be cool. They have meaningful relationships with adults and other mentors and experience diverse relationships with people of different ages, lifestyles, religions, and races in their interaction with the world outside their home. Homeschoolers have different socialization (Gathercole, 2007; Wyatt, 2008), but it is not necessarily worse than traditionally schooled students. Ray (2003) pointed out that assessments of socialization and psychological health may need to be altered for homeschooling children because the homeschooled child has a different form of socialization than the traditionally schooled child.

Homeschooling and the law. Homeschooling has fluctuated as a legal option throughout U.S. history. Prior to the late 1800s, parents were considered solely responsible for their children's education and many parents (dependent on their resources) homeschooled their own children, chose apprenticeships for their children, or had their children homeschooled under the supervision of a governess (Dumas et al.,

2010). In the late 1800s and the early 1900s, compulsory school became the law of the land. However, even then, some families were given the option of homeschooling their child if they lived in a remote area or if they needed to homeschool their special needs or ill child.

In the mid-1960s, John Holt (whose theories regarding education are mentioned under the history and future of homeschooling section but are not an underlying theory of this study) began the modern homeschool movement (Davis, 2011). He and others argued that compulsory schooling is not natural. At first, homeschooling was primarily a hidden practice, but as the movement gained power, state and federal laws began to change. State by state, legislatures passed laws that allowed homeschooling, but with very different expectations of parents and the homeschooled (Home School Legal Defense Association, n. d.). In some states parents do not need to register their children at all, whereas in other states parents need to register their children, submit curriculum and test scores, and be certified teachers or accept home visits by certified teachers. The United States Supreme Court ruled in *Wisconsin vs. Yoder* (1972) that parents can keep their children from public schools for religious reasons. Additionally, they ruled in *Pierce vs. Society of Sisters* and *Meyers vs. Nebraska* that parents had primary responsibility for their children's education. Homeschooling is now legal in all 50 states (Gaither, 2008). Although there are some struggles with the legality of homeschooling in other countries, homeschooling is becoming lawful in an increasing number of countries (Newman, 2012; Reimer, 2010).

More recently, educators report rising concerns regarding educational neglect in homeschool settings (Barnett, 2013; Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Jennens, 2011; Olsen, 2009; Pollack, 2012; Willard & Oplinger, 2004). This spawned new interest in homeschool laws and ways in which the law can be change to hold families accountable for their children's educational, psychological, and physical wellbeing. Several educational neglect cases rose through the justice system. Originally the verdicts leaned toward parents not having an inherent right to homeschool in the face of educational neglect, but this caused a public outcry (Kreager, 2010). The cases were brought to higher courts and eventually to the Supreme Court, who established the rights of parents to control the upbringing of their own children under the 14th Amendment and the right to homeschool children under the Free Exercise Clause (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Alongside the affirmation of these rights, the Supreme Court also clarified that the State has the right to regulate home schools (Kunzman, 2009).

Regulation proponents believe the state should be more involved in home schools because of abuse and neglect concerns. Some suggest that homeschoolers be required to submit the names and birth dates of homeschooled children (Barnett, 2013). Others asked that homeschoolers submit progress reports to the state or prove that their children are receiving a minimal education (Barnett, 2013; Yuracko, 2008). Some authors believe representatives of the state should make home visits (Barnett, 2013). Yet others believe that homeschooling should be regulated to ensure that sexist and racist beliefs are not being promoted under the Equal Protection Act (Yuracko, 2008).

Those opposed to homeschool regulation believe in the primacy of the home over the primacy of the state. They believe that the need for secure attachment is compromised when the state becomes involved in homeschooling (Conroy, 2010). They believe that parents should not need to justify their parenting decisions to others because their primary concern is their child instead of the whims of the state. Anti-regulationists believe that the state's two interests in this area are producing involved citizens and in having an informed populace. Homeschooling, they say, meets both of these needs more thoroughly than does traditional schooling. Furthermore, legal research and survey research makes the argument that regulation does not lead to better homeschooling outcomes (Dumas et al., 2010; Ray, 2005).

Public Perceptions of the Homeschooled

People may have many misperceptions about homeschoolers. Homeschoolers are seen as lacking in social skills and unable to form and to maintain friendships (Ray, 2001). Many believe that homeschoolers have a difficult time becoming independent from their parents, struggling as they begin college with those who were "normally" schooled (Ray, 2001; Lois, 2008). These beliefs are largely untrue. An assumption that homeschoolers are religiously motivated, far-right anti-government extremists has, for the most part, been found untrue (Ray, 2001). Although survey research shows that the majority of homeschoolers seem to be motivated by religious reasons (Harrison, 1996; Wyatt, 2008; Isenberg, 2007; Kunzman, 2009; Morton, 2010; Patterson et al., 2007; Romanowski, 2001; Schnaiberg, 1996; & Spiegler, 2010), the actual percentage of religiously motivated homeschoolers is unclear due to sampling difficulties.

Homeschoolers are known to be resistant to researchers (Goodman, 2008). Unfortunately, this skews samples toward those who are interested in heralding their homeschool methods and results.

Once homeschoolers begin to socialize with traditionally schooled students (either as later-starting public school students or as college students), they can run into socially awkward situations based on misperceptions of homeschooling. They find that they have to justify their parents' decision to homeschool and that they lack some common experiences with others their age (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007). Students who go to public schools have similar schooling backgrounds. They can recall athletic events, dances, and similar coursework. Homeschoolers cannot relate to these topics and find that this causes a sense of separation and alienation, furthering the stereotype that homeschoolers are awkward socially. However, this sense of alienation does not affect homeschoolers for long because once these uncomfortable moments are over, most studies show they are as socially capable as their traditionally schooled counterparts (Alvord, 2003; Jones, 2010; Saunders, 2006).

Even the media portrays incorrect assumptions regarding homeschoolers. Hauseman (2011) phenomenologically researched ways that the media represents homeschooling and the homeschooled. Hauseman (2011) believed that the media portrays homeschoolers as "know-it-alls" who lack social skills. Parents are portrayed as paranoid caregivers who want to protect their children from society. Both of these are exaggerations of the truth and promote further misperceptions and stereotyping, according to Hauseman (2011). This researcher believed that the way to change these

stereotypes is to actively promote putting different views of homeschoolers into the mainstream media.

Homeschooled Girls

Homeschooled girls have homeschool experiences unique to their gender. Sheffer (1995) interviewed 55 homeschooled adolescent girls about their experiences. These girls were recruited with an ad in New Moon, a magazine for feminist and liberal-thinking girls. She found the girls she interviewed were confident and trusted in themselves. They had few difficulties with friends who did not agree with their viewpoints because they were willing to listen to people of different perspectives and be empathetic to their views. The girls told her that in traditional schools, girls are taught to put aside their own interests in favor of the mandated curriculum. In homeschooling, these girls enjoyed having choice over curricular decisions and they like to teach themselves. According to Sheffer, the girls in this study were able to honor their unique learning style. They tended to be concerned regarding inequality and women's issues, considering themselves feminists. Homeschooling allowed these girls to figure out who they were and what they wanted (Sheffer, 1995). They looked to themselves for authority instead of to an outside source. These girls felt they had a voice.

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Attachment Theory

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Parents who homeschool frequently choose to do so to maintain close familial relationships, to focus on the child-parent bond, to allow for individualization, and to allow the children time to pursue their own interests (Wyatt, 2008; Morton, 2010; Spiegler, 2010). These values are at the core of Attachment Parenting, a theory of

parenting that espouses providing a secure base for children to explore the world with confidence and self-efficacy (Bowlby 1988). Ray (2011) argued that homeschooling embodies the concept of attachment because parents hold a central place in their children's lives, because children spend time at home instead of in institutions such as school, and because of the focus on forging important familial relationships. Neufeld and Mate (2004) further postulate that the closeness and nurturing connection offered in homeschooling can offset the negative influences that come from the outside world, and the attachment that happens in homeschooling creates true and meaningful bonds that cannot be replicated in traditional schooling.

Simpson, Collins, Tran, and Haydon (2007) showed in their experimental research that attachment relationships extend well beyond infancy. Their research shows that attachment style affects social life and the ability to make friends in elementary school. This ability is linked with an increase in the likelihood that a person can form romantic relationships in high school. Having the ability to form healthy relationships at each stage of life (elementary school, middle school, high school, and college-aged), sets the base for the following age. The relationship between success and failure in forming relationships is stronger between corresponding ages than it is between ages that are further apart. Simpson et al. also found that people with insecure attachment styles show less trust, less interest in their partners desires and preferences, and seem to have an expectation that they will be let down. As a result, they use worse communication patterns and show an interest in protecting themselves over being vulnerable to others.

Secure attachment can have several positive outcomes in a person's life. In one experimental study, positive attachments styles correlate with self-esteem in decision-making, better decision-making strategies, higher degrees of vigilance, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness (Deniz, 2011). Individuals who have secure attachment styles display constructive conflict communication and a more positive orientation toward marriage, leading to more satisfaction with their marriage (Cobb, Davila, & Bradbury, 2001; Domingue & Mollen, 2009). Secure attachment styles are correlated with grit, or the ability to continue in times of adversity (Levy, 2011). Grit predicts drive and determination.

In Liedloff's (1977) foundational book, *The Continuum Concept: In Search of Happiness Lost*, the author pointed out that children who have secure attachment are not as needy as children with insecure attachment styles. These children are more self-reliant, trusting that their needs will be met (Bowlby, 1988; Liedloff, 1977). They are able to make mistakes without a significant fear of reprisal (Mooney, 2010). Mary Ainsworth, a major contributor to Attachment Theory, found that when children with secure attachments were in an unusual situation, they checked to see if their caregiver was in the room, then went on to play or explore (Mooney, 2010). This sense of the importance of having a secure base from which to become autonomous and confident is pervasive throughout Attachment Theory research.

People with avoidant attachment styles do not feel as socially competent as those with positive attachment styles, according to one experimental study (Fraley et al., 2013). They also do not believe that their friendships are high in quality. According to

both phenomenological and experimental studies, people with insecure attachment styles have difficulties in arguments because their conflicts tend to escalate quickly, the insecurely attached person tends to attack, and their conflicts become more severe (Campbell et al., 2005; Marchand-Reilly, 2012). Couples in which one or both partners are insecurely attached have a greater likelihood of avoiding conflict, giving the silent treatment, and giving ultimatums, according to one experimental study (Domingue & Mollen, 2009).

Women's Psychology

In 1982, Carol Gilligan brought to the mainstream a new school of thought regarding biological and sociological differences between men and women with her book, *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1993). In this book, she outlined ways in which women and men are different, ways in which women's strengths are downplayed and overlooked in Western societies, and ways in which women are oppressed. According to Gilligan, women show greater moral complexity and men are better at logical thinking. Women focus their decisions on relationships and people, whereas men depend on traditional structures of hierarchy to inform their decision-making. Gilligan believes that women are largely left out of studies of psychological development, which leads to a belief that women's different ways are deviant from the norm. Women's focus on empathy for others and relationships is seen as weakness in Western societies, and their voices are largely unheard. Her book spawned a series of studies that focused on the differences between men and women and that helped inform the women's psychology movement. In a peer-reviewed article written in 2004, Gilligan further asserted that in

the past, all areas in which women were different from men were considered flaws (Gilligan, 2004). She believes that women needed to be valued in their own right, and that psychology needed to promote the agenda of validating individual identity.

In response, Gould (2001) stated that Gilligan encourages sexism. Gould believes that in Gilligan's attempts to validate women's strengths (such as empathy and relationship building), she ends up sidelining them to traditionally feminine work, including social work, where their advanced moral and empathy skills translate into a smaller paycheck and less respect from society. Gould also points out that insisting on the moral superiority of women does not do women favors, as it encourages sexism against men. Yoder and Kahn (1993) criticized the new female-friendly model of psychology. They thought that although sound points had been made regarding the male-assumptive model, the new female model was focused on white, upper-middle class women. To Yoder and Kahn, the exclusion of lower class and non-Caucasian women was as much a disservice to psychology as the original exclusion of women's experiences.

At approximately the same time as *In a Different Voice* was published, other authors considered the ramifications of strict gender roles on society. Mary Pipher (1994), Peggy Orenstein (1994), and Cohen et al. (1992) saw a crisis brewing as adolescent girls lost their voice, lost their self-esteem, and began to let their gender affect their interest in hard sciences, math and in seeming too intelligent. These authors believed that the self and other-imposed silencing of women's potential was hurtful to society as a whole and needed to be remedied through personal and societal

transformation of behaviors and expectations. London, Downey, Romer-Canyas, Rattan, and Tyson (2012) agreed, finding that women silence themselves academically in reaction to the perception that they will be rejected by others for being too smart or too aggressive. These authors also found that academic reticence experienced by women increases their feeling of isolation and lowers overall academic motivation. Farady (2010), believes that the girl crisis is overblown and misunderstood. He argued that there are few differences in self-esteem and voice between girls and boys and sees that girls are making inroads in academics and in traditionally male professions.

Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stivey, and Surrey (1991) emphasized the importance of the self/other dynamic as women mature. These authors argued that women see their identities as being intricately connected to others and that women tend to value interdependence and empathy. Women are mothers, daughters, friends, and sisters and see these roles as important in defining their identity. Where the traditional model of the psychologically healthy emerging adult man includes severing ties from the family of origin to discover their own identity, such an action may not apply to the psychologically healthy emerging adult woman. Women tend to take a different path, using their family relationships as a base from which to explore their world. The importance of relationships to women will be further discussed in the "Women in Relationship" section of this chapter.

Gender Identity of Women

According to Carothers and Reis' (2012) study, gender identity is not a dichotomous construct. Identity is on a sliding scale, including women who show

traditionally male traits such as leadership and straightforwardness and men who exhibit

nurturing and empathetic traits. Gender identity is also dependent upon the activity at the

time because a very feminine woman may choose to take on traditionally male traits

while conducting business or while in a situation she believes unsafe. Batalha, Reynolds,

and Newbigin (2011) pointed out in their experimental research that gender is best

examined as an environmental construct. They believe that many gender differences are

due to social and cultural issues.

Gender identity formation begins at an early age. At age 3 or 4, two-thirds of girls

go through a period of appearance gender identification, according to one experimental

study (Halim et al., 2013). During this time, they rigidly adhere to traditional feminine

appearance norms, including wearing pink frilly outfits, sparkles, and nail polish. The

more positively girls felt regarding their gender, the more likely they were to dress in

feminine clothing. The gender socialization process is similar for girls and boys, with

children receiving messages about gender expectations at a young age, according to one

experimental study (Epstein & Ward, 2011). As a child grows older, the people whom

they meet enforce gender identity, including parents and teachers who encourage

gender-traditional behavior while discouraging gender-nontraditional behavior. For

example, a girl might be chastised for speaking out of turn in class, although a teacher

might consider the same behavior charming and excusable in a boy. Significant adults

have an important effect on children's gender development.

One of the most significant adults in children's lives is their mother. During the

onset of the women's psychology movement, Nancy Chodorow (2004) studied women's

development. Chodorow looked at mothers' relationships with their children and found that gender identities are transmitted from mother to child at a young age, and that girls learn their gender roles from their mothers. Women, according to Chodorow, are taught by their mothers to value relationships and these values are then reinforced by society. More recently, Torres (2013) found that women who had highly educated or full-time employed mothers were more likely to take a feminist stance on work and family issues, further clarifying the importance that mothers have in reinforcing gender identities for their children. In return, mothering can be very fulfilling for women (Rittenour & Colaner, 2012). According to Rittenour and Colaner (2012), many women find their fulfillment is strongly tied to generativity, and motherhood is a form of generativity that creates a great sense of meaning for many women. Other forms of generativity, such as having a fulfilling and meaningful job, give women a sense of purpose as well.

Women in Relationship

Gilligan (1993) and Jordan et al. (1991) contended that relationships are very important to women. The sense of connection gained through relationships helps women to avoid depression (Whitton & Kuryluk, 2012), lowers stress for women (Mann et al., 2010), promotes physical health (Comas-Diaz, 2013; Willet et al., 2012), and supports overall mental health (Srivastava, 2013). Women who have the support of friends feel less lonely, even when having difficulties in their romantic relationships (Eshbaugh, 2010). Women with close connections feel more self-esteem (Burchfield, 2012) and overall life satisfaction is associated with successful parent-daughter communication (Levin et al., 2012).

Familial relationships set the groundwork for later relationship patterns (Surjadi et al., 2013). In one experimental study, women who have parents with an authoritative (assertive, yet supportive) parenting style were well adjusted, although women with authoritarian (assertive and lacking in affection) parents tend to have worse emotional adjustment (McKinney et al., 2011). According to another experimental study, authoritarian parenting also leads to perfectionism and a lack of creativity in children (Miller et al., 2012). As mentioned above, women's relationships with their mothers set the stage for gender identity (Chodorow, 2004), but relationships with fathers also have great importance for women (DelPriore & Hill, 2013). Women whose fathers were not a large part of their lives are more likely to be sexually permissive and more likely to take sexual risks, such as avoiding condom use. Girls who live with both parents are also more likely to have a higher degree of life satisfaction (Levin et al., 2012).

Friendships have unique relational and health benefits for women. Although relationships among women tend to be marked by a degree of rivalry (Bleske-Rechek & Lighthall, 2010), these relationships provide essential support (Aleman, 2010). One phenomenological study found a degree of constancy in women's friendships that encourages them to take risks and to explore life options (Aleman, 2010). Women value these relationships highly (Comas-Diaz & Weiner, 2013). Male-female relationships are also important to women (Felmlee et al., 2012; Russell et al., 2013). Women and men tend to have different expectations of these relationships, according to one experimental study (Felmlee et al., 2012) because women need their relationships to have a higher degree of trust and closeness. According to one study, some women specifically seek out

homosexual men, believing them to be particularly trustworthy, especially when discussing romantic relationships (Russell et al., 2013).

Romantic relationships are central to women's lives. In their study, Cusack, Hughes, and Cook (2012) found that in both homosexual and heterosexual relationships, women find the intimacy gained to be an important factor in relationship satisfaction and, therefore, life satisfaction. The existence of a romantic relationship adds to a woman's self-esteem (Eryilmaz & Atak, 2011). Survey research indicated that the ability to be authentic in relationships is linked to self-esteem and avoiding depression for women (Wenzel & Lucas-Thompson, 2012). Women who are capable of relational authenticity model their mothers' authentic behavior (Wenzel & Lucas-Thompson, 2012).

For many, an important component to romantic satisfaction is sex (Cusack et al., 2012; Murray, 2011; Pearson, 2008). Murray (2011) surmised in her grounded theory dissertation that women find their sexual desire is affected by their sense of intimacy with their partner and that an inability to communicate about sex is linked to depression. Women also find that their beliefs regarding sex affect their sense of sexual empowerment in relationships, leading women who believe that sex is bad to feel shame about their sexuality (Pearson, 2008). Heterosexual relationships can echo the sexism displayed in society as a whole, as men tend to feel disempowered by their female partners' success and need to have a certain degree of financial and occupational superiority over their partners, according to Ratliff and Oishi (2013). Along these lines, one experimental study found that women in heterosexual relationships are less likely to

initiate romantic intimacy, further showing that female relational empowerment can be improved (Eryilmaz & Atak, 2011).

Women in Academia

In 1986, Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule wrote *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (1986), a foundational work that described a theory regarding how women may think differently than men. These authors believe that women go through five stages of knowledge acquisition and understanding, beginning with silence (in which women are completely dependent on authority figures for knowledge). Women in the next step of knowledge acquisition are in the Received Knowledge stage, in which they are able to receive information from authority and reproduce the information themselves. In the Subjective Knowledge stage, women trust themselves more than authority figures. In the fourth stage, Procedural Knowledge, women gain their knowledge using objectivity, and in the final stage Constructed Knowledge, women value both subjectivity and objectivity. The backbone of this model is the idea that women go through their own process in understanding the world around them, going from dependence on others to dependence on themselves and finally toward a less ego-oriented view of understanding, accepting many ways of knowing that include intuition, subjective knowledge, and objective knowledge.

As mentioned above, Gilligan (1993) saw that women's ways were considered deviant to the male model. Some women experience subjugation of their natural ways of knowing and pressure to conform to traditionally female roles when they go to school. Women feel the pressure of stereotypes when choosing nontraditional fields of study

such as the sciences and mathematics (Beasley & Fisher, 2012; Good et al., 2012; Robnett, 2013). Good et al. (2012) found that women are less likely to choose math majors in part because they believe that mathematic learning is a fixed skill, and that people either have mathematic capabilities or they do not. These women tended to believe that hard work doesn't make much of a difference in mathematics skill attainment and that women are not naturally skilled at math. Smedling (2012) found in an experimental study that women who choose science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields have weaker gender stereotypes regarding women's occupational and academic choices than do women in the humanities. Women who take more math in high school are more likely to choose STEM majors in college (Perez-Faulkner et al., 2012), and women with peer support and role modeling in STEM fields are more likely to enroll in STEM programs when in college (Robnett, 2013). Women in STEM undergraduate programs are more likely to experience sexism (although this does not necessarily hold true for those in graduate programs), but peer support is helpful at mediating the effects of sexism (Robnett, 2013). Good et al. (2012) concluded that changing the message so that women are aware that hard work results in increased mathematics ability will help women to choose STEM fields.

Women's Development

As mentioned earlier, girls begin to show gender identification at a young age (Halim et al., 2013). As they go through later childhood and adolescence, they continue to show different traits than boys and mature socially earlier than boys (Klimstra et al., 2009; Van der Graff et al., 2013). According to an experimental study, they exhibit

higher levels of empathy and some psychologists believe considering other perspectives a sign of cognitive development among girls (Van der Graaff et al., 2013). Women's self-esteem reaches a height during their early 20s and 30s and begins to taper off as they age (Orth et al., 2010). Surprisingly, women experience an increase in depression during this time (Harkness et al., 2010). After age 21, depression decreases until age 30 (Pettit et al., 2011).

Women have a different way of approaching adulthood than men. According to Oesterle, Hawkins, Hill, and Bailey (2010), women have three basic pathways to adulthood in Western societies. Forty-three percent of women choose to put off marriage and family until they complete their education; 29% of women chose to marry during their early 20s and begin their families, and 26% of women choose to put off marriage and children without going to college.

Research finds that women are more intrinsically motivated than men (Morgan & Robinson, 2013). Women are motivated by self-acceptance, affiliation and a sense of community, striving to find personal meaning in their actions, according to one experimental study (Morgan & Robinson, 2013). Recently, researchers developed a pro-feminine model of positive development for young people. According to Hawkins et al. (2011), adults make gains in five constructs as they mature: civic action, engagement, trust and tolerance of others, trust in authorities, social competence and life satisfaction. Given the emphasis that women have on empathy and moral reasoning (Eisenberg et al., 2013; Van der Graaff et al., 2013), changing the model of mature behavior to include

more feminine traits is in line with a psychology that is inclusive of both men and women.

Emerging Adulthood and Emerging Adult Women

Emerging adulthood is a phrase coined by Arnett (2000). Arnett saw that during a distinct stage between adolescence and adulthood, people explore the world and their own interests to commit to who they are going to be as adults (Arnett, 2000; Arnett & Tanner, 2006; Patterson, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011). Arnett described a period between the ages of 18 and 25 for most people, in which they are neither children nor quite fully independent adults (Arnett, 2000). For many emerging adults, it is a time of anxiety, optimism, uncertainty, excitement, and unsettledness.

Arnett (2007a) determined five primary features of emerging adulthood. The first, identity exploration, refers to the tendency of emerging adults to spend this time exploring options available to them in adulthood. Many emerging adults will explore academic, occupational, and sexual options in the pursuit of a solid adult identity. Arnett also pointed out that this is a time of instability. Although emerging adults attempt to solidify their identity, they are not certain of themselves and tend to vacillate more than adults. Children depend greatly on their parents for their identity and their boundaries. Adults generally know who they are and have a sense of what their lives will look like. Emerging adults do not have this sense of stability.

A third feature of emerging adulthood is self-absorption (Arnett, 2007a). Emerging adults need to focus on themselves to determine who they are and what they want from their lives. A focus on the self helps emerging adults to put their own needs

first, encouraging them to create an identity separate from their parents. The fourth

feature of emerging adulthood is a sense of being in-between. As mentioned earlier,

emerging adults are neither children nor fully adults. They are aware of this lack of

solidity and feel in-between childhood and adulthood, at times identifying more with the

child role and more with the adult role. The fifth feature of emerging adulthood is a

sense of possibility. Emerging adults know that many options are available to them, and

although it is difficult not to have stability, they have hope regarding their future and are

excited to explore possible directions that their lives may take.

Arnett and Tanner (2006) explained that emerging adulthood is the last phase of

the individuation process that begins at birth. Babies are entirely dependent upon their

parents, and as they become children and later teenagers, they become increasingly

independent. Emerging adulthood is the end of the individuation process, in which

children begin to live separately from their parents. Although many emerging adults still

have financial ties to their parents, they want to become financially independent.

Primary indicators of moving through emerging adulthood include gaining financial

independence from parents and restructuring the child-parent relationship to

accommodate child autonomy.

Emerging adulthood can take a toll on people experiencing this life phase

(O'Sullivan, 2011; Schwartz et al., 2011). Emerging adults are a heterogeneous group,

but some protective factors can help to guard against the difficulties of emerging

adulthood (Schwartz et al., 2011). The support of friends, family, and romantic partners

helps people who are going through emerging adulthood. Emerging adults who know

that their decisions are supported feel a sense of security in an insecure time.

Achievement and the resultant sense of success also help to protect against some of the

difficulties of this insecure period (Schwartz et al., 2011). Positive stress, hope, and self-

efficacy are also protective factors for emerging adults (O'Sullivan, 2011). Diffusion (a

lack of interest in or confusion regarding addressing identity issues) is hurtful to those

who are attempting to create their own identity (Marcia, 1980).

The stage of emerging adulthood can be found across cultures (Arnett, 2007b;

Jensen & Arnett, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011). However, the markers of adulthood

change from culture to culture (Arnett, 2007b; Jensen & Arnett, 2012). In some Asian

cultures and in Argentina, the entrance to adulthood is evidenced by the ability to

support one's parents financially. In Israel, adulthood comes after the completion of

compulsory military service. In many Western cultures, adulthood is entered into when

one gets married. In Morocco, specific age-related markers including chronological age

and physical development mark the entrance into adulthood, along with the development

of qualities such as self-control.

As mentioned above, emerging adulthood is a relatively new concept (Arnett,

2000). Although many cultures recognize signs of a stage between adolescence and

adulthood, the evidence that a large number of people go through this prolonged stage is

somewhat recent (Arnett, 2004; Settersten & Ray, 2010; Silva, 2012). Until the 1970s,

the traditional routes to adulthood (marriage and family) were expected of young adults

in their late teens and early twenties, so the emerging adult phase was very short or

nonexistent (Settersten & Ray, 2010). Well-paying jobs were readily available and did

not require extended education, so many were able to afford having a family at a relatively young age (Settersten & Ray, 2010).

In today's economic climate, young adults frequently choose to extend their journey toward adulthood by going to college, joining the military, or joining a service program (Arnett, 2004; Settersten & Ray, 2010). College gives students a resting period when they can try out majors, part-time occupations, and relationships (Settersten & Ray, 2010). Emerging adults move slowly toward making life-long commitments and frequently try several options prior to committing for any longer period (Arnett, 2000). After college, many children decide to live at home, extending the period during which they are under their parents' financial protection. Although this can be stressful for both parent and child as the child attempts to form an independent life while accommodating parental input, Patterson (2012) found that these so-called boomerang children were more likely to work out healthy adult relationships with their parents. Zupancic, Komidar, and Levpuscek (2012) agreed, stating emerging adults who live with their parents are less likely to have a sense of detachment from their family. Patterson (2012) found that boomerang children are forced to reconcile issues with their parents in a way that children who live outside the home are not resulting in a more equal parent-child relationship and a firmer sense of autonomy and identity. Establishing an equal parent-child relationship is one of the primary jobs of emerging adulthood.

Emerging Adults and Their Families

This parent-child relationship is central to the work of becoming an adult, and children frequently vacillate between wanting autonomy and craving closeness with

parents (Aquilino, 2006). Girls share less with their parents during early adolescence, partially in an attempt to individuate from parents and to gain autonomy (Keijsers & Poulin, 2013). However, during middle adolescence, girls tend to want to be close with their parents again, increasing their communication and decreasing their secrecy during this time. The emerging adults' relationship with their mothers affects young adults' interest in sharing private information (Urry et al., 2011). If a mother exhibits controlling behavior, the child is more likely to be secretive. If the mother and child are close, the child is more likely to share with the mother and exhibits fewer risky behaviors.

Occasionally, parent separation anxiety can affect the parent-emerging adult relationship (Kins et al., 2011; Kins et al., 2013). In one experimental research study, mothers, in particular, were taught to trust their protective instinct when their children are young (Kins et al., 2013). If a mother does not allow her child to individuate properly during adolescence, the emerging adult period can be very difficult. The mother can find it hard to separate from her child, causing at times extreme separation anxiety because the mother both feels incapable of protecting her child and loses an important focus of her life (Kins et al., 2011). Children from these relationships can find it hard to form healthy romantic and friendship attachments, because they tend to either be distant or find it difficult to delineate boundaries with others.

As girls become emerging adults, their long-term goal is a sense of closeness with, yet autonomy from, their parents and a sense of mutual respect (Keijsers & Poulin, 2013; Zupancic et al., 2012). Emerging adult women who have positive relationships

with their parents are less likely to take drugs, more likely to make healthy sexual choices, and more likely to be happy with their lives (DelPriore & Hill, 2013; Sun, 2011). Emerging adults who come from close families tend to feel less emotional upset and exhibit less aggression (Fosco et al., 2012).

Parents who exhibit emotional maturity and who have a growth orientation tend to positively affect their children's growth (Syed & Seiffge-Krenke, 2013). Baumrind (1991) described four basic methods of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and uninvolved styles. Authoritarian parents do not show much affection and are controlling of their children. Authoritative parents are affectionate, show control over their children, but are willing to listen to them. Permissive parents are affectionate and do not show control over their children, and uninvolved parents neither show affection nor show control. According to one study, these four parenting styles had some similarities and some differences to those shown by parents of emerging adults (Nelson et al., 2011). Parents of emerging adults exhibit the uninvolved parenting style, but those who were authoritative begin to lessen their control over their children while remaining highly responsive to their child. Other parents exhibit controlling-indulgent behavior, in which they attempt to control their child and do not show affection or responsiveness to them. This parenting style can be loosely correlated to the authoritarian style of parenting younger children, but with worse results because children from this type of parent tend to distance themselves from their parents. Parents at this stage can also show inconsistent parenting (mostly exhibited by mothers) and average parenting in which

parents (primarily fathers) show equal amounts of positive and negative parenting techniques (Nelson et al., 2011).

When interviewed regarding their family relationships for a phenomenological study, emerging adult women's responses tended to be on five themes (Freel, 2011). The first was becoming cognizant of family expectations. Second, these women felt that this was a time of navigating within new family roles and gender roles. These women also found emerging adulthood a time of negotiating contradictory messages from others regarding expectations. Self-doubt is a theme for women during emerging adulthood, along with the introspection that self-doubt engenders. Finally, conflict is an important theme for female emerging adults, and the resolution of major identity and family conflicts is a marker of adulthood.

Emerging Adult Women and their Romantic Relationships

Emerging adults place great importance on their romantic relationships (Arnett, 2004). Women in particular feel pressure to be in relationships because of the stigma attached to not having a partner. College gives emerging adults an enhanced opportunity to meet potential romantic partners because students spend concentrated time with age-similar people (Arnett, 2004). Attachment styles, mentioned above, also have a part in the development of romantic relationships (Saraiva & Matos, 2012). Emerging adults who have preoccupied attachment styles want to be close to their partners, but doubt their partner's feelings. Those with a dismissive attachment style are distant, although those with a fearful attachment style are insecure and intrusive. Emerging adults with a secure attachment style are autonomous within the relationship, but remain close to their

partner (Saraiva & Matos, 2012). Emerging adults with insecure attachment

(preoccupied, dismissive and fearful) styles have more problems with their romantic

relationships as shown in an experimental study (Avila et al., 2011). Unhealthy romantic

relationships lead to depression, which further leads to an increase in attacking

behaviors (Marchand-Reilly, 2012). In contrast, those who have secure attachment styles

exhibit better emotional regulation and learn how to function in relationships from their

positive family dynamics (Avila et al., 2011). Emerging adult women, who are in

healthy romantic relationships, feel less depressed and have a greater sense of well-

being (Whitton & Kuryluk, 2012).

For many, sexual experimentation and freedom are also part of college life

(Pearson, 2008). Unfortunately, according to a narrative study, confusion reigns when

determining the status of emerging adult romantic relationships (Banker et al., 2010).

The traditional paths by which romantic relationships began are no longer used, because

people may become sexually involved prior to dating. This behavior leads to

misunderstandings as to the status of relationships because one partner may believe that

the relationship is exclusive, whereas the other may not. The vague and uncertain

language surrounding romantic relationships reflects this confusion (Banker et al.,

2010).

Female emerging adults frequently explore gender roles during the process of

identity formation (Arnett, 2004). Women at this age begin to question traditional

gender roles and to determine how they will be like and unlike their female role models

in terms of gender (Wicklund et al., 2010). At this time, women contemplate feminism

and whether feminist beliefs are in line with their own emerging identity (Mackay, 2011). *Third wave feminism* is the term currently being used to describe young feminists who eschew harsher forms of feminism in lieu of female empowerment to make their own choices, no matter what they are (McRobbie, 2011). Third wave feminists may choose to wear lipstick and to try sexual submission and dominant-submissive role-play, still claiming to be passionate regarding female empowerment. This group believes strongly that empowerment means allowing women to make their own choices, not prescribing politically correct behavior to them. However, the media continues to portray role models for women who are objects of desire and not empowered sexually (Murnen & Smolak, 2011). Emerging adult women find themselves in an age of gender role possibility, waiting for the world to catch up with them.

Transitioning to College

The transition to college can be a difficult time for emerging adults. On one hand, they have freedom not allowed them when living with their parents. On the other hand, they may miss their parents and may have difficulty transitioning to their new surroundings. Schlossberg (2011) studied life transitions and wrote foundational work on the topic. She found that there are three types of transitions: anticipated transitions such as marriage, unanticipated transitions such as death, and expected events that fail to occur. All of these types of transitions result in stress, but people cope with these stressors differently based on four factors. The first is the situation and if the person has other stressors. The second is the self. If college students are optimistic, resilient, and capable of coping with uncertainty, they are more likely to handle stress in a balanced

manner. The third factor is support. If college students have the support of loved ones and friends, they find it easier to deal with stress. The last factor is coping strategies. If college students use coping strategies such as brainstorming options, exercise, and looking for the bright side of a negative situation, they are more likely to be able to handle stress.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) wrote a foundational work regarding the ways that college changes students. They found that college attendance encourages students to think for themselves. In college, students are typically given access to new ways of thinking that were not promoted prior to their college experience. New experiences with diverse people may encourage them to question the worldview under which they were raised, and may encourage them to think independently. As a result, college fosters tolerance and antiauthoritarian thought. College attendance promotes intellectual thinking, psychological wellbeing, adjustment, independence from family and self-efficacy.

Baxter Magolda (1999) theorized as college students individuate from their parents, they begin a journey of self-authorship. With an increase in critical thinking skills and a resultant increase in cognitive complexity, students at this age begin to move away from relying upon authorities for information and validation, and toward self-constructing knowledge (Barber et al., 2013). This concept of moving in the direction of trusting one's own understanding is reflective of the earlier intellectual stages that Belenky et al. described in their 1986 study of the way that women comprehend differently than men.

Barber et al. (2013) found six primary themes in the qualitative responses of college-aged participants who were developing their own stories. They saw that specific experiences helped to encourage identity development, especially ones that promoted dissonance for the participants (King et al., 2011). Another important theme for individuating college students is feeling challenged to develop and take responsibility for their own beliefs (Barber et al., 2013). The importance of feeling a sense of belonging was found to be a common theme in participant responses. Relationships with diverse peers fostered emotional growth and self-authorship at this stage. Further, dealing with challenges (especially those that inspired taking a different perspective) encouraged students to become more self-reliant. Last, these researchers found that dealing with multifaceted relationships helped to develop self-authorship. Baxter Magolda further postulates that colleges should be creating college programs that encourage self-authorship through encouraging self-reflection and uncomfortable, but developmentally important, moments of looking at different perspectives (Baxter Magolda, 2007).

Autonomy is important to the development of a sense of self. College students differ in the way that they gain autonomy from their families. Kenyon and Koerner (2009), in an experimental study, found that there are four basic individuation styles that vary based on the amount of connectedness that college students have with their parents and the amount of separateness that they experience. Those with an individuated style feel both connected to their parents and separate from the family unit. Those with individuated style are generally the most well-adjusted group because they are able to

balance their needs with a sense of closeness to family. Pseudoautonomous students are low in the area of connectedness and high in separation, giving them a sense of independence, but without working through family issues that may hold them back from fully experiencing healthy non-familial relationships. Dependent students are high in connectedness and low in separation, leading them not to develop as individuals. Ambiguous students are low in connectedness and separation, leading them to become stagnant in their relationships. Kenyon and Koerner (2009) believed that society does not set clear standards for how to deal with individuation and that this want of clarity leads students and families to lack vision of what a healthy emerging adult-parent relationship looks like. Parents typically believe that they are encouraging appropriate independence, although their children typically do not feel they are given enough independence. This difference in relationship expectations causes friction between parents and their emerging adult children that can be relieved with communication.

Wallpe (2010) claimed that women experience four types of adjustment upon entering college. Personal-emotional adjustment has to do with a woman's personality and ways of dealing with problems. A woman who has difficulties in this area might develop eating disorders or might try to self-medicate to deal with the stress of her college transition. Social adjustments have to do with the introduction of new friends, the absence of old friends, and the change in familial and friend relationships. The ability to be flexible and accept the changes in these relationships can be affected by other stressors. Academic adjustment refers to the ability to adjust to a change in academic rigor and the reliance on self-motivation for academic success. Institutional

adjustment refers to the sense that a woman is committed to finishing her degree in the institution and the extent to which she feels emotionally connected to the institution. All of these types of adjustment affect how a woman feels regarding her college transition, and looking at how well a woman adjusts in each area can lend a better understanding of her experience as she transitions.

Not all freshmen make positive adjustments to college. The change from a family-centered life to a more independent life can cause problems for students, including an increase in loneliness, an increase in stress, an increase in emotional problems, and an increase in separation anxiety (Alipuria, 2007; Bernier & Larose, 1996; Goodwin, 2009; Santorelli, 2010; Secuban, 2011). Most students experience stress during their first year of college, frequently due to forming new relationships, roommate problems, and leaving the family unit (Alipuria, 2007; Santorelli, 2010; Secuban, 2011). These students may experience this stress as severe, but also think that severe stress is normal during the college transition (Alipuria, 2007). The knowledge that stress is normal helps students to accept it. It can also be helpful if students have people to whom they can disclose their feelings and with whom they can explore their identity, but frequently new college students do not use college counseling services (Alipuria, 2007; Goodwin, 2009). Loneliness and separation anxiety are also normal experiences as students begin college, but these typically dissipate near the end of the first year of college and many sophomores feel fully adjusted to their new, more independent lives (Bernier & Larose, 1996; Santorelli, 2010; Secuban, 2011).

A college student's parents can have a large effect on the way their child transitions to their new environment. In an experimental study, families that had larger amounts of parental conflict were more likely to have children who exhibited distress as emerging adults, producing children who were more likely to show attachment anxiety and avoidance of authentic relationships (Cusimano & Riggs, 2013). These children tended to expect unhappiness and rejection as emerging adults, which discouraged them from taking risks in relationships or encouraged needy behavior once they were in relationships. Unavailable and controlling parents tended to create daughters who are critical of themselves, distancing themselves from others or becoming overly vulnerable or preoccupied with their relationships (Perlman, 1998). Students who were the first in their family to go to college also tend to exhibit difficulties adjusting because their families typically did not understand the stresses and joys of college or have realistic expectations as to the college transition process (Turek, 2012).

Attachment style and attachment difficulties also show themselves during the transition to college. Insecurely attached emerging adults are more likely to show symptoms of depression, becoming preoccupied with their relationships, fearful of losing their relationships, or distant from others (Permuy et al., 2010). These emerging adults are more likely to be lonely (Ilhan, 2012), more likely to have difficulties adjusting to their new lives, and more likely to have lower self-confidence (Selby, 2000). Those with parents who are dealing with higher than normal separation anxiety are also more likely to have emotional and transitional difficulties as they adjust to

college (Kins et al., 2011). Parenting style clearly has a strong correlation to the emerging adult's ability to make the transition to college.

Protective factors may help an emerging adult make the transition to college. Students who are optimistic and who show effective coping skills are more likely to have an easy transition (Hermann, 2007). A quantitative survey study found that students with high grades, who feel pressure to succeed at college, and who are determined to finish their degree at the college where they began their schooling are more likely to transition well and to stay in college once they start (Gillock, 1998). Students who put effort into forming new friendships and into forming relationships with their professors are more likely to have a successful transition to college (Reio et al., 2009). Students with high academic self-efficacy make more successful college transitions and tend to have higher college grades, which leads to even more confidence in their academic abilities (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011).

Women's positive adjustment to college is not widely researched. However, Derby (2006), in a phenomenological study, researched this area looking for traits that helped women to adjust to college. Derby (2006) found that women find it easier to transition when they have fewer job and family responsibilities. Positive relationships with roommates and more time spent in extracurricular activities were also positively related to an easy college transition. Women who are driven, who are emotionally healthy, who sense community in their school, and who were involved in community service adjusted to college more easily. Last, this study confirmed the Brady-Amoon and Fuertes (2011), the Gillock (1998) and the Reio et al. (2009) findings that relationships

with professors, grades, and academic self-efficacy were key to an easy transition to college.

A quantitative study that focused on women's college adjustment processes found that women tended to fall into three categories of college transition style (Luyckx et al., 2008). *Pathmakers* are directed women who place a high value on achievement. *Consolidators* are highly committed to the values of people whom they consider important. *Searchers* are uncommitted to a particular direction but continue to seek their identity. The researchers saw that transitioning college-aged women who fell into the pathmaker or the consolidator categories had more positive college adjustments, whereas women who were searchers had the least positive college adjustment. The researchers underscored the importance of having commitments and direction as a woman proceeds through college.

Parent and family traits are also important to encouraging positive transitions to college. Parents with an authoritarian style are more likely to have children who adjust better to college (Smith, 2011). Connection with parents helps students, as long as the student is functionally independent (Kenyon, 2006). Indeed, frequent communication between parent and child is related to lowered alcohol consumption for the student (Small et al., 2011). Securely attached children feel that they matter to family and friends, are less lonely, have a higher sense of support and higher levels of engagement with others (Bernardon, 2012). They have higher levels of individuation (Mattanah et al., 2011), find it easier to form friendships and are happier with these friendships

(Parade et al., 2010), communicate more with their mothers (Robertson, 2011), and have fewer negative beliefs about themselves and worry less about rejection (Roring, 2012).

Methodology of Literature

The topics covered in this literature review represent many areas of research, and different research areas lend themselves to quantitative research, qualitative research, or both. In general, the research on homeschooling tended to be survey and demographic work. Research on college transition was largely experimental in nature, as was research on attachment theory. Women's development research and research on emerging adulthood were both primarily experimental in nature, with little qualitative research presented on the topics germane to this research.

Quantitative Research

The large majority of research in the literature review for this study used a quantitative methodology. Topics with little research, such as homeschooling, tended to focus more on survey and demographic research, as opposed to experimental research. An example of this is the preponderance of research on homeschooling that focused on college grades and standardized test scores (Jones & Gloeckner, 2004; Ray, 2010). Perhaps as this topic becomes popular and as a larger number of participants become available, more experimental research will be performed on homeschooling.

With the sole exception of homeschooling research, quantitative research studies were largely experimental in design. Quantitative attachment research primarily correlated the attachment styles that emerging adults had with their parents to their ability to make friends, the traits of their romantic relationships, their mental health,

their happiness with family relationships and their ability to individuate as emerging adults (Dereli & Karakus, 2011; Schwartz & Finley, 2010). A typical quantitative study in on attachment theory is the research done by Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, and Larsen-Rife (2008). In this study, the authors assessed the participants' attachment styles with their parents and their romantic partners' styles using videotaped interviews that were rated using a pre-developed scale. Video interactions were also rated on constructs such as hostility and responsiveness using a Likert-style scale. The data was in numerical form, allowing for structural analysis. The researchers found that parental relationships affected emerging adult children's' romantic relationships.

Quantitative research in the area of college transition focused on risk factors, protective factors, and specific problems that college students have as they transition to college (Kenyon, 2006; Permuy et al., 2010; Santorelli, 2010; Smith, 2011; Wallpe, 2010). One study that typifies the quantitative college transition research was by Small et al. (2011). In this study, the researchers correlated the amount of time that students spent communicating with their parents to the amount of alcohol these students drank. The authors found that students who spent more time communicating with their parents were less likely to drink and when they did drink were less likely to drink heavily. Psychological development topics that were researched quantitatively centered primarily on specific traits that helped or hindered emerging adults as they moved toward adulthood and the traits of relationships during this age (Cusack et al., 2012; DelPriore & Hill, 2013; McKinney et al., 2011; Sierra, 2013; Weiss et al., 2012). A typical quantitative study in this area is by Eshbaugh (2010). Eshbaugh was interested in finding

how and if support from family, romantic partners and friends affected loneliness in college women. She administered scales of social support and loneliness to the participants and found that supportive romantic relationships supported women who missed their parents and friends, but that supportive family relationships actually made college women feel lonelier. College women who have supportive friends are less likely to feel lonely.

Qualitative Research

The researchers whose work was cited in this literature review less frequently employed qualitative methods. When qualitative methods were used, phenomenology was largely the method of choice. Qualitative homeschool research included more case studies, ethnographical, and narrative research than did the other topics covered in this literature review. Unlike the other areas of research, some researchers chose to look at homeschooling as a study of a culture. Lois (2006) immersed herself in homeschooling groups and meeting with homeschooling families for 6 years. She explored several assumptions of maternal deviance that homeschooling families face: overconfidence in their ability to teach, social over-protectiveness, self-righteousness, and overly religious stereotypes. Lois found that mothers felt judged by society and that frequently feelings of judgment were enhanced by the mothers' own emotions.

Qualitative studies that researched family relationships and that were applicable to this study were rare. Freel (2011) studied the dynamics of families as their emerging adult daughters began to make choices that were not in line with family values. The focus of this study was on the processes that the daughters went through as they

individuated, including an active awareness of family values and expectations of women within the family. Freel looked at families' attempts to make sense of disparate personal and family values and expectations and coming to a resolution regarding how to move forward.

Qualitative studies that focused on college transition and that were applicable to this study were also somewhat rare. They were narrative and phenomenological in nature. Derby (2006) studied the ways that emerging adult women adjusted to college life. He found that college women were affected by family needs, job expectations, and roommate difficulties. Furthermore, Derby found that women were motivated by a need to do well in school and to finish college. Overall mental health helped women to adjust to college as did satisfaction with the college experience, a feeling of community, community service options, and successful relationships with teachers. Secuban (2011), in a narrative study, agreed with many of Derby's findings, adding that freshman typically have difficulties negotiating the above factors, and that sophomores have much more success when dealing with problems such as roommate issues.

Qualitative research that focuses on psychological development in a way that is germane to this study is rare as well. Banker et al. (2010) used a narrative approach to study the development of sexual and romantic relationships among college-aged students. These researchers pointed out the importance of having words that describe relationship status and the results of a lack of clear, mutually understood language surrounding relationship status. They further explained that this problem caused a sense

of confusion regarding the future of the relationship and the meaning of romantic and sexual behavior.

Conclusion

Although the research on homeschooling is still in its nascent stage, an increasing number of studies are being conducted. At this point, much of the quantitative research is demographic in nature and describes the characteristics of homeschooled students. Qualitative research on homeschoolers is scarce and only one study to date focuses on the college transition experiences of homeschooled students. This research covered an area previously unexplored; phenomenological studies such as this are necessary to gain a full understanding of the effect of homeschooling on the individual. This sort of exploratory study forms a base of understanding on which future studies can be built.

Summary

This chapter included an examination of the current literature on homeschooling, emerging adulthood, women's development, attachment theory, and the conceptual frameworks underlying this study. I reviewed the history of homeschooling, current homeschooling practices, and current issues and concerns regarding homeschooling. I addressed the homeschooling of girls, explained Attachment Theory, and discussed attachment issues specific to college-aged adults. I examined women's psychology and development, gender identity, and women as emerging adults. I analyzed Arnett's (2004) concept of emerging adulthood and issues specific to collegiate emerging adult women and their families.

Emerging adulthood is a relatively new addition to the psychological development timeline. Although a number of families have homeschooled throughout the history of the United States, it is only recently that homeschooling became a viable educational option for large numbers of families. As a result, research in these areas has not yet had a chance to specialize into the experiences of college transition for homeschooled women. Although scant quantitative and demographic research shows some evidence that homeschoolers do well academically in college, researchers have much work to do to cover the topic thoroughly. Conclusions are difficult when the research is so lacking.

This study considered the experiences of homeschooled women as they transition to college. The constructivist viewpoint taken allowed the participants to lead the interviews, telling which experiences are important to them and how they feel that homeschooling helped or hindered their transition. In this study, the focus was on the unique experiences that each participant brought to their transition as well as the meaning that each participant put onto their experiences. I emphasized each participant's background and current circumstance in an attempt to understand the individual as thoroughly as possible. This is in contrast to most current research on homeschooling, which focuses largely on test scores, grades, and quantitative measures of adjustment. Chapter 3 will focus on research methods, philosophies, design, rationale for this design, research instruments, and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this study was to learn about the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. Research in this area focuses on the experiences of homeschoolers in general, but there is insufficient research on the homeschooled woman specifically. Given that women frequently have different educational and developmental experiences than men (Arnett, 2005; Belenky et al., 1986), a study that focuses on understanding the unique experiences of homeschooled women as they transition to college is needed. Researchers have analyzed standardized test scores, grade point averages, and other numerical indicators of college success, all of which show that homeschooled students are as capable or more capable than traditionally schooled students on these measures. As I elaborated earlier, there is a research gap in the area of the unique experiences of homeschooled women, although some qualitative research examines homeschooled students of both sexes as they transition to college. This qualitative phenomenological study addresses the gap in understanding homeschooled women's unique college transition experiences.

In this chapter, I describe the research design and research approach that I took in this study as well as the rationale for choosing this approach. I also describe the participants in the study, my role as researcher, research questions for the study, and data collection methods I used. I address the research instrument, data management and analysis, and ethical protection of participants. Finally, in this chapter I address ways in which trustworthiness of results is ensured and dissemination of findings.

Research Design and Rationale

This study focused on the experiences of homeschooled female students as they transition to college. Homeschooling is the practice of parents taking primary responsibility for and control of the education of their children (VanGalen & Pitman, 1991). As described in previous chapters, a gap exists in the research regarding the experiences that homeschooled women have as they transition to college. A qualitative approach, according to Creswell (2007), focuses on participants' experiences and the meanings that the participants assign to their experiences. Quantitative study, on the other hand, tests theories and looks for relationship between variables (Creswell, 2009). I chose qualitative research to focus on experiences and participant interpretation. The research questions in this study were: (a) What are the experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new relationships and individuate from their families?, (b) How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school feel their homeschool experience influenced them socially, academically, and in terms of family relationships as they entered the launching phase and transitioned to college?, and (c) What differences, if any, do women who were homeschooled perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled?

Crotty (1998) explained that understanding and the construction of meaning are the domains of constructivism, the conceptual framework underlying this study. Constructivists focus their research on the reality that participants perceive based on active engagement with the world around them. The goal of qualitative research is understanding experiences, individual meaning, and group meaning in a natural setting,

and giving rich and detailed explanations and interpretations of this meaning (Creswell, 2007). Qualitative study, with its focus on holistic understanding as opposed to manipulating variables, is appropriate for research that is attempting to learn more about the experiences of homeschooled women after they leave their home school. A quantitative approach to this study would most likely yield data that describes differences between homeschoolers and traditionally schooled students, an approach that is widely used already and does not need replication at this point. Qualitative research, in contrast, helps to explain why some of these differences exist and helps to inform future directions for quantitative research regarding homeschooled students. Researchers determined five basic types of qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case study (Creswell, 2007).

Narrative research focuses on the stories that one or a few people tell to explain their experiences (Creswell, 2009). The researcher reassembles the elements of the story to explain the connection between events and meanings. Narrative research on one or several people was an option for this study, but would be better utilized after there is some foundational work in the area of homeschooled women, as a basic understanding is needed before delving into specific people's stories. Additionally, this study seeks to understand experiences of transitioning to college after homeschooling. Narrative study, with its focus on storytelling, would not necessarily lend itself to the study of a specific experience as lived across multiple lives.

Ethnography looks at groups of people and tries to understand their culture (Creswell, 2009). Ethnographers may attend meetings, hold interviews, and observe

group interactions as they try to understand the inner workings of these groups. Ethnography could have been employed to understand a specific homeschooling group. However, given that the participants in this study moved away from their homeschool, focusing study on the culture of their homeschooling experience would not be helpful in terms of understanding their experiences after leaving their homeschool. Additionally, the cultural focus of ethnography does not lend itself well to a study of the experience of transitioning to college after homeschooling.

Grounded theory is a qualitative research style that generates a theory regarding phenomena (Creswell, 2009). This may require going back and forth between collecting data and developing the theory. Grounded theory may have been an option for this study, but at this point there is so little information on women who have left homeschooling that any theory would have been specious. More information will be needed before a solid theory can be advanced. Given that the goal of this study is to learn more about the experience of transitioning to college after homeschooling, grounded theory's focus on developing theory would not be an appropriate choice.

Case study focuses on getting to know one small group or individual well (Creswell, 2009). The researcher spends a great deal of time with this individual or small group, getting to know their daily activities. Again, homeschooling is a relatively new area of research, and general information is needed before becoming too focused on the activities of a very few homeschooled students. Additionally, the focus of this study is on the experiences of the participants. Groups in case studies need to share time and

space boundaries, and given that these women will not be experiencing their transitions together, case study is not appropriate for this research project.

This qualitative study employed phenomenological strategies and has a constructivist mindset. Phenomenology is focused on explaining a particular phenomenon through the eyes of several participants (Creswell, 2009). The participants' perception of the phenomena is key to phenomenological study. In-depth interviews are used, where questions are focused on fully understanding the phenomena. According to Moustakas (1994), phenomenologists attempt to look at the concept they are studying with fresh eyes, removed from the trappings of everyday life and from the researcher's own beliefs about the subject. Phenomenologists delve into their topic, looking at as many angles as possible. They try to understand as much as they can about their participants' experiences. They look for underlying meaning in individual participant's responses and look for shared meaning and similar experiences between participants. Phenomenologists use intuition and reflection as they look for threads of shared meaning. They seek to explain participant experiences as vividly as possible.

Husserl (1977) explained phenomenologists must attempt to put aside their own biases and expectations to reach epoche, a state where the researcher's beliefs are taken out of the of the data analysis. Phenomenologists are expected to describe their own experiences and biases in relation to the subject in an attempt to make them aware of ways in which they might be prejudicial during data interpretation. As phenomenologists interpret data, they consider it several times, attempting to understand it on a deeper level, attempting to connect it with data from other participants, and attempting to see

new information with each reading. This repeated reading allows the researcher to form categories with which to interpret all of the data.

Given the relative infancy of the topic, this study was well served with a phenomenological methodology. The phenomenological stance focuses on the topic at hand and does not encourage extraneous information (such as the opinions of other family members or the homeschool setting) to seep into the data. In this research, the phenomenological stance encouraged a rich, detailed understanding of the participants' experiences, which helped me to gain a deep insight into the college transition experiences of homeschooled women.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative studies, the researcher takes a more collaborative role with the participant than in quantitative studies (Creswell, 2009). Creswell (2009) explained that qualitative researchers have several roles, including collecting data, understanding their relationship with the phenomena studied, validating the findings, interpreting the data, analyzing the data and collaborating with the participants. I fulfilled all these roles, and also found participants, designed a study and data protection procedures that ensured ethical treatment of participants, designed the interview questions and procedures and transcribed interview recordings.

Creswell (2009) pointed out that the researcher should be considered a research instrument. By this, he means that the researchers themselves hold a key role in collecting and interpreting data. In quantitative research, the researcher attempts to be removed from the process, relying on predetermined formulas and computer programs to

mine data. In qualitative research, although a computer program may help to find connections in the data, the researcher determines whether connections actually exist, how strong they are, and what they mean. As a result, the researcher needs to be honest about experiences and prejudices regarding the phenomena studied or the people studied. It is assumed that researchers will have a degree of bias, and as a result it is important that the researcher identify possible biases.

I am a Caucasian woman in my mid-40s living in rural Washington State in the United States of America. I am progressive politically, but live in an area with a large number of conservative Christians. For the last 20 years, I have lived in a neighborhood with a large number of homeschoolers. I chose to homeschool each of my three daughters and will soon homeschool my son part-time. My eldest was homeschooled in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade in a hybrid manner, taking classes part-time at a large and popular homeschool cooperative in my local school district. At this point, she transitioned to a local public high school and has now graduated from college. My second daughter was homeschooled in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade at home with no outside courses, then transitioned to a local public high school, where she thrived and graduated. She is now in college at the University of Washington. My third daughter began homeschooling as a fourth-grade student and will continue to homeschool until she graduates from high school. My fourth child, a son, will homeschool in a hybrid fashion in middle school only, transitioning to our local public high school afterwards.

I chose to homeschool my children to provide increased academic rigor for my children as well as an increased individualization of curriculum. I also felt that middle

school was an optimal time for my children to take some time away from the school day to determine their own interests and to get away from the negative aspects of middle-school peers. My own middle school experience was one of social struggle as my elementary school friends began to focus more on being attractive to the opposite sex and less on school. I want my children to focus on developing themselves as individuals, away from this influence.

Clearly, I have much experience with homeschooling. As a former public school teacher, I am also invested in more traditional schools, and do not have a particular passion for one over the other. I see that there are many ways to give children a rich and personalized education. I noticed that my two older daughters transitioned well into more traditional schooling environments, but also noticed that they are both more serious and more ambitious than many of their friends. My experiences with my own children lead me to be curious regarding whether and how girls who were homeschooled feel their homeschooling affected them.

I did not have prior personal or professional relationships with any of the participants in my study. I did not believe that I had any biases that affected my ability to listen to what the participants in this study said, but if I had found that I reacted to a participant's views or experiences, I would have taken note of this and mentioned it in my reflective journal as well as identified any such bias in the final study.

Methodology

Participant Selection

As mentioned above, the population of this study is homeschooled emerging adult women who are in the process of transitioning to college. Creswell (2007) suggests that phenomenological research include between 5 and 25 participants. This study included 11 participants to allow for a diversity of experiences, yet permit in-depth interviews. This number of participants also permitted me to cease interviewing when data saturation occurred. Participants in this study were: (a) female, (b) currently enrolled in college, (c) living away from home, (d) between 18-25 years of age in accordance with Arnett's (2004) emerging adulthood stage, (e) homeschooled for all four of their high school years and (f) in their second or third year of college. I decided to include women who had taken college classes during their high school years, as many homeschooled students take some form of college credit while homeschooling.

The participants for this study were chosen using criterion sampling. This method helped to identify participants with the specific traits needed for the study. The criterion in this case were emerging adult collegiate women who were homeschooled for all 4 years of high school. An attempt was made to select participants from different homeschooling ideological backgrounds and from different racial and ethnic groups to ensure that this study had the benefit of the experiences of people with varied homeschooling histories. Unfortunately, the participants in this research were very alike demographically because few people responded to the request for participants.

To determine whether participants meet the above criteria, potential participants were asked study eligibility questions and basic demographic questions prior to beginning the study (see Appendix A). This information was collected only to describe the participants and was not used to draw larger conclusions regarding female homeschoolers as a whole. The questionnaire asks their gender, their age, which grades were they homeschooled, whether they attended a traditional school and for how long, homeschooling methods used, social activities during their homeschooling years, how they would rate their homeschooling experience, their parents' educational backgrounds, their parents' working status, their ethnicity, their age, their family's socioeconomic group, their family makeup, their religion, whether they were enrolled in college classes while in high school, where they are going to school, which year they are in at school, a rating of their college experience so far, their college grade point average, how they found out about the study and where they are currently residing. Several factors (such as place of residence and college attendance) were verified during the interview.

Participants for this study were identified using several methods. I emailed homeschooling parents and asked if they could forward the email to others who might be able to help find participants. I also used social media sites, such as Facebook, to attempt to contact homeschooled female undergraduates. Facebook page administrators were asked to put an appeal for participants on their page. Last, homeschool groups, such as the Washington Homeschool Organization (WHO), The Coalition for Responsible Homeschooling and the Homeschoolers' Support Association (HSA) were contacted to find potential participants. The snowballing method was employed via email to find

further participants. Only participants who have no relationship to me were chosen for this study.

Creswell (2007) described saturation as the point when no new information is offered. In this study, 11 participants were interviewed, at which point the data was saturated. The directions of the results were clear. No more participants were recruited for the study.

Instrumentation

I created a set of interview questions that were reviewed by Walden University (see Table 1). The questions were considered a starting point, but follow-up questions were generated as appropriate to the context of the particular conversation. The intention of the phenomenological interview, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999) is to let the participants' "meanings guide actions and interactions" (p. 113). Such listening would encourage discussion that may diverge from the researcher's original plan, but that might enlighten the researcher as to the entirety of the topic. Research questions from which interview questions were developed were intentionally broad (Creswell, 2009). I conducted semi-structured interviews. As per Creswell's (2009) recommendation, each interview started with a question to break the ice.

The interview guide had, as its basis, the philosophies of several qualitative theorists. Moustakas (1994) clarified the importance of choosing interview questions that uncover participant experience and the context of these experiences. Patton (2002) agreed, clarifying that interview guides are a foundation upon which further, more specific questions can arise as the interviewer sees fit. All follow-up probes in the study

were done in this manner, allowing me to respond to the participants' answers instead of pre-scripting responses to expected answers. Patton (2002) and Moustakas (1990) believe that the interview tone should be conversational and natural, with the researcher feeling free to probe deeper into areas in which the participant appears to have rich and textured experience. Power is put in the hands of participants and they should be allowed to explain in their own words, rather than have the researcher script and define participant experience (Patton, 2002). Open-ended questions that avoid judgmental and loaded phrases lend themselves to phenomenological interviews (Patton, 2002). Moustakas (1994) believed that these types of questions help the phenomenologist to meet the goal of this type of research: a rich understanding of the wholeness of the situation.

The following research questions were developed in line with current college transition measures (Gray et al., 2013; Lattibeaudiere, 2000). Lattibeaudiere's (2000) study was similar in nature to this study, and her interview guide informed questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. For example, Lattibeaudiere (2000) asked, "What was it like for you to be homeschooled?" This study will ask the participants to describe their homeschooling experience. Lattibeaudiere asked, "Describe what it was like for you to leave your home and family and go to live at college", and this study asks, "Tell me about your relationship with your family. How is this going now that you've moved to college?" The questions are similar in nature, with only minor changes made to ensure that the distinctive aims of this study are met. Question 4 is unique to my study because the homeschoolers' experience of similarity to and difference from their peers is central

to understanding the unique internal lives of homeschoolers. The Social Adjustment to College Scale (Gray et al., 2013) is a Likert-style measure whose items were modified to reflect the open-ended questions expected in qualitative study (Patton, 2002). This scale's items contributed to Question 6 in the interview guide. Both the first and last questions fall in line with Patton's (2002) and Creswell's (2007) philosophy regarding qualitative questioning. They thought that the first question should encourage talking and comfort with the interview process and that the last question should allow the participant to add their own questions to the interview. As Patton (2002) stated, frequently the most interesting information is gained through allowing participants to add their own experiences outside the interview questions to the data. A panel of five qualitative experts at Walden University reviewed this interview guide.

Table 2

Interview Questions and Their Related Research Question(s)

Interview question	Related research questions
1.Tell me about your homeschooling experience. What was it like? Possible probes to help participants feel at ease-How long did you homeschool? Why were you homeschooled? Who	Introductory question

was your primary educator? How did you feel about

your relationship with your primary educator? Did

you take classes outside of the home? Which

classes did you take? Why did you take these

classes? Were your siblings homeschooled? Did

you have any siblings that were not homeschooled?

Why do you think they were/were not

homeschooled?

2. What have your experiences been as you have   RQ1, RQ2

transitioned to college? Possible probes- Has it been

easy to find people that you like? Where do you

look to meet new people? How do you feel about

being away from your family? How do you feel

about finding and working with study groups? How

do you feel about the ease of finding social groups?

ve your college transition experiences been different   RQ2, RQ3

homeschooled? Possible probe-How do you think

ooling experiences have affected your transition?

4. How are you similar to and different from   RQ2, RQ3

traditionally schooled students? Possible probes-

How do you think you are similar to or different

from traditionally schooled students in terms of

academics? Why? How do you think you are

similar to or different from traditionally schooled

students in terms of your relationships with friends

and significant others? Why? How do you think

you are similar to or different from traditionally

schooled students in terms of your relationship with

your parents and siblings? Why?

5. Tell me about your relationship with your family.   RQ1

How is this going now that you have begun

college? Possible probes-How do you feel about the

amount of time spent communicating with your

family now that you are in college? What

contributes to your communication with your

family now that you're in college? How do you feel

about your relationships with them now that you've

gone to college? How do you feel specifically about

your relationship with your learning coach? How

about your relationship with your parent(s) who

were not your learning coach? How do you feel

about your relationships with your brothers and

sisters?

6. How have your homeschooling experiences contributed to your ability to form relationships in college? Possible probes-How do you feel homeschooling affected your ability to form romantic relationships? How do you feel that homeschooling affected your ability to form new friendships? How do you feel that homeschooling affected your ability to form relationships with your college professors?

RQ2, RQ3

7. How do you feel your homeschooling experience affected your ability to form your own identity now that you are in college? Possible probes-How would you describe yourself? How do you feel that your description of yourself has been affected by homeschooling? How do you think that your description of yourself has changed since you left your homeschooling environment?

RQ1, RQ3

8. How do you feel that your homeschooling   RQ2, RQ3

experience affected your academic abilities in

comparison to your classmates who were

traditionally schooled? Possible probes-How do you

feel that subjects are taught differently in your

college? How is the academic emphasis different in

college? How do you feel you were taught high

school subjects differently than your traditionally

schooled counterparts?

9. Is there anything else you would like to add? Are there   Closing questions

any questions that I should have asked that I didn't think to

ask? Where should I look to find more information about

this topic? Is there anything that you would like to clarify

from our interview? Do you know of other homeschooled

women who might like to be a part of this study?

         The interviews were open-ended, in accordance with Moustakas' (1994)

recommendations. The goal of this research was to understand as fully as possible the

participants' experiences as transitioning homeschoolers. Moustakas pointed out the

importance of a focus on the participants as co-researchers who have "personal,

passionate involvement" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 105) in the research itself. The above

questions were designed to allow participants to fully explore their experiences and to

reach saturation on the topics at hand. I taped and transcribed interviews and I tried to

keep my personal views out of the results and kept a reflective journal that outlined my reactions to interviews.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Research questions were addressed with participants using one in-depth telephone interview. Interviews lasted 30 minutes to 1.5 hours. I took interview notes and recorded and transcribed the interviews. As described above, participants were recruited via several avenues, including social media pages intended for homeschool graduates and email forwarding. Although there were few interested participants at the outset of recruitment, repeated efforts to contact homeschool leaders and participant agreement to forward a recruitment email eventually resulted in enough participants to reach saturation.

Upon entering the study, participants were given a demographic survey and an informed consent form to sign and were given a copy of the form. They were told that they are welcome to end their participation at any time during the study and without explanation or penalty. No participants ended their participation during this study. If a participant had chosen to leave the study, any information that referred to this participant would have been destroyed. Upon entering the study, participants were informed as to the possible need for follow-up clarification emails. Participants were told that they would be given the opportunity to review the description of their experiences and that pseudonyms would be used in all data.

Data Analysis Plan

Moustakas (1994) outlined a data analysis plan for phenomenological research. This study used a modification of the Van Kaam method of data analysis (as cited in Moustakas, 1994). When analyzing data, I adhered to the following steps of the Van Kaam method outlined by Moustakas. Each expression (communication from the participant) was first analyzed for its relevance. This is called *horizonalization*. In the next step, *reduction* and *elimination*, those expressions that were relevant (called Invariant Constituents) were evaluated for whether they were necessary and whether it was possible to group and name the expressions. In the *clustering* and *thematizing* stage, those expressions that remained were clustered and themes were sought (Moustakas, 1994). In the next step, final identification of the invariant constituents and themes, themes were checked against the data to determine if the themes were accurate at expressing the data. Explicit examples were used to describe themes. Next, detailed themed descriptions with verbatim examples (called *structural descriptions*) of the experience were made for each participant. Afterwards, these descriptions were augmented with my understanding of the meaning of the data, or *textural description*. This textural description was arrived at using divergent thinking, called *imaginative variation* (Moustakas, 1994). Last, a textural-structural description of each participant's experiences was written, which included invariant constituents and themes. When these textural-structural descriptions were complete, participants were asked to review their individual textural-structural description for accuracy. Discrepant data was included in

the analysis. All data was analyzed for categories using Nvivo for Mac. The data analysis results were reported in Chapter 4.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained the conditions when researchers can determine the trustworthiness of their studies. Qualitative study, according to Lincoln and Guba, has four constructs of soundness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to whether the results accurately depict the experiences of the participants. In this study, credibility was gained through extensive contact with participants and through having participants review and give feedback on their textural structural descriptions. Researcher bias was accounted for through the epoche process described in the "Role of the Researcher" section earlier in this chapter. Credibility was also achieved using audio recording as a method of data collection.

Transferability refers to whether or not the findings can be applied to the population studied and whether the study can be replicated (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In this study, 11 participants were interviewed using an in-depth interview format. According to Creswell (2007), this number of participants should be sufficient to ensure saturation. I attempted to learn as thoroughly as possible the experiences of the participants to exhaust the information available on this topic and to collect thick, rich data on the topic. Between the number of participants and the thoroughness of the interviews, the information gleaned was sufficiently exhaustive to ensure that the results can be replicated and are applicable to the population studied.

Dependability, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) refers to whether the findings will remain stable over time. Although it cannot be known that findings are stable throughout time, it can be assumed that the number of participants will yield results that will hold throughout time. Again, Creswell (2007) ensured the sample size is appropriate to yield dependable results.

Confirmability, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), refers to whether the findings accurately reflect the experiences of the participants. In this instance, I made a point of looking for information that refuted my analysis. In addition, an epoche was completed that alerted me to possible biases. I was keenly aware of these and was on alert to determine whether my findings reflected any biases. Participants were asked to review a textural structural description of their interview and were given the opportunity to look at transcripts of their interviews to determine whether I was correct in my understanding of participant experience.

Ethical Procedures

Moustakas (1994) outlined the importance of considering the ethical implications of phenomenological research. He clarified the importance of having volunteer participants with whom clear agreements and an understanding of informed consent are present, and who have a clear understanding of the nature of the project. In this study, all personal information (names, email addresses, phone numbers) was stored on a password protected desktop computer, separate from interview transcripts and notes. Transcripts and notes were kept in a file on a password-protected laptop computer. References to participants were made solely through pseudonyms to ensure privacy.

Participants chose these pseudonyms prior to the recorded interview and I saved

pseudonyms in the same file as participant personal information (mentioned above). The

only institutional contact made was with groups and institutions that plan to disseminate

information about the study to their alumni or student population. Each of these groups

was asked to have a person of authority sign a letter of cooperation that outlined the

researcher-institution agreement. During recruitment, interested participants contacted

me. This allowed participants to choose whether or not they participated in the study,

free from any sense of coercion. I made a point of choosing only participants who I did

not know personally and with whom I did not hold any known personal connection.

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to review an informed

consent agreement that clarified the steps that were taken to ensure privacy. Further, it

explained the purpose of the research, the ability of the participant to leave the study, my

interest in having participants review and agree with the transcripts of the study, and

outlined informed consent procedures. Participants were asked to give consent that they

understand the informed consent agreement and confirmed that they agreed to

participate in the study. After the study, participant contact information was printed and

locked in a fireproof box to be held for at least five but no more than fifteen years. The

file with this information was deleted from my desktop computer. Transcriptions and

interviewer notes were kept on my laptop computer to be held for at least five but no

more than fifteen years, when they will be deleted entirely.

All procedures for this study were pre-approved by the Institutional Review

Board at Walden University. The intention of this study was to gain an understanding of

the college transition experience of the homeschooled women. A possibility existed that participation in the study would bring forth emotion among participants. I had the names and contact information of local mental health professionals on hand to give to any participant who might have found it helpful to work with a therapist. If it seemed that a participant was uncomfortable during the interview or had difficulty answering a question, I asked if she wanted to switch topics or skip the question. I was prepared to stop any interview if it seemed to make the participant uncomfortable, but none of the participants displayed any audible discomfort.

Summary

This chapter focused on describing the methodology behind this phenomenological study of the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. It outlined the plans for selecting participants, described the interview instrument that was used and ways in which each interview question tied to research questions, and clarified the procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection. I introduced a plan for analyzing data, I addressed trustworthiness issues, and I contemplated ethical considerations. I will present the results of this study in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the effect, if any, of homeschooling on the college transition, as well as the academic and relationship building experiences of women who were homeschooled. The research questions for this study were: (a) What are the experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new relationships and individuate from their families?, (b) How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school feel their homeschool experience influenced them socially, academically, and in terms of family relationships as they entered the launching phase and transitioned to college?, and (c) What differences, if any, do women who were homeschooled perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled? I employed the phenomenological method in order to thoroughly understand the experiences of these women. In this chapter, I will present the results of the study. I will discuss the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and the results of the study.

Research Setting

Data collection for this study occurred during in-depth telephone interviews. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours, depending on participant interest in talking at length and time availability. Prior to each interview, I informed participants they could skip questions or end the interview entirely without explanation. In addition, I asked them to review and sign informed consent paperwork before interviewing. None of the participants seemed distressed by their interview so I did not offer local

counseling resources. Indeed, many of the participants seemed to enjoy the interview process. I interviewed each participant separately via telephone. I took interviews in my private home office and participants chose their own location. All of the participants were living away from home at college during the time of the interviews, so they conducted interviews away from their homeschooling parents. No unanticipated events occurred that would affect data interpretation.

Participant Demographics

All participants in this study met the following criteria: they were (a) female, (b) currently enrolled in college, (c) living away from home, (d) between 18 and 25 years of age, (e) homeschooled for all 4 of their high school years and (f) in their second or third year of college (see Nature of the Study for further explanation). I decided to include women who had taken college classes during their high school years, as many homeschooled students take some form of college credit while homeschooling. One of the women interviewed went to a traditional school during a portion of her freshman year of high school, so transcripts and notes from this interview were not included in the data set for this research. This left a total of 11 participants with data included in the study. Only pseudonyms are used throughout the reporting of this research.

Eight of the participants homeschooled their entire K to12 career (Amelia, Chloe, Emma, Hannah, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah) one homeschooled from second through twelfth grade (Lydia), one from fourth through twelfth grade (Virginia), and one homeschooled for Kindergarten and first grade, went to a traditional school for second through fourth grade, then homeschooled again until high school graduation (Claire).

Nine participants experienced a more traditional method of homeschooling that mimicked the curriculum of a traditional school (Amelia, Chloe, Claire, Emma, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia, Mary, Rose). One mentioned using the Charlotte Mason curriculum (Amelia), a Catholic curriculum that focuses on a classical education during the morning and student choice in the afternoon. Two students were partially unschooled (Amelia, Virginia), one went part-time to a public school at a point in her homeschooling (Lydia), and eight participants were part of a cooperative or small homeschooling group (Emma, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia). Five participants received college credits during their high school homeschooling (Chloe, Joanna, Lydia, Rose, Virginia) and six participants had not taken a college course while homeschooling (Amelia, Claire, Emma, Hannah, Mary, Savannah). When asked to rate their schooling on a 1-7 scale with seven as the best score, the mean rating was 5.72 (SD=1.49) and the median rating was 6.

Participants differed quite a bit in the amount of peer time they received during homeschooling (indeed, most of them differed in their own peer time from year-to-year). One participant saw peers less than one hour per week (Amelia). Two mentioned getting approximately 5-6 hours of time with peers per week (Claire, Rose), four participants mentioned getting approximately 20 hours per week with peers (Chloe, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia), one participant received approximately 30 hours per week (Savannah), and two participants (Emma, Mary) said that it differed year-to-year. Ten participants met with peers at church (Amelia, Chloe, Claire, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia), eight at co-op (Claire, Emma, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia, Mary, Savannah,

Virginia), six at sports (Chloe, Lydia, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia), seven at clubs (Chloe, Claire, Emma, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Virginia) three had regular social activities with peers (Amelia, Chloe, Hannah), five met peers at classes and sports outside their co-op (Chloe, Claire, Hannah, Rose, Virginia), three met friends in college classes (Chloe, Claire, Mary) two participants met people at work, (Chloe, Lydia) and one felt that she spent her social time with family (Amelia).

Eight participants went to small, Christian colleges (Amelia, Chloe, Hannah, Joanna, Lydia, Mary, Rose, Savannah). Two went to state colleges (Claire, Virginia), and one went to a liberal arts school with no religious basis (Emma). When asked to rate their colleges from 1 to 7 (7 is the highest rating), the mean rating was 6.0 (SD=.63) and the median was 6. All of the participants consider themselves White. Six of the participants come from families that are Christian (Amelia, Lydia, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia), three considered themselves Catholic (Chloe, Claire, Hannah), one had no religious affiliation (Emma), and one considered herself Christian growing up but no longer considered herself Christian (Joanna).

All 11 participants had parents that were married while they were homeschooling; one lost her mother during her senior year. The participants had an average of four siblings (SD=2.33) and the median number of siblings was 3.5. All mentioned that most, if not all, of their siblings homeschooled. Ten participants said that their mother was their primary homeschooling teacher and one explained that both her mother and father were her homeschool teachers (Claire). All had one male and one female married to one another as parents. Three participants said their mother had completed high school but

not all of college (Amelia, Emma, Hannah), three mothers had a B.A. (Claire, Joanna, Savannah) one mother had a B.S. (Rose), and four mothers had completed their M.A (Chloe, Lydia, Mary, Virginia). Three of their fathers had a B.A. (Emma, Mary, Virginia), three had a B.S. (Amelia, Claire, Savannah), one had an M.S. (Rose), one had an M.B.A. (Joanna), one had a Ph.D. (Chloe), one had an M.D. (Lydia), and one had his D.C. (Hannah). All of participants' fathers worked full-time, three of the mothers worked part-time (Chloe, Claire, Emma), one worked both part-time and full-time during her homeschooling career (Lydia), and seven mothers stayed at home full-time (Amelia, Hannah, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia).

Data Collection

During this study, I conducted 12 phone interviews from January 2016 through April 2016. One of the participants went to a traditional school during part of her freshman year of high school, so her transcripts were left out of the data analysis process, leaving 11 eligible participants. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours, dependent upon participant time restraints and interest in speaking at length. Eight interviews lasted approximately an hour, one lasted half an hour (the participant had another appointment so she requested a shorter interview), and one lasted an hour and a half (the participant in this case was interested in speaking in depth and chose to have a longer interview). After each interview, participants were given a textural structural description of their transcripts to review and were asked to add any relevant data that they remembered after the interview. No participants chose to add to their interview, although one participant clarified a couple of points. Each participant was

interviewed separately via telephone. I took interviews in my private home office and participants chose their own location. All of the participants were living away from home at college during the time of the interviews, so their interviews were conducted away from their homeschooling parents. Transcripts and audio recordings of individual interviews were stored on a password-protected computer in the interviewer's private home office. Contact information was kept separate from the data in a locked box. Participants chose their pseudonyms prior to interviewing. Pseudonyms were used on transcripts and in the summary sent to each participant. No unexpected events occurred during the interviews that would affect data collection.

Data Analysis

After each interview, I used the transcripts to write a textural-structural description that described each participant's experiences. These interview summaries were sent to the participants for review. The interview transcripts were entered into NVivo software. In the original analysis, a priori coding was used to find trends using a constructivist mindset. These themes were identified: (a) the homeschool, (b) the transition to college, (c) social issues (d) identity. Following this I reviewed the transcripts a second time and emergent coding was employed to find themes and group ideas. During this round of coding, subthemes, subsubthemes and subsubsubthemes were found (see Table 3 in Section 5). When a participant had a meaningful experience that was not shared by other participants, this was included in the "additional findings" section of the results. Any statements that were irrelevant to this discussion were excluded from the findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was met throughout data collection and data analysis using these techniques: prolonged engagement (which meets the conditions for credibility, dependability and transferability), a researcher epoche process (which meets the conditions for credibility and confirmability), reflexive journaling (which meets the conditions for credibility), audio recording (which meets the conditions for credibility), interviewing an appropriate number of participants (which meets the conditions for dependability and transferability), looking for and reporting discrepant cases (which meets the conditions for confirmability), and member checking (which meets the conditions for credibility, dependability and confirmability). Interviews for this study were approximately one hour in length, with one shorter interview and one longer interview. During these interviews, trust was established through reiterating the importance of the participant's control over the interview process, through repeating back major points of the interview to ensure understanding, and through establishing rapport at the beginning of the interview. During data collection and analysis, I kept a reflexive journal, writing thoughts that occurred to me throughout the process. Once transcripts were complete for each interview, I wrote a summary that was shared with the participant to determine accuracy. In only one case was a change requested as a result of reviewing the summary.

Results

The intention of this study was to understand the experiences of women who were homeschooled as they transition to college. Research questions are 1) What are the

experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new romantic relationships and friendships and individuate from their families as they enter the launching phase and transition to college? 2) How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school believe their homeschool experience influenced them socially, academically, and in terms of family relationships as they entered the launching phase and transitioned to college? 3) What differences, if any, do women who were homeschooled perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled? Questions on the interview guide were open-ended in order to encourage participants to answer in the way that best suited them. Given that there was an overall structure to the interview, the interviewer took this structure and tailored questions to meet the specific needs and interests of each participant.

The participants had very different experiences of homeschooling. Some felt it was a great experience that prepared them completely for college, while others felt held captive by their parents' ideology. Most of the respondents were somewhere in the middle, feeling that their parents succeeded in some areas but considered themselves a little unprepared for college in other areas. Many of the participants were questioning their parents' beliefs and determining who they were as individuals, outside their family. Given this, however, most of the participants seemed to be respectful of and deeply caring for their parents.

For this review of results, themes and sub-themes were discovered as described in the data analysis section of this chapter. These are elucidated with examples from the

interview transcripts. Excerpts from each participant's transcripts will be used to describe themes.

Theme 1: The Homeschool

Participants were asked about their homeschool experience. They were asked about the reasons behind homeschooling, academics while homeschooling, and relationships with their family as a result of homeschooling. The majority of respondents explained that they had positive experiences while homeschooling and as a result of homeschooling, but there were notable exceptions. Parents choose to homeschool for a variety of reasons and chose a variety of methods and curricula for their homeschool.

Subtheme 1:Reasons behind the choice to homeschool. Parents had varying reasons for homeschooling, including religious reasons, the need to protect their children, academic individualization, and flexibility. Many of the parents chose to homeschool for more than one reason. Of the eleven participants, six mentioned that their parents chose to homeschool at least in part due to religious reasons (Amelia, Claire, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah). Five of the eleven mentioned that their parents wanted to homeschool them in part because they wanted to protect their children (Claire, Emma, Hannah, Rose, Virginia). Five of the eleven wanted to homeschool to provide academic individualization (Amelia, Chloe, Emma, Hannah, Joanna). Three of the eleven wanted to homeschool to increase the family's flexibility (Chloe, Emma, Lydia).

Homeschooling for religious reasons. Six of eleven participants mentioned that their parents chose to homeschool, in part, for religious reasons (Amelia, Claire, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah). Most of these parents had stated an interest in protecting their

children from "worldly influences" and wanted to bring their child up around parents and children who agreed with them (Amelia, Claire, Joanna, Rose).

"I think it was the conviction that my parents had and they believed that it was the only biblical way to educate their children .... I felt they wanted [to avoid] a worldly influence, to be honest, while were growing up" (Amelia).

"It was my parents' decision. Mainly so that they could be certain of what was being taught to their kids .... For religious reasons so they know what we were being taught, really" (Claire).

"Well, my parents' initial decision was, I think ... partially based on the beliefs that they have about the world or the culture. Outfits, bands, labels, anything that is not Christian. They were very concerned about bringing their kids up around like-minded families" (Joanna).

"My parents wanted to be the main influence in what I was learning and specifically due to religion. I would be learning everything from a Christian standpoint and that they would be able to include bible study, quiet time, that kind of thing into my school routine" (Mary).

"There weren't Christian schools in my area and my parents definitely didn't want to send me to a public school because they didn't agree with a lot of what's taught and they also didn't like the environment at all" (Rose).

"My mom didn't want to homeschool us at first, but she felt like it was the right thing to do. She and my dad prayed about it for a long time .... Yes, there was a big religious reason .... I hadn't attended [nonreligious classes] because we wanted to learn

from a Christian perspective and be built up in faith throughout our high school and earlier years" (Savannah).

Homeschooling to protect. As mentioned in the last section, several parents wanted to protect their children from people who were not a part of their religion. Others wanted to protect their children from bad experiences (Claire, Emma, Hannah, Rose, Virginia).

"They didn't want [teaching] being done by some third party where they weren't really certain of what was being put out there" (Claire).

"I know one reason was because my parents don't like the public school system. It was ... like indoctrination" (Hannah).

"It was a better fit for me. I was pretty shy when I was younger" (Emma).

"My parents definitely didn't want to send me to a public school because they ... didn't like the environment at all" (Rose).

"I didn't enjoy the school I was in ... I couldn't get along with the other girls at all. I was just sitting alone, really too weird and introverted, and I got picked on a lot at school" (Virginia).

Homeschooling for academic individualization. Some parents chose to homeschool in order to provide academic individualization for their children who either needed more remediation or a quicker pace to their instruction (Amelia, Chloe, Emma, Hannah, Joanna).

"I've known people ... and they've done really well and they actually are able to get their child in a place more advanced than maybe someone who was in public school" (Amelia).

"My parents originally did it—they liked the ... ability to adapt to each child's needs, interests, and pace of learning" (Chloe).

"My mom homeschooled my brother because he was very ahead in some subjects and behind in others, so she did that so he could catch up. If he was left in school, he'd probably be put in a specialized class and she didn't want that" (Emma).

"I think there were lots of reasons ... you could have a more well-rounded education. Like if we had a passion, we could really focus on that and not be forced to do testing, so we could actually be interested in something and not be a photocopy to learn to pass the test" (Hannah).

"Well, my parent's initial decision was I think partially academically based ... [my parents] were afraid that [their children] would be overlooked at public schools .... I think for me in particular, my mom thought that I would get really bored .... I could read by the time I came to kindergarten" (Joanna).

Homeschooling for flexibility. Other parents liked the idea of having flexibility. They used it to allow their children to pursue personal interests, to adapt to meet their children's learning styles, and to spend more time with their children doing non-academic work.

"My parents ... liked the flexibility and the ability to adapt to each child's needs, interests and pace of learning. We did some traveling, like field trips to [national parks] and stuff" (Chloe).

"I started working at the local library .... I would have essentially had to give that up if I went to high school just because of the hours available. I had [activities] that I would have had to give up if I had high school things and then tried to join theater or sports or something" (Emma).

"I was homeschooled because my mom did not like how much I was gone from home when I was in private school. I would leave early in the morning, around seven or seven thirty, my dad would drop me off on his way to work, and I would get home, probably at three or four in the afternoon and I did soccer and I also had piano lessons, so my activities ... would make me later, and then I was going to a private Christian school so the work, especially during first grade ... she felt like it was too much for a first grader to be staying up late and doing homework, then turning around the next morning and doing it all over again ... another reason was she wanted me to have more free time to pursue things like piano or any other type of hobby I might have" (Lydia).

Subtheme 2: Academics in Homeschooling.

Methods. The parents used many different methods of teaching their children, from homeschool cooperatives to unschooling. Many parents used a traditional curriculum, some sent their children to college to get credits while in high school, some chose to use clubs as learning experiences, and some students took online courses meant for homeschoolers.

Cooperatives. Eight participants mentioned having gone to a cooperative school at some point during their homeschooling experience. Paid teachers taught some of the cooperatives and some were taught by parents. Six (Emma, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah, Virginia) elaborated upon their time in the cooperative.

"Well, I don't know how precisely to say what it was like. I thought it was fun .... When I was younger, we were part of a homeschool group comprised of Tri-State families .... We would meet sometimes annually, sometimes every few months, we would do project fairs which were basically science fairs but for all the disciplines. We would do literary potlucks, it was basically presenting a book report then making a dish-thing on what we said. So there were a lot of really cool show projects that cross disciplines and that is something I like" (Emma).

"I was like one of a couple of kids in my grade and ... my family is one of them and a few other families and then occasional [other families]. It's like being part of a big sibling group. A lot of the curriculum ... was pretty standard in homeschooling circles. Then, in seventh grade I moved to a ... more structured [co-op] ... it was kind of like a college preparatory school ... my mom really admired the homeschool moms who picked more of the actual instruction ... she didn't think she was capable of doing that, especially not for all four of her kids. She was very aware of her limitations there and was trying to find other people to guide us along. She was guiding us too" (Joanna).

"I took a few different types [of classes]. In high school, tenth grade, I went to a co-op which was just other homeschooled families and the moms and dads of the family, whichever was the primary educator, they would teach a class that they felt confident in

so that each parent was teaching something that they were an expert in. So, I took some classes from other parents and I took English in high school. I took some sciences in high school, I did choir in high school and then also my senior year I did take some online dual credit and I went on campus for some of my credits" (Mary).

"We did belong to a homeschool group growing up. We did classes with that group, like art class, also speech class, but my mom taught that, so it was funny being in a co-op class that my mom taught" (Rose).

"Yes, we did attend a co-op ... [Homeschool Cooperative A], [Homeschool Cooperative B], and then I think one other little homeschool center for pretty much grammar classes, science, reading, pretty much a broad range of classes like that" (Savannah).

"Oh, let's see. At [Homeschool Cooperative A] I remember taking a music theory class, which didn't stick, and a bible class, which went better, a grammar class, also not cake, and I did a musical theater production of 'Annie.' [At Homeschool Cooperative B] I did [American Sign Language] for a year ... and I took a playwriting class, and chess class ... I did classical literature class, and I think a religions class. I remember learning about Buddhism. At [Homeschool Cooperative C] I went there for a year and I did French and [did] two different P.E. classes" (Virginia).

Community college. Five participants mentioned having taken community college courses during their homeschool experience. Two participants elaborated upon this in their interviews.

"I took a couple of community college classes at the very end of high school, which worked out fine" (Joanna).

"In my senior year of high school, I went to a junior college that was a few miles away from my house, so I did dual credit. So I was able to get college credit and then also finish my high school credits" (Lydia).

"In my senior year, I did take some online dual credit and I went on campus for some of my credits" (Mary).

"I did Running Start at [a local college]. [College] was a lot smoother because I had Running Start beforehand" (Virginia).

Clubs. Five students explained that they learned school topics in a club format. Two elaborated upon this in their interviews.

"Well, speech and debate, I don't know how familiar you are with speech and debate. I didn't take a class. Well, I did take one class in eighth grade but after that I did it competitively. So we were attending clubs, it wasn't structured by the class, and then we would go to tournaments and compete, and the clubs were all other homeschooling families because the league that we were in was exclusively for Christian homeschool families. So the debate club and speech club met often, like weekly or maybe bi-weekly" (Joanna).

"I was in ... a Spanish Club. I did things that I feel were kind of similar to the things that people did in traditional schools" (Mary).

Self-taught. Seven of eleven participants mentioned that they were self-taught (Chloe, Claire, Hannah, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah). This was not a question on the

interview guide nor did the interviewer mention the words "self-taught" until the participant decided to discuss it. Some of the participants who mentioned being self-taught brought it up several times during the interview, and most participants saw it as both adding to their lives by encouraging self-motivation and making their lives more difficult because it was harder to learn school topics, in particular math and science, without teacher direction.

"For the most part, once we reached a certain age and knew how to read, a lot of it was self-directed. [My mother] would have to make up the assignments and we would have to do it on our own ... for the most part, from what I could remember, like when I had learned how to read, it was pretty self-directed. She occasionally checked up to make sure I was doing it and doing it correctly. For the most part, it was hands-off ... it worked pretty well for most subjects. Math was definitely a struggle ... my mom had five kids under me to supervise in homeschooling and wasn't able to give me much time in terms of like, as far as attention in the specific subjects" (Chloe).

"I think I take my academics a little more seriously and more personally, I think, than normally schooled students do. Maybe just because when you are homeschooling ... it's all about your own academics .... I think a lot of my high school teaching was done directly from the textbook, which is probably different from traditionally schooled students because they would have it more from the teacher whereas I would have it more straight from the book" (Claire).

"I feel like I was almost teaching myself to a certain extent, but I enjoyed it because it was a really big help, transitioning to college, I knew if I'd get an assignment, I knew how to finish it" (Hannah).

"I was pretty much in charge of my education in a very similar way to college ... I actually really liked that because I'm a self-starter .... I could kind of set my own schedules" (Joanna).

"By high school, I was to the point where I was mainly able to kind of teach myself and they just kind of oversaw that I was learning what I was supposed to be learning and then helped me if I needed help, but for the most part I was kind of reading the material and learning it myself .... One of the main differences is that I did a lot of science experiments on my own, I guess. Like I would just read a description of the experiment and maybe watch a video and try to do it on my own instead of having a teacher show me how to do it .... I think that maybe I was required to read more and kind of figure things out maybe a little bit more for myself .... I had to, I guess, think more in-depth about some things because of the fact that I was responsible for what I was learning instead of someone else. But I felt like when I came into college I didn't feel behind. I didn't feel like I was missing any part of my education" (Mary).

"I taught myself Biology and Chemistry ... my mom chose a curriculum, gave it to me and said, 'Here, you can do this. I could teach myself very well and I'm pretty disciplined when it comes to doing school, whereas I noticed for people who didn't have that it's a little hard if they don't have homework to turn into a teacher every day.

They're like 'Oh, no, I have to get all of it done,' whereas I have to pace myself. For me, it's not a problem. I could schedule myself and it's great" (Rose).

"I think I definitely had to teach myself a lot of the courses, but that was really helpful to me as a person because now when I come across a problem, I cannot move on until I've answered the problem. That's definitely helped from homeschooling" (Savannah).

Individualization. Many participants mentioned the unique ability of the homeschool environment to allow for academic individualization and choice. For one participant (Amelia), this flexibility was not always positive.

"I think [homeschooling] gave too much leeway for parents to do what they wanted and—which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can cause you not to understand the concept fully or you don't get a full understanding of it. So, that's why I think ... [transitioning to college] has been a challenge for me just because I wasn't able to get that full amount of schooling that I should have or would have liked" (Amelia).

"At home, a lot of it was stuff I could choose ... I got to pick [assignments] in high school a little more, like I got tired of book reports and I actually wrote a play for English instead of doing a book report" (Chloe).

"My mom, she was a lot more lax, so she would let us learn at our own pace which was helpful but really not enough pressure to move forward" (Claire).

"I was able to pick my own course of study .... Every time I wrote a paper, my mom would sit down with me and we'd pick through all of the little grammatical things and all of the things that would make it a little bit clearer, and she really valued big

vocabularies and good writing at the same time as artistic things and general interests. And then I personally have always been a bit of a perfectionist, sometimes to detrimental effects, but usually it's just—I do the best work I can. Because I was homeschooled, I didn't have to conform to specific teacher style. I could just do it on my own and my mom made sure it was good quality .... I've had a solid baseline to work off of, I have a sense for what will work and what might need work" (Emma).

"I guess we had more of a say when we were homeschooled. Probably just because we were with friends, or we were in a smaller setting, so there was time to hear back from students. I like some of the teaching methods that my parents and my other friends did when we were in high school where we had more say. We were challenged to think critically about situations" (Lydia).

"Some years are more unschooling than others. So, there was one year where I really wanted to be a missionary in African for a while. So, Mom was like 'Okay, we're just gonna go with that.' So, she designed an entire curriculum based off African and we had to memorize all the countries in Africa. I had to memorize all the capitals because I was the oldest. And we studied history, we read about the famous kings from Africa, the Zulu tribes and stuff like that ... she kind of taught us the natural world off of bubbles which went well, except everyone was more interested in blowing bubbles rather than doing the geometry and stuff that was involved in it. She abandoned that after a while. We did a variety of different curriculum that my mom tried. I don't think she ever really succeeded in finding one that she likes all the way and so we bounced back and forth basically in what we're doing any given year. A lot of it was mostly used at the time were

interested in it. She would always start out the year trying to let us do whatever topic we wanted to do ... typically around Christmas she would realize that we were just really not into doing any kind of school on our own and she would abandon that and make us actually do homework again" (Virginia).

Mom and Dad. While all of the participants mentioned they were primarily taught by their mothers, many of their fathers also took a role in their education. This was especially prevalent in the areas of math and science. Several participants explained this in more depth-

"Every once in a while [my father] would [take a role in my education]. It would either be to help me to some math or some science if my mom didn't understand, but mostly it was my mom" (Amelia).

"I guess my mom would be primary, but it was almost split evenly between my mom and my dad ... my mom did the religion, the literature, the history—more humanities, and then my dad did all the math and science ... they were pretty much always available so if we were struggling with anything they would always be there for us to ask questions .... [My dad] was a little more strict with deadlines and assignments and things. Since he worked full-time he definitely wasn't there. It was definitely different between my mom and my dad. I would say my dad was almost more like a 'real teacher' because he would give assignments and then expect them to be done by the time he said, whereas my mom kind of guided us through the entire thing" (Claire).

"Sometimes my dad would take over our science lessons, but we were doing chemistry for a while and we had a lot of fun with that" (Emma).

"My mom was my main educator, but my dad also taught us .... My dad ... was usually the science teacher, and the one who kind of oversaw experiments, and he would have us read books to him as we were learning to read ... but my mom taught us pretty much everything else. She taught us math ... the writing, the language arts. She made sure that we were involved in things" (Mary).

"[My dad] teaches science classes. Whenever my mom ran a homeschooling co-op out of our house, he would always teach the science classes. So he taught computer programming to me and some of my friends for a year ... and then he taught an Astronomy and Physics class the next year ... he absolutely loves science. He's always said that if he didn't have a family of six to support, he'd be a high school science teacher" (Virginia).

Subtheme Three: Relationship with the Family. Many of the participants discussed the ongoing relationship with their families, both in and out of the homeschool. Some of them have deep, rich, ongoing relationships with their families, while others have been pushed out of the fold.

"It's actually kind of funny. Actually, I've been ... I left home a couple of years ago, so it's actually been awhile since I've been with my family but I was staying with my grandmother before coming to school, and it hasn't been that hard. I do miss [my mother] a lot of course, but it's been I think really healthy for me to be able to be here on my own and kind of start getting into the real world, so to speak ... I was, with my siblings 24/7, so we were pretty close growing up. I would say that I was fairly close with my parents for the most part as well, Since I left, though, the relationship has been really

strained and basically broken because they don't accept what I'm doing, so it's a little bit of a different dynamic now. So, I actually haven't seen or spoken to my siblings in two years. So the dynamic has changed a lot in the last few years, that's for sure .... In our home and just growing up, I wasn't allowed to vocally have my own opinions ... or make a lot of decisions, so a lot of that was formed in my own mind quietly, but now since I've left, I've actually been able to vocalize and ... freely form my own opinions ... the Lord's leading me to just being able to make my own decisions for myself" (Amelia).

"I think we had a good relationship. I enjoyed having my mom and dad teach me because they kind of knew how I learned and they gave me direction on things that I liked and what I kind of had a tendency to go towards" (Mary).

"Admittedly, sometimes it was kind of hard ... we would have an argument about school and we would be upset with each other about school, which was kind of bad. But overall it was really good" (Rose).

Closer to the family. All respondents mentioned that they felt closer to at least some family members as a result of homeschooling. One of the respondents is no longer in communication with her parents, but the rest stay in touch.

"I was with my siblings 24/7, so we were pretty close growing up. I would say I was fairly close with my parents for the most part as well. Since I left, though, the relationship has been really strained and basically broken because they don't respect what I'm doing [my decision to go to college], so it's a different dynamic now. So, I haven't seen or spoken to my siblings in two years. So the dynamic has changed a lot in a few years, that's for sure" (Amelia).

"I think [I'm] a lot closer because I noticed the first year away from home I was a lot more homesick than they [other students] were. A lot of them were happy, like 'Freedom, I'm on my own!' I was like 'Bring me back home!' It's much better now" (Chloe).

"As far as my parents, I think being homeschooled I was able to have a closer relationship with them while I was in high school and being homeschooled .... I think, with my younger siblings, I think I've actually grown closer to them since being in college .... I miss having them there all the time. I think they miss me too, so they'll call me all the time .... I think with my older siblings I've probably gotten closer to them as well because going through college experiences I know they've all been through it, so I go to them for advice. I think the relationship with [my parents] has stayed about the same .... I think that really just not having them here makes me realize just how important they really are" (Claire).

"With my mom, the way I described our relationship was the Gilmore Girls with a bigger age gap. I think a lot of people don't get that because they either just don't have the time together or because they're influenced by an idea that it's bad to be close to your mom and you should be closer to your friends your own age, or it's typical to have fights with your mom. I thought the opposite was natural" (Emma).

"The people that I know that were traditionally schooled .... I feel like I have a much better relationship with my mom and dad. I see them as my friends that are always there for me and whenever I'm into a huge issue, they're usually the first people that I will ask for advice. I really trust them, they trust me, we're on really good terms. I really

enjoy being with them, I feel a really strong relationship with them. The same goes for my siblings, we're kind of always there for each other, even when I'm not home .... I do think because I spent the first eighteen years of my life at home with them, I think we just had a really strong [relationship], like we had time to work on our relationship together. Now that I'm away from home, I feel like if anything it's gotten better. Stepping back, I've been able to appreciate them more ... looking back, one of the principles, the foundation, is that we were really tight-knit and we were always there for each other" (Hannah).

"I feel like compared to anyone I would probably be pretty close to my family because I don't mind talking to them a lot. I'm kind of [interested] in what's going on at home especially because everything that my family's involved in, I was involved in. I'm the one that's just left and it's kind of a missing reaction .... I think I talk to her [my mother] more frequently than some other people. I'm definitely not the person that forgets to call their mom. I'm the one initiating contact with my mom .... I miss them. I think probably the one thing I miss is being able to hug them" (Joanna).

"My relationship with my family is much tighter [than other college students]. I'm really close to all of my younger siblings and really close to my parents and my family is really important to me. That's why I try to go home once a week or so. I've noticed that it's not as common to go visit your family, call your mom in the evenings, things like that .... Even though we had a large social group, some of my closest friends are my siblings and my parents .... I feel very close to them and I have a really good

relationship with them .... I've noticed that that's not as common with my friends here at college" (Lydia).

"I think that regarding my family, just from what I've seen, I think I might have a better relationship than a lot of other people and I guess that's just due to the fact that they invested in me a lot. I just got close from the fact that I was with my siblings a lot, we had similar interests, and we did a lot of things together growing up. My parents were very invested in my learning and my being able to enjoy myself. I feel like I have a really good relationship with all my family members and I don't see that all the time with other students" (Mary).

"I'm definitely, especially with my siblings, I'm much closer than most people. My siblings and I, we did everything together. So we've just always been super-close and a lot of people are surprised. We would watch some other people and were like, 'Oh, my goodness, brothers and sisters are enemies,' but that wasn't for me. And then my parents, too, because they were actively involved in our schooling and just everyday life, in some ways we got closer. We're a lot closer to our parents than I think most people are. A lot of people on campus will go to the on-campus counselor. I'm like, 'I don't really need to go to a counselor. I'll just ask my parents.' We have all these inside jokes ... It's different in that we're not together all the time, so it's not quite the same, but overall really not that much has changed" (Rose).

"I think I definitely have a stronger relationship with my parents and sister because I grew up with them and I got to see them all day, and it was wonderful ... it was awesome. [Now that I'm in college] I think in a way it's [my relationship] gotten stronger

with my sister. We value each other more and we miss each other more. Towards the end of high school I was getting slightly annoyed with her, but now I realize that I miss her so much and we've just gotten closer. With my parents, it's always been strong. I still go to [my mom] with life questions. I call her my best friend because I can talk to her about boys. It's great ... I was telling my sister the other day, 'Pay attention to what Mom and Dad tell you. They're 90% right.' [My dad] is awesome. I talk to him about a ton of things, too. He's great" (Savannah).

"My [family] relationships are far better than, really, anybody ... outside of homeschooling ... we never had a reason to fight our parents. There was an implied dress code that we all just followed ... we all came home at a certain time because a) none of us could drive and [b] our parents just picked us up. Our parents had implied standards that we all just lived up to because we didn't have a reason not to. I think that really helped us all have really great relationships with each other because there was no conflict being created by outside forces .... I know everyone misses me lots because they make that very obvious when I call. But no, it's mostly been the same and I always had a really good relationship with my parents, especially to begin with. I never fought with my mom, I've never been grounded or really had any disciplinary measures against me at all. That hasn't changed much since going away to college" (Virginia).

Needed space from family. Six participants mentioned needing space and independence from their family after the homeschooling experience.

"The space kind of helped that [the relationship with my family] a lot. The last few years at home were kind of me like wanting to get out of there. But now that I'm a

couple of thousand miles away it's much easier to get along with them and I appreciate the time I have with them over Christmas and the summer a lot more" (Chloe).

"So, college was, for me, it was a given pretty much in my family because all of my older siblings had gone. It wasn't really a question of whether I was going or not, it was where you are going to. For me, personally, I wanted to go somewhere away from home" (Claire).

"In all honesty, I was getting frustrated with my dad. We're sort of healthier having space .... I'm only about two hours away from home. If I need to, I can go home. I can see my dad" (Emma).

"I felt really ready to go. I was home, but I was ready to be a little bit more in control of my own life, like I look out for myself at this point .... I'm kind of on my own so I have to figure out what I'm going to do" (Hannah).

"So I mean I miss them. I think probably the one thing I miss is being able to hug them, see them, but I'm kind of glad that I'm establishing myself a little bit. I don't think I would mind moving back with my family once I'm financially independent and on my own two feet. But I think I needed some space .... I will tell [other students] about some stuff about what my parents believe like that I wasn't allowed to watch Disney movies or Star Wars or some other weirder stuff, and they'll be like 'Wow, that's pretty out there.' And I'm like 'Yeah, why do you think I'm in Seattle." It's kind of a joke. I love my family and I just, it's not like there's anything wrong so much as much as I just needed some space" (Joanna).

"I really enjoy college. I feel like it was a good transition for me, just to get out on my own and figure things out for myself and realize how much I have learned to think for myself while I was being homeschooled. I would say that I think I've transitioned well. I enjoy being in charge of myself, but I really do love my family. I think that I'm ready not to be living with my parents" (Mary).

Theme Two: The Transition to College

Overall, the participants felt they made good transitions to college. While it was tough for many of them to leave home, the group as a whole found that they made friends and enjoyed the independence allowed at college. Six of eleven participants elaborated upon the general transition to college.

"It's definitely been a little bit of an adjustment. Basically, I'm going to a smaller campus, it was Christian, so it's been a little bit easier ... it's been a little bit challenging but overall it's been ... it hasn't been that hard. It's actually been a pretty good experience for me" (Amelia).

"I think I found, with the two aspects, social and academic, I think the social has been a little harder to transition into. Academically, it hasn't really been an issue at all" (Claire).

"Here, one of my friends from [Homeschool Group A] is here and so people that she knows are now my friends and people I met during orientation. My roommate and I get along really well .... I have a good social network" (Emma).

"I would say my transition was really good, especially because I did dual credit when I was in high school. It wasn't this immediate high school to college culture shock-type of thing" (Lydia).

"It's actually been easier than I expected. I was pretty scared to go off to college .... If I went to a state school, like a large school, the transition would probably have been a little bit harder because I wouldn't have been able to find people with the same background and people who had the same interests. So I think that did help, coming to this school" (Rose).

"Well, it was rough. I had grown up with my family. I have the best family and go to college 2700 miles away. I didn't know anyone back here. It's a small group which is really nice because it kind or relates to the homeschool co-op which was nice, but the first year especially was rough, being away from them, but now it's getting better .... I think that the homeschooling experience I had was really beneficial and helpful in my transition. I think basically this college is like a Christian co-op. It was nice to get that same experience here as I did back in high school" (Savannah).

Exposure to different opinions. Five of the participants (Amelia, Joanna, Lydia, Rose, Virginia) mentioned that they had been exposed to different opinions in college. Some felt this was due in part to their parents limiting the people with whom they had contact in high school. Some of these women also mentioned changing their minds now that they are on their own.

"Definitely my view on theology has changed a bit and things like that. I would say those have been taught a bit differently than what I was taught while being homeschooled" (Amelia).

"I did notice that a lot of people who were homeschooled tend to be more sheltered, more on the innocent side. There are a handful of people that just weren't really aware of the harsher side of life, like gay marriage or whatever, it was more foreign to them. Not the majority of the people, but some homeschooled people could potentially not be as aware of those things" (Hannah).

"I guess maybe all homeschool kids who are now in college or about to enter college that I have talked to, have at least had some degree of social difficulty ... some of them are very vehement about not liking homeschooling because of the social limitations in your community. You're not interacting very much beyond the people that your parents approved for you ... in terms of their transition to college, they're not always academically prepared because their family was not concerned so much with academics but [with] staying in the right community and protecting themselves from worldly influences and such things. [My parents] are both very ardent 24-hour 6-day creationists. They were not very comfortable with me learning ... about evolution in school ... the college doesn't have to ... accommodate their families sensibilities by not covering it or something. Here, I definitely met people who are actually progressive or liberal .... I just really didn't know any LGBT people in high school but I know some now. So yeah, I have met different people here. [College] has just kind of opened my world a little bit

although it's kind of weird that, for example, gay people existed but I just never met one

until a couple of days ago actually" (Joanna).

"My first experience at college was at a junior college. There were kids from all

over the place, people of different nationalities who speak different languages" (Lydia).

"One thing was my parents definitely had their opinions and we learned their

opinions. We were encouraged to think about things, but not necessarily to form our own

opinions .... Once I got to school, I heard a lot of different perspectives ... which was new.

We have a lot of students here with different ideas. It was really different and I was like,

'Wait, now I'm getting a different perspectives.' I hadn't really thought about it before.

They have legitimate arguments to make. Things are taught from different perspectives.

One of the teachers that we have during freshman year, he makes us study things from

every angle. He took all these problems and said, 'So what would you do if you were put

in this spot?' and I would always want to, you know, 'This is good, and this is bad,' and

he would take all these different perspectives and say, 'Well, here are the pluses and

minuses of each question.' I hadn't ever seen things taught from so many different

perspectives" (Rose).

"A lot of—all my other friends avoided college because they didn't want to have

to deal with the liberal secular environment. I haven't—I transitioned into it pretty well.

Because of my homeschooling, but backwards, because I have a very strong, not exactly

rebellious streak, but I will be different from anyone else streak, and because I was raised

in a very conservative Christian homeschooling environment which shut out people who

were different. I'm slowly beginning to realize that my life is very outside [my mother's]

bubble. It just is, but it does make it harder to engage in conversations with her sometimes because I don't want to talk about things. They're like ... hiveminded" (Virginia).

College academics. Many of the participants felt very prepared for college academics, with only a few areas of underpreparation. Some had difficulties with college-level writing, others with computer skills, others with the structure of courses at college. All eleven participants commented on college academics.

"Entering into college ... was definitely more of a challenge and just kind of being in a more structured school environment which I wasn't familiar with ... learning to write papers to a certain way or doing exams in a certain way and it was kind of a whole new world for me. So I would say that that has been definitely not a big transition, but a transition. [When I experienced writing problems] I would just ask someone who was already familiar with it. I befriended some of the sophomores which was nice, so they were able to give me some pointers and things like that early on. I think I'm kind of a person that catches on quickly. So, between asking for help or just clarifying with professors or Googling, that's how I survived ... they have a high standard for achievement ... you have to have a specific standards and that helps keep you going…my mom never really worried about [having standards]. As long as we understood the concept we were good" (Amelia).

"[At college] there's a lot more focus on grades. In homeschool, I tried to get my day's work done so I could go read or go do something with my friends. [At college] you

have to turn in an essay and at homeschool, like, you could write a play or a book report or ... " (Chloe).

"On my very first day, I remember going to all my classes and normally what they do on the first day is go through the entire syllabus, which I really had never been accustomed to, I think, so I remember feeling extremely overwhelmed .... I felt like 'I can't do this, I'm quitting,' but then once it came down to the day-to-day it was obviously not as hard as doing the entire semester in one day. So, yeah, when it came down to the day-to-day it was manageable .... I think there may be more of an emphasis on the tests and assignments ... there is more of an emphasis on the assignments rather than just the material, I guess ... also, some of my classes are taught with more discussion in class, which is different from homeschooling" (Claire).

"[The reading load] is getting better now but at the beginning of the semester it was probably three times as much reading as I'm used to. My mom and the other parents in our group worked a lot during the last few years to format our classes the way college classes work. They really did give us tools for independent thinking and time management which I needed the pressure of" (Emma).

"Academically, I was really well-prepared for college. I came in [having taken] seven AP exams. I had taken two college classes as well. I did not find the academic transition hard at all. I'm used to setting my own schedule and keeping track of deadlines, and talking to professors if I needed to. I would hear my ... friends complaining ... about how different it was from high school for them. I still remember one girl on my floor, talking about how she was annoyed that the professors weren't telling her exactly what to

do, and was like, leaving it up to her until she kind of realized 'Oh, I have a project here. So I need to start working on it now?' Science is more understandable and consistent ... it's also more thorough" (Joanna).

"I feel like I'm on the same plane with [other students] .... I don't really different in the way I was educated. We just had midterms and finals, which were ... more new to me than [traditionally schooled students]. Sometimes we do science together and I didn't have the opportunity to do every single lab, like in Biology ... but I don't feel it's hindered me .... I kind of feel the same with anyone else. [We have] equal stuff to say in class" (Hannah).

"You're obviously in a classroom, in a typical lecture, and you take notes. When I was homeschooled that was the case as well. I guess we had more of a say when we were homeschooled .... we were in a smaller setting, so there was time to hear back from students. I missed that part when I came to college. I missed talking in groups with my classmates, with the professor. I like some of the teaching methods that my parents and my other friends did when we were in high school, where we had more say. We were challenged to think critically about situations ... when I was a freshman and sophomore in college, the teaching was very traditional, when you take notes in class, and take your quizzes and tests. That was a bit of an adjustment. One thing I've definitely noticed recently is the amount of technology that's required in universities nowadays. I did not grow up owning a computer .... I didn't grow up using technology so I still feel like I'm learning that" (Lydia).

"It's taught very differently using the Socratic method than at home. Even though at home we did emphasize a lot reading the actual authors instead of reading what someone else says, so we'd go back to the roots. Here, it's more like, just go back to the roots because that's what the people want. So that's different, sure. I'm taking a lot of different classes, like philosophy ... I'm studying theology, too" (Mary).

"I guess [college] requires a little bit more of my time to understand the material. Like I can't just breeze through classes in the way that I could .... But the material ... it is not difficult .... I haven't really hit anything that I've just been like "Oh my gosh, I just don't really get that.' You really see the reasoning—the logic behind the structure of the class, or why we are learning something the way that we are. It's pretty predictable and that wasn't always true about homeschooling classes. Everything is kind of random. There is more writing here. This is probably just because it's college, but the classes are more detailed, they're more in-depth" (Joanna).

"One of the main differences in the way that they teach at school versus how I was taught is the fact that I have a regular class period and I have a teacher specifically knowledgeable about that subject. And I guess homework is a little bit different just because, I guess when I was homeschooled everything was homework. Now I learn some in class, take some notes in class, and then I have homework as well, although ... it's not anything that I'm put out by. One thing I've noticed ... is that I read a lot faster than other people. I don't know if it's just because I read a lot. I think also reading comprehension is something that I learned in homeschooling, that I understand and remember what I read the first time. [Also] I guess I'm more likely to think outside the box in some scenarios.

In college, people really expect you to be mature and to work hard. I feel that that was the same when I was learning at home" (Mary).

"I hadn't really had to work on group projects. A lot of times here at school, we have to work in groups. It's very annoying because people don't always do what they're supposed to do and then my grade is hurt because people didn't turn in the assignment .... I had always worked independently and that was great and I could do what I needed to do ... group projects and all, that was a whole new dynamic. My school ... is a classic liberal arts college ... when I homeschooled it was more well-rounded. Coming here to school, you have to write papers all the time. I wasn't used to that .... I've had to get used to taking information and then analyzing it and being able to write about it, just my thoughts, which I didn't have to do as much before. I just got information and I didn't have to say it again in my own words and show that I understood it ... we have to do so much more than when I was in school with Mom and Dad ... that's been interesting. It's more than I'm used to" (Rose).

"I would say that the teachers have very many different teaching styles. They are also extremely intellectual. They are very, very smart. Most of them are doctors in their fields and I think when you ask them questions, they know pretty much every single aspect of the topic they're giving you. [My college] is a classic liberal arts school. We focus a lot on philosophy and we have very intensive history courses and kind of the basis for the school are the philosophers, morality and ethics and how you can incorporate those aspects into your education. I don't want this to sound arrogant, but I feel like I have a leg up on [other students]. I feel like I have learned the things of the

world from a clearer perspective because I can directly talk to my teacher, my mom, and ask her questions and not feel intimidated by a large classroom setting" (Savannah).

"In the dorm, I was the same age as everyone, but I was a little academically advanced ... that's kind of remarkable since I dropped out of school because I was behind. Academically [homeschooling] hasn't been an issue and it's definitely been an advantage. So I was able to be taught things in a way that made sense and so I was able to learn more than I would have in a typical fashion. [In classes] I was two years behind everyone, but academically the same ... when I was in a social group, I would say, 'Yeah, my name is Virginia and I'm a freshman at State College.' When I was in an academic group I'd be like 'Yeah, My name is Virginia and I'm a junior at [State College]'" (Virginia).

Relationships with college professors. Many of the participants mentioned they felt more capable of forming a relationship with their college professors than they perceived their traditionally schooled peers were. They thought this was primarily due to the homeschooling experience of working closely with their adult teachers and forming relationships with people of all ages instead of going to school primarily with same-age peers. One participant (Rose) had a hard time communicating with professors due to a lack of experience with teachers other than her parents and online teachers, but is moving toward being able to communicate better.

"I would say that would be another thing that worked out well for me was ... learning how to talk with a lot of different age groups…especially like with my professors or other teachers. It's been really easy for me to talk with them and meet with

them on a regular basis. It's been a really positive experience just because ... having a lot

of interaction with adults in more mature conversation .... I've been able to talk with them

a lot easier than a lot of my other peers here at college and they're often intimidated by

going to the professor ... they have a lot of coaching or encouraging before they will

actually go up and talk to them ... that's been really helpful actually" (Amelia).

"In high school .... I had a really amazing English teacher. Her goal was to teach

us how to write English so that we could be successful at a college level. She also gave us

a ton of tips on how to approach our professors. It's been good for me coming here

because I feel like I know how to meet [professors]. I know how to approach them and

talk to them, even if they so much intellectually above me .... I don't feel like

[homeschooling] hindered me at all. I had a really good transition" (Hannah).

"Well ... I'm used to kind of being a center of attention in the classroom. I kind

of just expect them to talk to me. It's a little bit interesting, though, because I'm used to

being able to negotiate over exams, essays and so on. That's kind of weird, having that

just be like the final say. It's not something that I've ever overly complained about, but

it's something that I've sort of had to bring up sometimes and my professors kind of look

at me and like, 'What are you saying?'" (Joanna).

"I've noticed that I'm more comfortable talking to professors and being able to

develop a friendship with them. I have several professors that I'm really good friends

with. We go out to lunch and I meet them on campus and it turns into a long

conversation. So, I've noticed that I really like to get to know my professors and I really

like being able to go up to them and ask questions, and I think as I've talked to my

friends that might be the results of homeschooling just because I'm used to being taught by different adults in a small setting" (Lydia).

"I think that homeschooling, well, in my case at least, my parents taught us to respect authorities and communicate when we need help, so I think that helped me when I got to college because I already went in knowing that I was going to respect them as professors and at the same time knew when to ask for help and when to just take initiative" (Mary).

"It was actually really, really strange at first. I hadn't really had many other teachers. The ones I did have were teachers through the internet, so I didn't interact at all with them face-to-face. I guess to me, professors were big, scary, distant people ... so a lot of freshman year I spent kind of standoffish. I'd see teachers in the hall and they'd smile and greet you by name, and I'm like, 'Oh, my goodness.' Professors here really like to get to know people on a personal basis and they're really interested in their lives outside of the classroom. At first, it was pretty intimidating, but I tried to be intentional this year about talking to professors about things that aren't just school, making the most of the opportunities ... rather than ... walking past as quickly as possible. It was hard at first because I didn't really know how to talk to these people and I wasn't sure if I was supposed to treat them as equals or if there was a student-teacher barrier between you. It was difficult to figure that out at first. That was one of the hardest things about school, figuring out how to interact with professors" (Rose).

"I'm not intimidated by my college professors at all. My teachers at home, my mom and my co-op teachers were easily accessible, easily available, I could just go up

and talk to them and that kind of carried on in college. Homeschooling enabled me to talk more without feeling uncomfortable so I can ask questions in class without feeling uncomfortable at all" (Savannah).

"I think the hardest part for me has been having to deal with bureaucracy. I think one of the things I'm learning is that I don't have a one-on-one educator anymore and that people don't—aren't going to care about me unless I make them care about me" (Virginia).

Self-directed learners. A theme among the participants was the idea of being self-motivated to learn. They feel that learning is personal for them. Many of them attribute this to the self-directed nature of their homeschooling experience.

"I think one of the great things about being homeschooled was that I developed a good work ethic, or just the desire to ... study hard. So, that has definitely helped me with transitioning to classes and homework" (Amelia).

"A lot of people will study the Powerpoints [that our professors provide], but I like to make my own tests and take them a few times. I go and ask [professors] questions and use them to learn more stuff that I'm interested in" (Chloe).

"I think maybe I take my academics a little more seriously and more personally, I think, than normally schooled students do. In my experience, [homeschooling] forced me to be a little more self-motivated, instead of doing my assignments with a class" (Claire).

"I know a lot of people who get into their first year of college and they treat it the same way as high school works, with the social cliques and trying to fit in any

extracurricular that's possible .... I had the opportunity to work and understand that that was a thing you have to do .... I was able to pick my own course of study and think about the big picture, and I think a lot of public schoolers get overwhelmed with that because they don't think about it until the last minute" (Emma).

"Transitioning to college, I knew if I'd get an assignment, I knew how to finish it and if I didn't know the answers, I knew how to look them up. I'm very comfortable talking to people and not knowing" (Hannah).

"I do think I take [college academics] more seriously than some kids, for sure. I would love to go on for my Master's ... so I'd love to do more schooling" (Lydia).

"I feel like I learned a lot of the same things, math, science, English, art ... I was required to read more and kind of figure things out maybe a little bit more for myself. I had to ... think more in-depth about some things because of the fact that I was responsible for what I was learning instead of someone else. In college, people really expect you to be mature and to work hard. The teachers at least. But I feel that that was the same when I was learning at home .... I think the main thing, probably, is just that I already came in knowing how to study for myself. I didn't have to learn that while I was learning all the information from classes" (Mary).

"I've become more organized at school because there's a lot more to do there than there ever was before. I'm still a very flexible individual, but I have my schedule and I have to keep to it .... I have to eliminate some people time to make sure I'm getting [my studies] in" (Rose).

"Compared to traditionally schooled people, I think I'm a little bit more alert in classes because I do have to learn these things on my own" (Savannah).

Theme Three: Social Issues

As mentioned in Chapter Two, there is concern over homeschoolers' social skills (or lack thereof). Most of the women interviewed for this study felt capable socially, although they felt that they lacked certain pop culture references and were stereotyped by their peers as a result of their homeschooling. As a group, they felt different in terms of their socialization, having had less same-age peer experience and more multiage experiences, but they saw this as a benefit, not a detriment.

"I feel like a lot of public school have a harder time entering into a friendship or not just as, you know socially adaptable or oriented. That's my personal experience .... I think one thing I wished is that I would have had more opportunity to interact more with people my own age as I was growing up, people outside of homeschooling ... so other than that, though, it was pretty good" (Amelia).

"[I've learned] it's really easy to make friends, to take the initiative. It's two people waiting for the other person to take the initiative. Someone's got to take the first step. I would definitely say that it's partly influenced by being homeschooled .... I tend to take the initiative more than [other students] do. I am the one calling to set up a time to meet, stuff like that. Back home at last I deal with a pretty small pool of people who were my group of friends. I wasn't too motivated to make new friends. Then I come here and I don't know anyone and I'm all, 'Okay, I need to make new friends'" (Chloe).

"When approached, I am very socially normal, I guess. In conversation .... I've actually gotten the comment many times when I do tell people that I was homeschooled they are often very surprised. So I think socially I'm similar to them, but I'm just not very outgoing whereas they would be more outgoing. My personality is definitely more reserved. I'm not really one to go out and be really, really social. For that reason also, I have less friends than other people because of personality. With the two aspects, social and academic, I think the social has been a little harder to transition into" (Claire).

"A lot of people have said that they wouldn't have guessed I was homeschooled because I love talking to people and getting to know people and feel very comfortable in conversations, so I would say I'm similar in that way. Most people have told me, 'Oh, I thought you went to public school,' or something like that, or 'I thought you grew up in a normal school.' I've had a lot of people tell me that, which I'm kind of glad .... I would really much thank my mom for that because she ensured that we were with people three to four days a week" (Lydia).

"I think that for the most part [transitioning to college] wasn't very different for me. I was still able to make friends. I was still able to be involved on campus and find a job and that kind of stuff" (Mary).

"[Homeschooling] taught me, for one, to appreciate when I did have the chance to be with people. Now, I always try to make sure that I dedicate a fair amount of time to talking to friends because I didn't have as much time to do that growing up. When I was with my friends I had to make the most of it. Now a lot of people hang out and do school. I don't like that at all. If I'm friends with you, I'm going to hang out with you and I'm

going to spend time with you and actually pay attention to you. And when I'm done with that, then I'll go do my schooling. A lot of it has been, I really value the time that I have with friends ... but it also, now that I see people it's kind of like, 'Wow, I really don't know what to do with you. I see you all the time.' But having roommates is definitely teaching me a lot" (Rose).

"I think [taking speech and debate classes] had a huge effect on me as far as public speaking goes because [my father] always tells me that if you ever get an opportunity to speak you should take it because the more you speak, the more comfortable you will be. So I've tried to talk to as many people as I could in the past and given speeches and that has helped as well .... As a homeschooler it's more difficult to make lasting friendships, so we work harder to get those relationships" (Savannah).

"I created a friend group based off of other people who also, at their core, knew who they were. I created a circle of very weird friends so I don't have the typical college experience. We had a very diverse group. We had several ... Catholics, and then different kinds of Christians, and then we had a girl who actively practices ... Judaism, but didn't believe in God, which was fascinating. We have several Atheists and multiple different ethnicities, multiple different genders, they were all women but they're all identified differently within the scale. I am most likely more confident in who I am than everyone else because I don't want to be friends with everyone else" (Virginia).

Socialization during homeschooling. The homeschooling parents of the participants utilized many different types of socialization for their children. Ten of eleven women reported socializing at church, seven of eleven socialized at co-ops, seven of

eleven socialized in sports, five of eleven socialized in clubs, four of eleven took classes outside their co-op, and four of eleven had regular play dates. Work, college classes, and extended family events were also places that these women socialized when they were in their homeschool.

"I did a homeschool band when I was thirteen. I actually auditioned for one of their plays and got the lead ... then I started doing community performances and I did four or five of them in high school. Soccer, I played until I was about fifteen and then I coached for four seasons" (Chloe).

"Being in a regular school, you're with your classmates long hours every single day, so you have that friendship with people and you don't even have to really work for it. It's just there. Being homeschooled, it came a little harder and was more of a struggle because the friends weren't automatic ... you kind of had to choose who your friends were going to be through whatever extracurricular activities I did. The main one that we did was we had a weekly meeting with other homeschooled families. My closest friends were definitely from that ... we would meet once a week. It started out as a kind of socializing thing and ... one of the parents volunteered to teach volleyball so it became like a volleyball class every single week. That's how I got the social aspect of it, I guess. Although [socializing] was a struggle at first, I think I did fine with it because I did have those extracurricular activities where I was able to make friends" (Claire).

"I did a lot of music ... my family did more music and dancing and the athletics and things. Up until high school, I swam competitively on a swim team. Once in high school, I switched the focus and played a lot of music. I'd meet [other kids] in classes.

We'd hang out afterwards. There was a lot of park days that went on in my homeschooling group, there was a huge homeschooling group. We had park days once a week where we'd go hang out. That was fun. We'd do fun things on the weekend. We'd have friends that would come over to our house for dinner, or we'd all go out dancing ... especially when I was older, you'd do a lot of dancing together ... at church there'd be a lot of things happening and there were also spontaneous special events, like we'd go to Magic Mountain, like once a year" (Hannah).

"My mom had me in piano and violin lessons. I was in a dance class. We were in soccer for a long time, [from the time we] were about 6 to maybe about 12 ... it was a Christian league. The families went to Christian private schools or they were homeschooling in the area" (Joanna).

"We went to a small church back when I was really young and then we moved to another church that was small and then it turned into a really huge church. I would say our friend group was really big ... with all the co-ops, you would see friends probably on average at least three to four days a week we would be with other people, doing school, extracurricular activities, volunteering at places ... the older high schoolers that were ahead of me would help me [with school]" (Lydia).

"[I went to] Spanish Club. And I went to dances and football games. Most of them were with other homeschoolers in the area .... I feel like I still had social opportunities like others did. Like I was in athletics in high school, in choir .... I did things that I feel were kind of similar to the things that people do in traditional schools" (Mary).

Socialization in college. Most of the participants felt that they were similar to traditionally schooled students in terms of their social readiness for college. Although a couple of them communicated that they struggled in the beginning, they all felt relatively capable of socializing after a couple of years at college. They also have many places that they meet and socialize with other college students.

"[I go to] dances, which is my personal favorite. A lot of the times just at meal times. I live in a residence hall so I've gotten to know a lot of people just by living in the same hall" (Chloe).

"I tried joining a choral group but I just had too much homework to stay in the group, so I didn't really have time to connect with anyone. I am hoping that next semester, now that I'm sort of in the stream of things, I can join a student group like maybe an a capella group. I did contact people in the folk dance group because I like Irish tap dance .... one of my friends from [Homeschool Group A] is here and so people that she knows who are now my friends and people I met during orientation. My roommate and I, we get a long really well" (Emma).

"[Finding friends at school is] easy. It's really weird, how you ended up in the social group that you're in now. It just kind of happened. There's not really an intention to 'Oh, we're going to hang out with this group,' or 'We're going to do this together.' I've just had a really easy time finding people that I have common interests with because there's a huge focus here on community life. People take their meals together and the tutors will be there too, people will study together, we pray together ... we go hiking together, a lot of student plays, a lot of dances, because it's such a strong community life.

It's pretty amazing, pretty neat. A lot of people just bond together over everything, so I have a lot of really well-rounded friendships" (Hannah).

"It has not been that easy. I mean, being in the honors program it is kind of its own social group. [People I knew before college], obviously I'm friends with them ... I certainly have enough friends ... there are enough people that I can hang out with or have dinner with or do homework with .... I met a few people on orientation week and I've kind of stuck with them and become good friends" (Joanna).

"It's ... not been as easy as I'd thought it would be. A lot of people .... there's not a lot of homeschoolers ... there weren't a ton of kids on campus who were familiar with it .... I mostly rely on my classes to find people .... I found that just sticking to people who are all in the same classes together really helped to narrow it down and not be so overwhelmed with all the kids on campus. I'm really glad that I live in the dorms because the RAs, they organize your halls, and see who has the same degree plan. There's weekly hall events, but I have a really amazing RA who organizes a lot of things, so I would say living in the dorms is really helpful" (Lydia).

"I would say [it has been easy to find social groups]. I go places that are interesting to me and there's usually someone there that I can agree with. [In] my first few years in school .... I would go to like the Baptist Student Ministries or a school event, maybe like a football game or a dance. I made friends at work. I work at school as a student worker. I made friends in my classes, I guess I met some friends just from incoming freshman events they had, I also did choir for my first year and a half in college and I made friends there as well" (Mary).

"It's such a small, close-knit community at school everybody gets to know each other so it wasn't as hard as I expected. They're really friendly and it's easy to find a friend group and find ways to get involved. So, overall it was a lot easier than I expected. It's a conservative school ... there's just a lot of things that we don't have that you would have at other schools because of the background people are coming from .... if I went to a state school, like a large school, the transition would probably have been a little bit harder because I wouldn't have been able to find people with the same background and people who had the same interests. So I think that did help, coming to this school" (Rose).

Fewer, better friends. Six out of eleven participants mentioned the importance of fewer, deeper friendships over the importance of having many friendships.

"I would say ... I feel like a lot of public school people I've met have a harder time with knowing how to develop a deep relationship with someone" (Amelia).

"My friends like to have a large friend circle and know a lot of people, where I tend to have two or three really close friends. Like a lot of acquaintances that I hang out with, but in terms of close friendships I only have a few" (Chloe).

"I think for me, being homeschooled showed me that I can choose my friends ... it has made me okay with not having every single person in the world be my friend, I guess. More just having a smaller group of friends" (Claire).

"I kind of assembled ... a set of criteria for people that I'll be friends with. I still want to meet more people because I do feel like I'm still a little influenced by my circle of friends, and those people are mostly like me. But it's not like, I mean I feel like I have

an adequate and sufficient, fulfilling number of friends, but I would also like to meet more people" (Joanna).

"So I tend to spend the majority of my time with just a couple of people compared to going to lots of events where lots of people are. I will do that, but on a lesser scale than other people. Who I choose as friends is going to make a difference in what my life is going to look like in the future .... I'm a little bit more particular about who I spend my time with, so I will still be friendly and spend time with people that see differently than I do, but I spend the most time, or the most quality time at least, with people who I feel like have similar views" (Mary).

"I don't want to be friends with everyone else" (Virginia).

Comfort. Comfort and comfort zones were a theme for four women. There was a degree of comfort and familiarity during their homeschool years that made it difficult for them to want to take risks as they went into college.

"Forming new friendships has been tough to me, especially when I was home. Like I didn't want to take that first step. Back home at least I deal with a pretty small pool of people who were my group of friends. I wasn't too motivated to make new friends" (Chloe).

"I was used to being in kind of a more comfortable social setting, [then] being thrown into a very uncomfortable [setting] with strangers pretty much was kind of hard at first" (Claire).

"I'd say my transition was really smooth. I really like the way my parents sort of eased me into it instead of shocking me and throwing me into college" (Lydia).

"I've had to learn to kind of put myself out there some. A little bit more than I did at home just because at home I was in that comfortable environment. Being in college, I've been in uncomfortable environments and so I've kind of had to learn to be okay with being uncomfortable and sometimes doing things that I wouldn't necessarily do like, for example, when I was looking for a church to go to, that was very uncomfortable for me because I didn't know anybody ... that was something that I had to take initiative to do. I feel like that translated into other areas as well. I'm more likely to put myself in an uncomfortable position if I think that the outcome is going to be good. I might not have done as much when I was homeschooled just because I was comfortable a lot of the time" (Mary).

Multiage relationships. Five of the women commented on the importance of having friends of many ages as they grew up.

"I think all the interaction that I had with adults while homeschooling has been very helpful ... it's been more my experience with just meeting and talking with adults. I didn't really have a lot of people when I was growing up and so, most of that would be interacting with parents, either moms or dads, people that were older than me .... I think that's why it's hard for me to participate in a lot of young people's kind of conversation because for me it's really immature ... it doesn't make sense to me .... I've had to learn to adapt to that kind of talking. I would say when I had the opportunity and I didn't spend a lot of time with my peers or people my own age, but I had a lot more interaction with adults" (Amelia).

"I don't try to make friends just with people who are close in age to me. I like having friends who are a little bit older or a little bit younger" (Emma).

"One thing I noticed that I did miss being on campus .... I did miss having people around that were different ages and I noticed that sometimes .... I get a little tired of being around just people my age. I really appreciate my job because I have my managers, people that are younger than me and older than me. I've talked to my friends and [comfort talking with adults] may be one result of homeschooling. I'm used to being taught by different adults in a small setting .... I grew up getting used to talking to adults and having conversations with them. We were used to talking to our friends' parents" (Lydia).

"I think that my homeschool experience has been beneficial just because of the fact that I as a homeschool student had to communicate with peers, but also with people who are younger than me, people that are older than me, at different levels and in different stages of life. I feel like that helped me to ... be able to respect people based on when in life they are at" (Mary).

"One of the big things is that I haven't spent a lot of time around my [same-age] peers. At church I was with people of all ages. I was friends with the two-year-olds and I was friends with the elderly people and I was friends with everybody in between. I wasn't ever at school, so I wasn't around people just my age. Coming here, it's been really strange just because I'm around people my age all the time. Some of my friends and I were talking a few weeks ago. This family was on campus and we saw little kids and we were all, 'Little kids, we haven't seen them in forever.' I guess that was one thing I

realized that most school kids were like, 'Yeah, I'm just around people my age all the time, that's normal.' But for me that wasn't normal at all" (Rose).

Introversion/extroversion. Several of the participants commented they were both introverted and extroverted, seeking relationships but needing plenty of time alone to recharge. Others felt as though they were fully introverts or fully extroverts. Some wondered whether their introversion or extroversion came from their homeschooling experience.

"I love being with people and I love interacting with people of different cultures. I guess I'm outgoing" (Amelia).

"I'm a mix of introverted and extroverted. I like spending time with people and being out there, but I need a long time to recharge. I don't really take an interest in [study groups]…I am really shy and prefer being on my own a lot of the time" (Chloe).

"I'm more reserved initially and more hesitant to open up to people, but that can probably be attributed to my personality as much as to being homeschooled. But once I get to know someone, I'm comfortable around them and have no problems having an intimate relationship. As far as the effect of homeschooling, I think homeschooling may have made me more of a reserved person as opposed to people who were schooled regularly just because they were in a social setting pretty much the majority of their day, whereas by being at home it's not as much of a social setting so that's what I was used to. It kind of made me more used to not being in a social setting and then coming to college it's the very opposite of that. So yeah, it definitely was unfamiliar at first" (Claire).

"I definitely know I'm an introvert. I love being able to sit in a corner, sit in a coffee shop and read. But then, I also don't like being alone for a majority of the time. I love being with people .... Coming out of homeschooling ... learning when it is time to go with friends and go socialize, and when it is time to be by yourself and get things done. Overall, I love being with people and I love being able to do things as a group, but I also really need time alone" (Lydia).

"Personality-wise, I would say that I am a bit introverted. I usually [speak up in class] about the same amount as my peers who are a little bit more introverted. So, I don't necessarily talk as much as everyone does, but for people who have the same personalities I talk the same. So I will answer in class, but I won't necessarily give a long answer, like a story" (Mary).

"I've always considered myself to be pretty shy and reserved ... really serious ... I always thought I was shy, and I always thought that was partly because I was home a lot and not interacting with a lot of people…also I'm an extrovert, so when I interact with people I get happier…that might have been in part because when I was homeschooling, I didn't get to interact with people, so when I did get to interact with people, I'd be like 'Yes, people!' and I'd get really excited. I guess a lot of it was dependent on the experiences that I had as far as interacting with people. A lot of it depended on, 'Oh, I didn't get to have much people time, so people time makes me really happy.' My first semester here, everybody was like, 'You're such a social butterfly,' and I just never studied .... I was just very happy to be around a bunch of people. I was 'I actually need to get more studious, I need to be better about my schoolwork,' and so .... I had to get a little

less crazy and a little more serious .... Being homeschooled, I could have my quiet time, be alone when I wanted to, and I could go in my room and do school for hours and not be disturbed. And then coming here, there are people everywhere so I had to learn to work with distractions like I didn't have to before" (Rose).

"I feel like I'm an extrovert when I'm around people, but when I'm studying for a test, or when I just need a break, I go back to my room to watch a movie or read a book ... maybe I'm a little more introverted at college than I was in high school because I kind of like grew up with my friends back in the day. Kind of trying to get to know people here. I think I'm pretty much the same person except a little more introverted here" (Savannah).

"I would say that homeschooling has really only affected the fact that I don't really go out and party and I tend to just kind of keep to myself. I'm really shy and better at keeping up my grades. It becomes hard to separate who I am biologically and who I am because I was homeschooled. Why I don't go around actively seeking friendships is a) because I'm very introverted and b) because I was homeschooled" (Virginia).

Romantic relationships. Few of the women had engaged in romantic relationships. Some of the participants felt this was due to a religious community that frowned upon this behavior.

"Romantic relationships? I haven't actually experienced [romantic relationships]. We were never allowed to date either. I was potentially going into a courtship ... it was definitely not encouraged at all. I would have liked to have the ability to be more free or more open, without having restrictions on dating by yourself, that that would have been available to me" (Amelia).

"I haven't had the opportunity to put [forming romantic relationships] to the test yet" (Chloe).

"I can't think of any effects that [homeschooling] has had, negative or positive, I guess" (Claire).

"I feel like a lot of homeschooled kids take things like dating a lot more seriously. It's not like, you know, a one-night deal, but it's meant to last. I think we take that way more seriously" (Hannah).

"I have a lot of trouble sitting in class next to my male classmates because the other women are going to judge me for it .... It's kind of like I carry over to college a lot of the social norms in the homeschooling community. One of the big ones has been accidental touch, which doesn't really happen ... like I'll bump into somebody and kind of flinch. It's been kind of an adjustment, I guess" (Joanna).

"I would say that has been something that's been more of a struggle, because ... I grew up around a lot of kids of different ages. My parents were, they're very old-fashioned that way. They didn't allow us to date. Their rule is basically if you're of marriageable age and you can get married then you're allowed to date. I would say that growing up, I thought it was bad to have a crush on a boy. It was something that I did struggle with a bit more, and I would say now I am really grateful for that. I'd say that now it keeps me from being foolish and getting into relationships too fast. It was a big of a struggle because I was like 'Why am I not allowed to date when my friends are,' or 'Am I ever going to get married?' I definitely did have those challenges when I was older, in high school. Now I feel pretty normal in that area. I don't have a boyfriend now

and I'm not dating, so I think it's just prevented me from being foolish and making

mistakes" (Lydia).

"No, I don't think [homeschooling] has affected me" (Mary).

"I dated some guys in high school, like in co-op, I also kind of met this one guy

who had been in the co-op earlier, but had gone off to community college so I

reconnected with him and dated him. None of the guys that I dated were really ... what I

was looking for" (Savannah).

"I'm 20 and I've never dated. That is because of the homeschooling culture. I'm

... more conservative with my personal relationships" (Virginia).

Social benefits of homeschooling. Some participants pointed out that there are

specific social benefits to the unique atmosphere of homeschooling. Some felt that they

were more intentional and committed to their relationships, some felt deep, life-long

connections made during their homeschooling experience, and others felt that lack of

social connections in homeschooling pushed them to make more friends in college.

"I guess like as a homeschooler, I think most homeschoolers ... the people that we

do meet or we do want to become friends with we're very intentional about it for the

most part. They're willing to reach out and I think we're more, I would say, socially-

oriented in a sense. I feel like a lot of public school people I've met have a harder time

with knowing how to develop a deep relationship with someone or crossing different

boundaries and entering into a friendship, or they're just not as, you know, socially

adaptable or oriented. That's my personal experience .... I do a lot of the initiating and it's

something that I've really had to learn and grown in but definitely one aspect that I did a

lot during my homeschooling years" (Amelia).

"I would definitely say that [my ability to take the first step in forming

friendships] has been partly influenced by being homeschooled" (Chloe).

"I would say our friend group [while homeschooling] was really big. Again, with

all the co-ops, you would see friends probably on average at least three to four days a

week ... we always had a huge group of friends and I still do have a really tight group of

friends, even though most of us are off at college, we are still together. Over breaks,

we're still all together. We do something for Christmas or Thanksgiving or something

like that, we definitely had a very active social life" (Lydia).

"I wasn't able to be with people all the time. I didn't go to school every day to be

with my friends. I would see them once a week at church on Sunday, or I had a lot of

friends I never even saw—we communicated through [our online class] all the time ... in

some ways it was good because later on it helped me to have relationships, where I

wasn't necessarily seeing people all the time" (Rose).

Stereotypes of homeschoolers. Six of the participants found that non-

homeschoolers stereotype them at college. For some, they are able to laugh at the

stereotypes, while others feel stereotypes a significant hindrance. Two felt that they ran

into few stereotypes at their schools.

"It's not really too bad. I would say there's only about 10% of us that were

homeschooled ... everyone I've met hasn't been like, 'Oh, you're a homeschooler.' So,

that hasn't been too much of an issue, which has really been nice" (Amelia).

"Occasionally I'd hear people [at Running Start] make jokes about homeschoolers, but hardly ever" (Chloe).

"I think maybe I sometimes have a more negative view of myself because of being homeschooled because I know that other people have a negative bias of people who are homeschooled. So yeah, that can sometimes have a negative effect because when they know that I'm homeschooled, they'll automatically have that negative bias towards me just because of that fact" (Claire).

"I've seen a big change in people's perception of homeschooling…when I was younger, usually there was the 'S' word, socialization and people say, 'You're homeschooled, you must not have friends, you must not do sports.' I did all of that and now usually if I say I was homeschooled, people will just say, 'Oh, cool.' I don't think that [they know] any of the stereotypes [that] homeschoolers must be religious or they must be super smart. Some people at [my college] don't even ask questions about it ... [we] just continue with the rest of our conversation" (Emma).

"Comment(s) about the stereotypical homeschooler, I would say that I have experienced that. Not a ton, but a good amount. It doesn't really bother me or offend me or anything, but I've encountered that quite a bit on campus. One of the stereotypes I get is 'Oh, your siblings are your best friends. You don't have any other friends besides your siblings.' When I went to college, people were like 'What's homeschooling and is it weird?' I've been asked SO many times, 'Did you have any friends in high school?' and 'Did you have any friends growing up?' There was that one, and the technology one that has been kind of true, but it doesn't mean that we don't know how to handle it, or it's like

a foreign object or anything. I'm really grateful that we didn't grow up around much technology. [Along the lines of stereotypes about] friends, it's that we don't know how to talk to people or that we're shy or that we don't know how to carry on a conversation. That's another one that people are really surprised about. I'd say that we learned how to make our own friends really well, sometimes I think better than traditionally schooled kids. At first I didn't [feel confident handling stereotypes]. At first it did bother me. But I've just learned that it doesn't bother me anymore and sometimes I think they're funny. Now I'm totally comfortable handling them" (Lydia).

"I did notice as a student coming into college there was a lot of questions and a lot of stereotype assumptions that people had placed on me because I was homeschooled. They would automatically assume that I was antisocial or that I was kind of weird or that I had different interests or that I just sat around and did nothing and was lazy or that I just didn't like people. You see a lot of that up front from students who didn't know me but knew I was homeschooled, so I did kind of usually avoid telling people that until they knew me. They would make a stereotype assumption that I didn't know anything or know how to talk to people" (Mary).

"I have this guy at youth group, I was walking past him and he said 'Homeschoolers suck.' He didn't know I was a homeschooler and I looked over at him and I'm like 'Thanks.' In a way, I don't think he thought I was a homeschooler because I don't wear the long dresses and the hair. [Other stereotypes are] dress, act ... no dating ... a lot of non-homeschooled guys are like, 'I don't want to have to deal with that and all'" (Savannah).

"My age and schooling are my two most closely guarded secrets because it immediately changes everyone's perspective. I see it in their eyes. My roommate and I were texting over the summer and I [told her I was homeschooled]. She told me later, 'I was absolutely terrified. I thought you were going to be some freaky genius and I didn't think I was going to be able to compare to you at all. I thought we weren't going to get along because you were going to be infinitely smarter than I was and you were going to flaunt it or something'" (Virginia).

"I come from a different culture." Many participants felt their schooling was so different from their college peers, it was almost as though they came from another culture. Many of them hadn't been exposed to the same cultural references as their traditionally schooled friends and needed help bridging the divide.

"I would say ... I was pretty sheltered. Learning about different things or different meanings or music or what people do or don't do. That has been really eye opening and it's sometimes really hard for me to comprehend ... because there's a whole new world for me. It's definitely been a bit of an adjustment ... growing up so conservatively, I still don't know a lot of things about movies or music or just general life ... but overall it hasn't been that hard. [I would ask others to be] patient ... it's been really nice for me. If I ask a dumb question ... it's really sincere, like I don't really know what to do and they think it's really funny, and I get it, But, yeah, just for people to realize" (Amelia).

"I did notice that a lot of people who were homeschooled tend to be more sheltered, more on the innocent side. They won't be aware of like a crude joke, or all the innuendos that people talk about, they're just not aware of those things, or they go over

their heads. [They're] just not acquainted with the bad side of the world ... the not-nice

things that happened, they just don't know about those things. I guess because those

things weren't talked about at home, whereas if you go to school you know those things"

(Hannah).

"I think the hardest personal transition has been not knowing as much about pop

culture. The other people here ... persist even though I've been here almost a year. My

friends [are] like, 'It's surprising what you don't know.' I'll just ask this question that

makes it really clear, and they're always saying like 'Oh, we need to show you this

movie,' or 'You need to listen to this music.' I haven't really been able to connect with

too many people who went to a public school because the stuff that they talk about ... I

always have to ask questions about. So that's kind of a weird way to start a friendship. I

feel like it's going to happen at least every week, and usually more frequently than that.

Like there's this one; I wasn't allowed to see Star Wars or Indiana Jones growing up. So I

saw that someone showed me a picture of Harrison Ford at one point and I was just like,

'Oh, is that Han Solo?' Everyone just burst out laughing including one of my friends who

was homeschooled. They're like, 'No, that's Indiana Jones. Really?' And I'm just like, 'I

don't know'" (Joanna).

"We didn't grow up watching TV, so even small things that come up in

conversations ... like 'What kind of TV shows do you follow?' and I'm like 'I don't

know, I don't watch TV.' Of course, we watched movies and stuff, but watching TV

wasn't a huge thing in our house. I guess, just small things like that, I realized how

maybe I am a bit different, like maybe more old-school" (Lydia).

"I guess the main difference with me coming into college being homeschooled ... was just the fact that I maybe hadn't been exposed to as many outside secular movies and music and that was kind of the main thing I noticed" (Mary).

"Because I was homeschooled, I and all my friends grew up very adverse to the outside world. I think that's probably going to be what I'm going to go with for the rest of my adult life, is the feeling of displacement and not belonging anywhere I am. To an extent everyone feels that way about something. To have to transfer from homeschooling to university is that we live in two different worlds and that people from neither world understand us anymore. [Homeschooling] has created a certain sense of displacement in my life because I don't identify with any of the cultural references of people in college. People make a SpongeBob reference and I'm like I don't understand what you just said. But then I go home and I get in contact with my old homeschool friends, and I realize I don't fit in there either because I went to university and I had my world extended and I've become friends with weird people. I'm far more accepting than many of my friends back home. I am willing to be friends with someone who I know to be bi, or transgender or gay or a Democrat and an atheist. That doesn't faze me at all. That makes relationships very interesting for me because I do have these two different cultures in my mind and these two different ways of approaching situations. I kind of pick moment-by-moment, which one I'm going to listen to" (Virginia).

Theme Four: Identity

As a group, they were remarkably contemplative and mature. They also reported independence and self-validation among their traits.

"I would say I definitely formed a lot of opinions while I was growing up and being homeschooled. I have to say I definitely change a lot of it, ever since I left and have been on my own. Since I've left, I've actually been able to vocalize that more or be able to freely form my opinions. I would have said I was really discouraged from having a different opinion from my parents or different ... beliefs or something like that. Coming out of that has been a very fine experience for me actually because I've been able to really discover more of who I am and what I think. The Lord's leading me to just being able to make my own decisions for myself" (Amelia).

"I define myself more by my activities than who my friends are. A lot of the activities I got into on my own or with maybe one person that I knew. I'm definitely a lot more outgoing, like the one to take that initiative. I'm kind of out of the umbrella of the oldest [family name] girl and now it's like I'm Chloe. No one here is like 'She's the big sister.' It's been kind of nice to have my own identity a little more" (Chloe).

"I am religious, I am a very optimistic person—I love what I do, love what I'm doing, I love people, I love doing things, probably the worst thing I could do is sit on my hands, you know, like not do anything. I love to hike ... I love being outdoors, I like to dance, I like to read books, I'm a social butterfly .... I really enjoy every moment here. I've gotten to know myself better as a person. I know I can deal with problems without depending on anybody" (Hannah).

"I've asked people what their first impressions are of me. They say that I'm super-joyful and always smiling and really upbeat, which I didn't really realize until they actually said it, so ... that's all God. Growing up with love that really contributed to who I

am now and also, kind of like a side note, homeschooling taught me to kind of learn things on my own and study for myself. That gave me confidence and spirit, I guess" (Savannah).

"And, so, kind of, the opposite is because of my homeschooling and fighting against my homeschooling, I am a very open and accepting person .... Whatever you believe about yourself, I'll believe it too. That's very unique to me. I don't think it applies to anyone else who came out of homeschooling who is that way" (Virginia).

Contemplative. The participants seemed to be quite willing to explore both the positive and negative sides of their identities and their homeschooling in some depth.

"I feel like I was really well-equipped to handle everything. Not that I knew everything that was going to come at me .... I knew how to deal .... It might have been part of who I was or what I did, but I have a very strong work ethic. That kind of helped me here, too, I guess. I didn't stay up as late or get up as early, but just kind of relying on myself. I know myself, I know how I react to things, so I was able to adapt really well to here ... Kind of like, I knew who I was dealing with" (Hannah).

"I think that ... probably the things that I have grown in the most of this year is not academically or mentally ... but it's emotionally and socially. And I'm learning how to listen to people ... not that I, I'm not that great at it ... but I'm getting better at it. Getting better at ... kind of affirming or nurturing ... and not ashamed of it" (Joanna).

"I would say that I learned more about myself when I was out of homeschooling. When I was homeschooling, my description of myself was still dependent on family and really close friends. If you would have asked me that question when I was homeschooled,

I don't know what I would have said. I think that moving out of the house and being more independent has helped me to understand, 'Oh, I think this is generally what I prefer,' 'This is how my personality works,' 'I prefer small groups as opposed to huge groups'" (Lydia).

"I think I am, I guess ... analytical, would be a personality trait. I feel like I look at every scenario and I think about what's about to happen, what one action will bring versus another" (Mary).

"I generally don't describe myself the way other people describe me. My roommate told me, 'You're the happiest person I've ever met.' And I'm like, 'Really?' 'You smile more than anyone else I've ever seen.' 'Really, okay.' I just don't think I'm really outgoing and friendly. I've always considered myself to be pretty shy and reserved. I was always really confused about that. I've always considered myself really serious and everybody was like, 'No, you're one of the silliest, weirdest people I know.' I'm like, 'Okay,' I might not know this, but okay. And then I thought I was insensitive and my roommate was like, 'No.' I'm always confused when people ask 'What's your personality like?' I actually don't know" (Rose).

Independent. The participants seemed to value their independence, their ability to think and act on their own now that they're in college, and taking responsibility for themselves.

"I think [my identity] has solidified more. I think being ... in school now ... [I've] definitely become more determined and more focused on what I want to do, where I want to go and not have the worry or fear that I might not be able to do that and I've also

definitely become much more outgoing to people from all different walks of life, where before, I would never really have ... met certain people or interacted with certain people ever" (Amelia).

"At first, I was happy to be independent and be on my own and everything. There's definitely been some times when I've missed them. Overall, it has not been hard. I definitely think of myself more independently, obviously. I guess I'm just more free to be who I want to be, and make my own decisions" (Claire).

"I feel more independent. When I look at myself I feel way more confident. I know I feel confident and I know that I can do things" (Hannah).

"I kind of picked a college so that I would be away from home. I felt like I needed to establish myself a little bit away from my family because I could've gone to a community college and just stayed at home but I did not want to do that. I am kind of an independent, stubborn person" (Joanna).

"I think that moving out of the house and being more independent has helped me to understand, 'Oh, I think this is generally what I prefer,' 'This is how my personality works.' As I've been more on my own and not having my parents to determine my school schedule, I've learned to balance my social life more and learned more about my personality, what makes me tired and things like that. I've learned how to handle my time really well. I feel like I've really learned a healthy balance and I think having a job has helped with that" (Lydia).

"I enjoy being able to kind of be in charge of myself" (Mary).

"I feel like this is exactly where God wants me to be. He presents us with challenges and trials that help us. This is a great college. It has a good Christian foundation. I'm learning exactly what God wants me to learn, so it's good. I found out who I am in Christ, I found out who I was and accepted him for myself. You can think for yourself" (Savannah).

"I am a very independent human being and [my family knows] that about me. When I attended college, school started at the end of September and I told my parents, 'Look, I'm not coming and I don't want you to visit me. Until [my sibling's birthday, when I plan to come home] I want to be able to form my life at college.' My parents really pushed me to be independent and to explore the world" (Virginia).

Maturity. This group of participants seemed unusually mature for their age.

"That was definitely my way, to be like logical ... I think maybe [other students] they've had less experience. I think their lives, also I feel like this is the first time a lot of them have been given adult responsibilities, where it's not ... true for me. My parents had a philosophy that we were young adults when we turned twelve. That's when they started giving us input into decisions about our lives and family decisions. [Other students] seem a little bit unprepared for being an adult by themselves. I was eighteen when I was living at home. I had already done that a little bit, like being in charge of my own medical decisions" (Joanna).

"I feel like I was really well-equipped to handle everything. I knew how to deal" (Hannah).

"I do think I take it more seriously than other kids. Some of my professors have told me I'm such an old soul. I don't mind it and I'm really glad for that" (Lydia).

"I guess ... in college, people really expect you to be mature and to work hard, the teachers at least. But I feel that was the same when I was learning at home. I feel like it's similar [to home] because they expect us to work hard and be mature about it" (Mary).

Self-Validation. One thing that stood out in the women interviewed was a strong sense of self. Many of them pointed out that they are very comfortable with who they are and aren't swayed by a need to please others. They mentioned learning for the sake of learning, not to make others happy.

"I get to choose and specialize a bit more, which is really nice to be able to take the things I want to be studying. I like kind of working at my own pace. That's really helped in terms of being able to manage my own schedule. I [talk to my professors] a lot .... I go and ask them questions and use them to learn more stuff that I'm interested in" (Chloe).

"My mom was always very explicit about 'I don't really care who you want to be as long as you actually work to be that person. I think working had a lot to do with that ... I [learned] how to present myself in a space that was professional and a space that was outside my parents' authority, and people expected me to have an idea of who I was. I think also I wasn't pressured to grow up as fast, so I didn't come up with a premature adult idea of myself. It's been a bit more organic development and I think education and pursuing knowledge and pursuing my interests is a big part of who I am" (Emma).

"I just kind of [relied] on myself. I really knew who I was beforehand, so it helps me to move on. Kind of like, I knew who I was dealing with" (Hannah).

"I have learned from a Christian perspective and I don't have as much peer pressure as I'm sure I would have had in high school. I can think of teachings with a critical eye and decide for myself if what I'm hearing is true or not because of God's spirit in me. I don't worry if I'm in the popular group. There are cliques here at college, but I don't worry if I'm in the popular group just because as a Christian that doesn't really matter. You can think for yourself" (Savannah).

"There wasn't this public school atmosphere of peer pressure. Homeschooling had given me a very firm basis who I knew that I was outside of any outside influences in high school. Homeschooling allowed me to figure out who I was outside of peer pressure. I could just be whoever I wanted to be without having to fit in to certain cliques or make friends in certain ways. So I didn't have the typical identity crisis ... which was nice. My goal that I made for myself in college was to be unapologetic for who I was. Be the kind of person where people are like, yeah, she just is. I could just ... be whoever I wanted to be and make my own circle of people around me who were attracted to [me as I am] instead of trying to fit into a circle of people" (Virginia).

Additional Findings

One participant mentioned an area that was meaningful to her. She was raised in a family that did not value education for women and as a result of her homeschooling experience, lived in a culture that validated her parents' beliefs without allowing her to deviate from the path that had been laid out for her or even know people who felt

differently about education. I decided to include these experiences in my report of findings, as she feels strongly regarding this subject and has mentioned other women whose families' ideologies limited their children's choices. I also included comments from Joanna, who touches on the same issue.

"I was brought up ... pretty on a conservative level. In the church that my parents were involved with, having or giving girls higher education or being involved in extracurricular activities was really discouraged and not allowed. So, I would say my younger years of homeschooling went fairly well, but then as I got older, like through the high school years, it was really not as good an experience for me just because I wasn't allowed to kind of explore more avenues with either higher education or other pursuits. It was primarily girls. They did discourage boys from going to college, too, and kind of just more of like an entrepreneurship kind of model. I think it was the conviction that my parents had and they believe that it was the only biblical way to educate their children. I think one thing I wished is that I would have had more opportunity to interact more with people my own age as I was growing up, people outside of homeschooling. I know for some other girls or just people I've heard about that were homeschooled like me it's been a really difficult transition. So I'm really thankful that, kind or raising awareness…on these difficulties and just to see in fairness because a lot of girls like myself growing up we weren't allowed to go to college to get higher education. So for me, it's a really important topic that's why I kind of popped on it right away. This is really new" (Amelia).

"I guess maybe all the homeschooled kids who are now in college or about to enter college that I have talked to, have at least had some degree of social difficulty in terms of being—and some of them are very vehement about not liking homeschooling because of the social limitations in your community. You're not interacting very much beyond the people that your parents approved for you. So I think that in my experience and my friends' experience that is fairly wide spread. Academically, too, I think I've been lucky. Comparing notes with a lot of my other friends, I think my family and my mom prioritized academics. She evaluates and looks for the right opportunities. That's ... not common amongst ... my friends' moms because to them homeschooling is more of an ideology. And so in terms of their transition to college, they're not always academically prepared because their families were not concerned so much with academics but more with staying in the right community and protecting themselves from worldly influences and such things. In terms of my relationship with my parents ... I don't think anything abusive occurred ... I've heard stories of abuse from homeschooling parents and I'm am kind of, 'Wow, my parents were actually reasonable'" (Joanna).

Composite Description

The research questions for this study are 1) What are the experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new romantic relationships and friendships and individuate from their families as they enter the launching phase and transition to college? 2) How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school believe their homeschool experience influenced them socially, academically, and in terms of family relationships as they entered the launching

phase and transitioned to college? 3) What differences, if any, do women who were

homeschooled perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled?

Moustakas (1994) suggests that researchers develop a composite description, with

a goal of understanding how the group of participants experienced each theme. This

composite description will describe the themes of the homeschool (with subthemes of

reasons behind homeschooling, academics in homeschooling, and relationship with the

family), the transition to college (with subthemes of exposure to different opinions,

college academics, relationships with college professors and self-directed learners), social

issues (with subthemes of socialization during homeschooling, socialization in college,

choosing fewer and better friends, comfort, multiage relationships, introversion and

extroversion, romantic relationships, the social benefits of homeschooling, stereotypes of

homeschoolers, and "I come from a different culture"), and identity (with subthemes of

being contemplative, independent, mature and being self-validating).

While the parents of participants in this study homeschooled for their own unique

set of reasons, most of them included a religious or protective purpose in their reasons.

Some wanted to protect their children from worldly influences and preferred that their

children know primarily people of their own religion. Other parents cited an interest in

curriculum individualization and flexibility in their schedule. Academically, most of the

participants followed a more traditional curriculum with some choice as to topics

covered. The curriculum was tailored to meet the academic needs of the homeschoolers,

allowing them to work at their own level. Participants felt they were prepared

academically for college (several felt more advanced than their peers), although there

were holes in their education in the area of technology. Examples include needing extra help with writing upon entering college and a deficit in lab science. Participants commented on having taught themselves while being homeschooled, and they considered this a boon to them in college because they became self-directed learners when in the homeschool.

Participants reported feeling closer to their families than they believed their traditionally schooled counterparts were. This was likely due to the number of hours spent together. While most of them missed their family upon going to college (some acutely), they were also happy to be gaining independence and space. They enjoyed being out on their own and taking responsibility for themselves. Some chose a different path politically and/or religiously. One participant's parents were unhappy regarding her choosing to go to college and cut off relations with her, fearing that she would be a worldly influence on her brothers and sisters.

The participants felt that they made a successful transition to college. While they mentioned originally having difficulties leaving their family, they found friendships and made their own niches in the college community. They mentioned college being one of the first places in which they were exposed to different opinions. The idea that people with different views had valid points of view was a bit surprising. For example, they had never been exposed to the concept of transgendered people or homosexual or bisexual people, and again this was surprising. They seemed to be willing to accept experiences and opinions that were different than their own.

College academics have not been difficult for the majority of the respondents—indeed, many of them excelled in this environment. They are self-directed learners who take responsibility. The participants are surprised by the degree to which their peers need direction and leading by their professors, and they attribute their sense of responsibility and understanding of academic expectations to homeschooling. The participants felt more comfortable talking to their professors than they believed their peers to be. These women saw professors as friends.

These are highly motivated students. They take their learning personally and seriously. As self-directed learners in their younger years, they took responsibility for their learning and this responsibility seems to follow through to their college years. They feel as though it is expected that they behave with maturity.

While the respondents mentioned that they thought they were introverts, they have no problems making the friends they want. They were more interested in having true friends and were willing to give up on the idea of popularity in order to spend their time cultivating fewer, deeper friendships. Some consider themselves shy, but aren't concerned regarding the number of friends they have.

When starting college, the participants had to go outside of their comfort zones to make friends. While homeschooling, they felt comfortable with their friends and family. College required a shift outside of their comfort zones, forcing them to be more outgoing and take risks to make friends. Participants commented that they forced themselves to do it and are happy as a result. Few of the participants had developed romantic relationships.

The participants mentioned the importance of having friends of all ages as they grew up. They felt that this was socially beneficial, and feel uncomfortable being solely with same-age peers in college. In some ways, they feel that there is a lack of maturity among their peers. The participants crave being around children and more mature people as well. For them, college feels like a place unlike the real world.

The participants mentioned that, unlike the assumption that there are social detriments to homeschooling, they felt homeschooling had benefited them socially. They felt they valued their friendships more deeply and put more time and effort into cultivating and caring for their friendships. They felt that their lack of friend time in high school made them more willing to take social risks in college.

The participants had to face stereotypes of homeschoolers. For some, the stereotyping felt excessive. Stereotypes that the participants heard include homeschoolers being super smart and nerdy, homeschoolers being religiously extreme, homeschoolers dressing oddly, homeschoolers having no social skills, homeschoolers only having siblings as friends, and homeschoolers having no experience with technology. The participants were teased regarding their status as homeschoolers.

One of these areas of teasing was their lack of pop-culture knowledge. It is an area of discomfort for many of them, as their parents didn't allow them access to pop culture. The homeschool culture meant that they didn't have friends from outside who could introduce them to popular music or television shows. The respondents mentioned they felt as though they were from an entirely different culture, and needed to be treated as such by their professors and classmates. As homeschoolers, they had no experience

with basic classroom culture, including syllabi. They reported feeling a lack of comfort with their outsider status in this area and a wish that their peers and professors would treat them with understanding and patience, as though they were someone from outside the culture.

This was a remarkable group of young women. They displayed an unusual amount of maturity and self-contemplation. They seemed honest and balanced in their responses to my questions, sharing both the benefits and the detriments to their homeschooling experiences. They showed extraordinary strength, looking to themselves or to God for validation instead of looking to gain peer or family acceptance. I was honored to meet all of the women who participated in this study.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I communicated the findings of this phenomenological study on the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. I described the setting of the interviews, the demographic makeup of the participants, and the ways that data was collected and analyzed. I provided evidence of trustworthiness and gave the results of the research, along with many direct quotes from transcripts. I provided a composite description of the results. The research questions for this study were 1) What are the experiences of emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school as they form new romantic relationships and friendships and individuate from their families as they enter the launching phase and transition to college? 2) How do emerging adult college women who were homeschooled in high school believe their homeschool experience influenced them socially, academically, and in terms of family relationships

as they entered the launching phase and transitioned to college? And 3) What differences, if any, do women who were homeschooled perceive between themselves and women who were not homeschooled? In summary, the answers are as follows 1) With only a few exceptions, the women in this study felt capable of forming new romantic relationships and friendships and of individuating appropriately as they transitioned to college, 2) The women in this study felt on par socially with their traditionally schooled peers, they felt as or slightly more capable academically, and believed they were closer to their families than their traditionally schooled peers as they transitioned to college, and 3) While the women in this study believed they were more committed to their studies than their traditionally schooled peers and felt the sting of homeschooling stereotypes and teasing that centered on a lack of cultural knowledge, they believed that they weren't substantially different than their traditionally schooled peers. An interpretation of the findings will be found in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to summarize and discuss the findings that I presented in Chapter 4 regarding the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. The literature review in Chapter 2 showed a gap in the understanding of the college transition experiences of homeschooled students, particularly in the area of homeschooled women's transitions to college. Understanding this transition may help parents, teachers, college transition professionals and legislators to better plan for their homeschooled students. Between January and April, 2016, I conducted in-depth interviews with 11 participants regarding their college transition experiences. These lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours each. This phenomenological study produced a rich description of the women's experiences as they transitioned from their homeschool to college.

Participants for this study were recruited using criterion sampling. All participants were women between the ages of 18 and 25 years, were homeschooled throughout high school, were living at and enrolled in a four-year college, and were in their second- or third-year of college. The data analysis exposed four themes a) the homeschool, b) college transition, c) social issues, and d) identity. A full list of themes and subthemes is in Table 3 below.

Table 3

Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subtheme(s)	Subsubtheme(s)	Subsubsubtheme(s)
Homeschool			
	Reasons		
		Religious reasons	
		Protection	
		Individualization	
		Flexibility	
	Academics		
		Methods	
			Cooperatives
			Community college
			Online class
		Self-taught	
		Individualization	
		Mom and Dad	
	Family		
		Closer to the family	
		Needed space from family	
College transition			
	Different opinions		
	College academics		
	College professors		
	Self-directed learners		
Social issues			
	Socialization-homeschooling		
	Socialization in college		
	Fewer, better friends		
	Comfort		
	Multiage relationships		
	Introversion/extroversion		
	Romantic relationships		
	Social benefits-homeschooling		
	Stereotypes of homeschoolers		
	"I come from a different culture"		
Identity			
	Contemplative		
	Independent		

Maturity
Self-validating

The key findings for this study are that a) homeschooled women believe they are substantially similar to their traditionally schooled peers, and b) homeschooled women feel as though they were raised in a different culture, but believe that academically they are as or slightly more capable than their traditionally schooled peers, think they are more committed to their studies than their traditionally schooled peers, and feel that they are closer to their families than their traditionally schooled peers.

Interpretation of Findings

Given there is a clear gap in the literature regarding the college transition experiences of homeschooled women and the overall nascent nature of research on homeschooled students, research in this area is necessary in order to understand the effects of homeschooling. After I developed a textural-structural description of each participant's experiences as a homeschooler transitioning to college, a composite description of all results was completed. While each participant had unique personal traits and experiences transitioning to college, there were many similarities. An outline of the results was provided in Table 4, Themes and Subthemes.

Theme 1: The Homeschool

Although the focus of this study is the transition to college, the homeschool environment informs this transition. The reasons why parents choose to homeschool affect the choice of homeschooling methods and the social milieu of the homeschooling environment, which can lead to differences in the way a person transitions to college. The academics in homeschooling affect the ability to perform in college classes. The

relationship with family during homeschooling can also affect the success of the transition as a woman goes out into the world on her own.

Subtheme 1: Reasons behind the choice to homeschool. Ray (2005) described that homeschoolers have many different reasons behind their choice to homeschool, that homeschoolers choose to employ a variety of methods of homeschooling, and ways that their choice to homeschool affected the family dynamic. In many ways, this research supported his findings regarding the homeschool itself. The parents in this sample chose to homeschool for religious reasons, to protect their children, for academic individualization, and for flexibility in schedule.

Subsubtheme 1: Homeschooling for religious reasons. Many homeschooling parents make their homeschooling decision based on religious reasons (Apple, 2006; Harrison, 1996; Isenberg, 2007; Kunzman, 2010; Montes, 2006; Spiegler, 2010). As mentioned in the composite description, most of the parents in this study chose also to homeschool for religious reasons. All participants but one described their parents as either Christian or Catholic. Many of these parents saw homeschooling as an ideal way to instill their religious values in their children throughout their daily activities. "We wanted to learn from a Christian perspective and be built up in faith throughout our high school and earlier years" (Savannah). "I would be learning everything from a Christian standpoint and ... they would be able to include bible study, quiet time, that kind of thing into my school routine" (Mary). Others wanted to avoid the "worldly influences" of the outside world and to control the peers with which their children had contact. "I felt that they wanted [to avoid] a worldly influence ... while we were growing up" (Amelia). "[My

parents homeschooled] mainly so that they could be certain of what was being taught to their kids" (Claire). " ... my parents' initial decision was, I think ... partially based on the beliefs that they have about the world or the culture. Outfits, bands, labels, anything that is not Christian. They were very concerned about bringing their kids up around like-minded families" (Joanna). "[My parents] didn't agree with a lot of what's taught [in the local public school] and they also didn't like the environment at all" (Rose).

Subsubtheme 2: Homeschooling to protect. As mentioned in Chapter 2, many parents who homeschool want to protect their children from a variety of problems, including protecting them from violence (Arora, 2006; McDowell, 2000; Morton, 2010) and protecting them from racial or religious bias in schools (Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; Ray, 2005; Taylor, 2005). Research also shows homeschoolers are less likely make unhealthy decisions regarding alcohol (Thomson & Jang, 2016). While none of the participants in this study specifically mentioned protection from violence, unhealthy decisions, or biases as reasons why their parents chose to homeschool, they did mention other protective reasons, including a distrust of teachers, wanting to protect their children from a system that would change them, and wanting to protect their children from other children who might be hurtful.

Claire's parents wanted to protect her from teachers who might not have the same background and values as her parents. "They didn't want [teaching] being done by some third party where they weren't really certain of what was being put out there" (Claire). Hannah's parents agreed. "I know one reason was because my parents don't like the public school system. It was ... like indoctrination" (Hannah).

Emma's and Virginia's parents wanted to protect them from potentially negative social situations. "It was a better fit for me. I was pretty shy when I was younger" (Emma). "I didn't enjoy the school I was in ... I couldn't get along with the other girls at all. I was just sitting alone, really weird and introverted, and I got picked on a lot at school" (Virginia). Both of these women believe that the homeschool environment suited their social needs better than a traditional school, and both feel socially capable as adults.

Subsubtheme 3: Homeschooling for academic individualization. Some homeschooling parents are motivated by a need to individualize their children's education (Arora, 2006; Harrison, 1996; Kendall & Taylor, 2016; Lois, 2006; Patterson et al., 2007; Spiegler, 2010). This includes both parents whose children are struggling in school and those whose children need more challenge. Parents may feel that a traditional school doesn't have the resources to adequately meet the needs of their child and may believe that a one-on-one teaching situation will better benefit their child. Some parents also want to include a specific curriculum that isn't taught in the public schools (Ray, 2015).

Amelia, Chloe, Hannah and Joanna's parents all chose to homeschool in part because of this interest in academic individualization. "I've known people…and they've done really well and they actually are able to get their child in a place more advanced than maybe someone who was in public school" (Amelia). However, Amelia's own experiences didn't echo the promise of homeschooling. "I think [homeschooling] gave too much leeway for parents to do what they wanted and—which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can cause you not to understand the concept fully or you don't get a full

understanding of it. So, that's why I think ... [transitioning to college] has been a challenge for me just because I wasn't able to get that full amount of schooling that I should have or would have liked" (Amelia). "My parents originally did it—they liked the ... ability to adapt to each child's needs, interests, and pace of learning" (Chloe). "My mom homeschooled my brother because he was very ahead in some subjects and behind in others, so she did that so he could catch up. If he was left in school, he'd probably be put in a specialized class and she didn't want that" (Emma). "I think there were lots of reasons ... you could have a more well-rounded education. Like if we had a passion, we could really focus on that and not be forced to do testing, so we could actually be interested in something and not be a photocopy to learn to pass the test" (Hannah). "Well, my parent's initial decision was I think partially academically based ... [my parents] were afraid that [their children] would be overlooked at public schools ... I think for me in particular, my mom thought that I would get really bored ... I could read by the time I came to kindergarten" (Joanna).

Subsubtheme 4: Homeschooling for flexibility. Harrison (1996) and Webb (1999) found that some parents choose to homeschool in order to have a more flexible schedule. They enjoy being able to start the school day late, end it early and go on family vacations during the school year. In some cases, they also like to work the school day around their children's energy levels. Several participants mentioned that their parents chose to homeschool in part because of this interest in a more flexible schedule.

Chloe's parents were interested in flexibility for several reasons. "My parents ... liked the flexibility and the ability to adapt to each child's needs, interests, and pace of

learning. We did some traveling, like field trips to [national parks] and stuff" (Chloe).

Emma considered going to a traditional school in high school, but chose to continue

homeschooling in part to allow flexibility in her school hours. "I started working at the

local library ... I would have essentially had to give that up if I went to high school just

because of the hours available. I had [activities] that I would have had to give up if I had

high school things and then tried to join theater or sports or something" (Emma). Lydia's

parents wanted to homeschool both to have their children at home more and to allow for

curricular flexibility. "I was homeschooled in part because my mom did not like how

much I was gone from home when I was in private school ... another reason was she

wanted me to have more free time to pursue things like piano or any other type of hobby I

might have" (Lydia).

Subtheme 2: Academics in homeschooling. The academic choices that parents

make during homeschooling affect their child's ability to transition successfully to

college academics. Thoroughness of curriculum and academic rigor are important to

homeschooling parents (Clements, 2002). Many parents assess the efficacy of their

curriculum constantly, changing as necessary to meet the academic needs of each child

(Bannier, 2007; Ray, 2000). Homeschoolers use a variety of curricula (Clements, 2002),

but focus on reading as an avenue for learning (Anthony, 2009; Clements, 2002).

Subsubtheme 1: Methods. As mentioned in Chapter 2, many methods are

employed to teach homeschooled students, from Montessori teaching to Waldorf

teaching, to traditional teaching, cooperative learning, and unschooling (Davis, 2011;

Ray, 2000). All of the participants in this study learned using a more traditional approach,

although some parents chose to use a hybrid traditional and unschooling approach. Many of the parents also chose to employ homeschool cooperatives for their children, either hiring teachers to lead classes or having parent "specialists" teach classes for a larger group of homeschoolers. Other parents chose to put their children in community college classes when they were older. Some chose online courses to supplement their children's learning. Parents also used clubs and extracurricular classes to help homeschoolers to delve more deeply into topics of interest.

Subsubsubtheme 1: Cooperatives. Homeschool cooperatives were a popular teaching method with the group of homeschoolers I interviewed. As mentioned in Chapter 2, cooperatives offer classes and extracurricular activities for homeschoolers (Atkinson et al., 2007). Emma, Joanna, Mary, Rose, Savannah and Virginia described their experiences in cooperatives. Homeschooling parents with similar ideologies primarily taught these cooperatives. However, one participant mentioned that a hired teacher taught her cooperative.

Emma was in a homeschool cooperative for many years. Rather than offer regular, daily classes, they sponsored fairs to exhibit student learning. "Well, I don't know how precisely to say what it was like. I thought it was fun. It's sort of more from my first years of school through my last years of high school. When I was younger, we were part of a homeschool group comprised of Tri-State families ... We would meet sometimes annually, sometimes every few months, we would do project fairs which were basically science fairs but for all the disciplines. We would do literary potlucks, it was

basically presenting a book report then making a dish-thing on what we said. So there were a lot of really cool show projects that cross disciplines and that is something I like."

Joanna went to a couple of cooperatives. She took all of her classes from the teachers in the cooperatives, although her mother supervised her learning. "I was like one of a couple of kids in my grade and ... my family is one of them and a few other families and then occasional [other families]. It's like being part of a big sibling group. A lot of the curriculum…was pretty standard in homeschooling circles. Then, in seventh grade I moved to a ... more structured [co-op] ... it was kind of like a college preparatory school ... my mom really admired the homeschool moms who picked more of the actual instruction…she didn't think she was capable of doing that, especially not for all four of her kids. She was very aware of her limitations there and was trying to find other people to guide us along. She was guiding us too."

Mary and Rose went to parent-taught cooperatives. "I took a few different types [of classes]. In high school, tenth grade, I went to a co-op which was just other homeschooled families and the moms and dads of the family, whichever was the primary educator, they would teach a class that they felt confident in so that each parent was teaching something that they were an expert in. So, I took some classes from other parents and I took English in high school. I took some sciences in high school, I did choir in high school ... " (Mary) "We did belong to a homeschool group growing up. We did classes with that group, like art class, also speech class, but my mom taught that, so it was funny being in a co-op class that my mom taught." (Rose)

The range of offerings taught at her homeschool co-operative impressed Savannah. "[My homeschool co-op taught] grammar classes, science, reading, pretty much a broad range of classes like that." Virginia also took a variety of classes at several cooperatives. "Oh, let's see. At [Homeschool Cooperative A] I remember taking a music theory class, which didn't stick, and a Bible class, which went better, a grammar class, also not cake, and I did a musical theater production of 'Annie.' [At Homeschool Cooperative B] I did [American Sign Language] for a year ... and I took a playwriting class, and chess class ... I did classical literature class, and I think a religions class. I remember learning about Buddhism. At [Homeschool Cooperative C] I went there for a year and I did French and [did] two different P.E. classes." (Virginia)

Subsubsubtheme 2: Community college. Five participants took community college classes while in high school to supplement their homeschool learning. Through programs such as Running Start, high school students can take courses at their local community or junior college while in high school, earning college credit in conjunction with high school credit. Virginia was able to complete her entire A.A. degree while in high school, allowing her to begin college as a junior in terms of her college credits. "I did Running Start at [a local college]. [College] was a lot smoother because I had Running Start beforehand" (Virginia). Joanna, Lydia, and Mary took fewer classes at their local community or junior colleges. "I took a couple of community college classes at the very end of high school, which worked out fine" (Joanna). "In my senior year of high school, I went to a junior college that was a few miles away from my house, so I did dual credit. So I was able to get college credit and then also finish my high school credits" (Lydia).

"In my senior year, I did take some online dual credit and I went on campus for some of my credits" (Mary).

Subsubsubtheme 3: Clubs. Parents sometimes use clubs to augment their children's homeschooling (Gathercole, 2007; Ray, 2005). These can be a way to focus on an area of learning or interest. Five of the participants in this study learned in a club format, and two went into more depth about their experiences. "Well, speech and debate ... I didn't take a class. Well, I did take one class in eighth grade, but after that I did it competitively. So we were attending clubs, it wasn't structured like a class, and then we would go to tournaments and compete, and the clubs were all other homeschooling families because the league that we were in was exclusively for Christian homeschool families. So the debate club and the speech club met often, like weekly or maybe bi-weekly" (Joanna). "I was in ... a Spanish club. I did things that I feel were kind of similar to the things that people did in traditional schools" (Mary).

Subsubtheme 2: Self-teaching. As mentioned in Chapter 2, research found that women are more motivated than men on measures of intrinsic motivation (Morgan & Robinson, 2013). Seven of the women who participated in this study described a self-taught learning environment that required intrinsic motivation. Most participants believe that the self-taught nature of their homeschooling was beneficial. "When I had learned how to read, [learning] was pretty self-directed. [My mother] occasionally checked up to make sure I was doing it and doing it correctly" (Chloe). "I think I take my academics a little more seriously and more personally, I think, than normally schooled students do" (Claire). "I feel like I was almost teaching myself to a certain extent, but I enjoyed it

because it was a really big help, transitioning to college. I knew if I'd get an assignment, I knew how to finish it" (Hannah). "I was pretty much in charge of my education in a very similar way to college ... I actually really liked that because I'm a self-starter" (Joanna). "By high school, I was to the point where I was mainly able to kind of teach myself and they just kind of oversaw what I was learning ... I think that maybe I was required to read more and kind of figure things out maybe a little bit more for myself ... I had to, I guess, think more in-depth about some things because of the fact that I was responsible for what I was learning instead of someone else" (Mary). "I could teach myself very well and I'm pretty disciplined when it comes to doing school, whereas I noticed for people who didn't have that it's a little hard" (Rose). "I think I definitely had to teach myself a lot of the courses, but that was really helpful to me as a person because now when I come across a problem, I cannot move on until I've answered the problem. That's definitely helped from homeschooling" (Savannah).

While self-teaching helped in terms of developing intrinsic motivation, it was difficult for some, especially in the areas of math and science. This may be related to Phillips' (2010) findings that homeschoolers tend to avoid majoring in scientific fields, choosing liberal arts majors instead. "For the most part, once we reached a certain age and knew how to read, a lot of it was self-directed. [My mother] would have to make up the assignments and we would have to do it on our own ... she occasionally checked up to make sure I was doing it and doing it correctly ... it worked pretty well for most subjects. Math was definitely a struggle" (Chloe). "One of the main differences is that I did a lot of science experiments on my own, I guess. Like I would just read a description of the

experiment and maybe watch a video and try to do it on my own instead of having a teacher show me how to do it." (Mary) "I didn't have the opportunity to do every single lab, like in Biology ... when I got into high school in math and science, I would get supplementary materials. My mom wasn't necessarily as there, but I always had something to go back on" (Hannah). "Science [in college] is more understandable and consistent ... it's also more thorough ... I felt very lost in a lot of my high school science classes" (Joanna).

Subsubtheme 3: Individualization. As mentioned in Chapter 2, one of the main reasons why parents choose to homeschool is the interest in individualizing their child's curriculum (Dumas et al., 2010; Peterson, 2009). This is important to the parents of both gifted children and children with special needs (Arora, 2006; Duvall et al., 2004; Peterson, 2009). Indeed, homeschooling can help children with unique educational needs to make greater gains than they do in more traditional schools (O'Neill, 2013; Peterson, 2009). Claire, Chloe, and Emma mentioned their parents chose to use homeschooling as a means for academic individualization. "My parents ... like the ability to adapt to each child's needs, interests, and pace of learning" (Chloe) "My mom ... would let us learn at our own pace" (Claire). "My mom homeschooled my brother because he was very ahead in some subjects and behind in others, so she did that so he could catch up. If he was left in school, he'd probably be put in a specialized class and she didn't want that" (Emma).

Parents also enjoyed the ability to form schooling around each child's interests. "At home, a lot of [the assignments were] stuff I could choose ... like I got tired of book reports and I actually wrote a play for English" (Chloe). "I was able to pick my own

course of study" (Emma). "I guess we had more of a say when we were homeschooled" (Lydia). "We bounced back and forth basically in what we're doing any given year. A lot of it was mostly used at the time we were interested in it" (Virginia).

Subsubtheme 4: Mom and Dad. According to Ray (2005), mothers are the primary teachers of their homeschooled children, while fathers teach about 10% of the time. All of the participants in this research were taught by their mothers, but many of their fathers also took a role in their education. When their fathers taught them, the fathers taught primarily math and science. "Every once in a while [my father] would [take a role in my education]. It would either be to help me with some math or some science if my mom didn't understand, but mostly it was my mom" (Amelia). "I guess my mom would be primary, but it was almost split evenly between my mom and my dad ... my dad did all the math and the science" (Claire). "Sometimes my dad would take over our science lessons, but we were doing chemistry for a while so we had a lot of fun with that" (Emma). "My dad ... was usually the science teacher and the one who kind of oversaw experiments" (Mary). "[My dad] teaches science classes. Whenever my mom ran a homeschooling co-op out of our house, he would always teach the science classes. So he taught computer programming to me and some of my friends for a year ... and then he taught an Astronomy/Physics class the next year ... he absolutely loves science" (Virginia).

Subtheme 3: Relationship with the family. Parents frequently choose to homeschool in part because they want to maintain a close familial bond, because they want to allow for individualization, and because they want to give their children the

ability to pursue their own interests (Wyatt, 2008; Morton, 2010; Spiegler, 2010). These goals are in line with the goals of Attachment Parenting, a parenting philosophy that encourages giving children a solid, secure family experience from which they can explore the world confidently (Bowlby, 1988). Ray (2011) examined the connection between Attachment Parenting and homeschooling, showing that homeschooling provides an ideal nurturing environment from which children can confidently go forth. Most of the women in this study described a close familial bond that was formed largely because of homeschooling. "I was with my siblings 24/7, so we were pretty close growing up. I would say that I was fairly close with my parents for the most part as well [while I was homeschooling]" (Amelia). "I think we had a good relationship. I enjoyed having my mom and dad teach me" (Mary). However, not all of the relationships were trouble-free. "Admittedly, sometimes it was kind of hard ... we would have an argument about school and we would be upset with each other about school, which was kind of bad. But overall it was really good" (Rose).

Subsubtheme 1: Closer to the family. Arnett (2008) described young women as vacillating between wanting to be close to their families and craving independence. While the women in this study were no different than other women in their need for independence, they universally felt closer to their family during their homeschooling experience, and all but one (Amelia) continued to feel this strong family bond. "[My siblings and I] were pretty close growing up. I would say I was fairly close with my parents as well. Since I left, thought, the relationship has been really strained and basically broken because they don't respect [my decision to go to college], so it's a

different dynamic now. So, I haven't seen or spoken to my siblings in two years. So the

dynamic has changed a lot in a few years, that's for sure" (Amelia).

Many of the women interviewed elaborated on the closeness of relationships with

their parents. "As far as my parents, I think being homeschooled, I was able to have a

closer relationship with them while I was in high school and being homeschooled"

(Chloe). "With my mom, the way I described our relationship was the Gilmore Girls with

a bigger age gap. I think a lot of people don't get that because they either just don't have

the time together or because they're influenced by an idea that it's bad to be close to your

mom and you should be closer to your friends your own age, or it's typical to have fights

with your mom. I thought the opposite was natural" (Emma). "The people that I know

that were traditionally schooled ... I feel like I have a much better relationship with my

mom and dad. I see them as my friends that are always there for me and whenever I'm

into a huge issue, they're usually the first people that I will ask for advice. I really trust

them. They trust me. We're on really good terms. I really enjoy being with them, I feel a

really strong relationship with them ... I do think because I spent the first eighteen years

of my life at home with them, I think we just had a really strong [relationship], like we

had time to work on our relationship together" (Hannah). "My parents were very invested

in my learning and my being able to enjoy myself" (Mary). "And then my parents, too,

because they were actively involved in our schooling and just everyday life, in some

ways we got closer. We're a lot closer to our parents than I think most people are"

(Rose).

Several commented on their relationships with their brothers and sisters as well. "I feel like compared to anyone I would probably be pretty close to my family ... " (Joanna). "I'm really close to all of my younger siblings and really close to my parents and my family is really important to me ... I feel very close to them and I have a really good relationship with them" (Lydia). "I think that regarding my family, just from what I've seen, I think I might have a better relationship than a lot of other people and I guess that's just due to the fact that they invested in me a lot. I just got close from the fact that I was with my siblings a lot, we had similar interests, and we did a lot of things together growing up ... I feel like I have a really good relationship with all my family members" (Mary). "I'm definitely, especially with my siblings, I'm much closer than most people. My siblings and I, we did everything together. So we've just always been super-close and a lot of people are surprised. We would watch some other people and were like, 'Oh, my goodness, brothers and sisters are enemies,' but that wasn't for me" (Rose). "I think I definitely have a stronger relationship with my parents and sister because I grew up with them and I got to see them all day, and it was wonderful ... it was awesome" (Savannah).

Virginia commented on the lack of outside influences and the way they helped her family to become closer. "My [family] relationships are far better than, really, anybody ... outside of homeschooling ... we never had a reason to fight our parents…our parents had implied standards that we all just lived up to because we didn't have a reason not to. I think that it really helped us all have really great relationships with each other because there was no conflict being created by outside forces ... I always had a really good

relationship with my parents, especially to begin with. I never fought with my mom. I've never been grounded or really had any disciplinary measures against me at all."

Subsubtheme 2: Needed space from the family. Emerging adulthood is the end of the individuation process (Arnett & Tanner, 2006). During this time, children become independent of their parents. Kenyon and Koerner (2009) found that this separation can cause stress on the parent-child relationship as children figure out who they are separate from their parents. The women in this study were no different than most emerging adults. As they move toward adulthood, they need space from their parents to figure out who they are on their own. This space also helps them to forge a new, more adult relationship with their family. However, needing this space does not affect the affection they hold for their families. "The space kind of helped [the relationship with my family] a lot. The last few years at home were kind of me like wanting to get out of there. But now that I'm a couple of thousand miles away it's much easier to get along with them and I appreciate the time I have with them over Christmas and the summer a lot more" (Chloe). "I wanted to go somewhere away from home" (Claire). "In all honesty, I was getting frustrated with my dad. We're sort of healthier having space" (Emma). "I felt really ready to go. I was home, but I was ready to be a little bit more in control of my own life" (Hannah). "I'm kind of glad that I'm establishing myself a little bit ... I think I needed some space ... I love my family and I just, it's not like there's anything wrong so much as much as I just needed some space" (Joanna). "I feel like [college] was a really good transition for me, just to get out on my own and figure things out for myself ... I really do love my family. I think that I'm ready not to be living with my parents" (Mary).

Theme 2: The Transition to College

According to Drenovsky and Cohen (2012), homeschoolers have a better college experience than traditionally schooled students. However, the first year or so of college can be stressful as students uproot themselves from the life they know and embark upon a life of their own. This transition from living at home to college can lead to an increase in loneliness, stress, emotional problems and separation anxiety (Alipuria, 2007; Bernier and Larose, 1996; Goodwin, 2009, Santorelli, 2010, Secuban, 2011). By sophomore year, much of this stress eases as the college student moves toward solidifying his or her life away from family (Bernier and Larose, 1996; Santorelli, 2010, Secuban, 2011).

The social side of the transition was difficult for some participants, and easier for others. Claire found the academic transition easier than the social transition. "I think I found, with the two aspects, social and academic, I think the social has been a little harder to transition into. Academically, it hasn't really been an issue at all" (Claire). For Emma, Joanna and Rose, knowing people at their college in advance helped them to transition with more ease. "Here, one of my friends from [Homeschool Cooperative A] is here so people that she knows are now my friends and people I met during orientation. My roommate and I get along really well ... I have a good social network" (Emma). "In terms of like a social transition, it was, I think it was made easier ... [because of my] debate friends ... we met each other in high school either debating or just at tournaments, at various places. Several of them [came] to this school ... we all kind of know each other ... they kind of understood my background" (Joanna). "[My brother] introduced me to all his friends so I already knew some people on campus" (Rose).

Most of the participants in this research went to small colleges. Amelia, Rose and Savannah pointed out that being in a small school helped their transition to college. "It's definitely been a little bit of an adjustment. Basically, I'm going to a smaller campus, it was Christian, so it's been a little bit easier" (Amelia). It's actually been easier than I expected. I was pretty scared to go off to college ... If I went to a state school, like a large school, the transition would probably have been a little bit harder because I wouldn't have been able to find people with the same background and people who had the same interests. So I think that did help, coming to this school" (Rose). "I didn't know anyone back here. It's a small group which is really nice ... " (Savannah).

Lydia and Savannah mentioned the importance of having a college life that was similar to their life at home. "I would say my transition was really good, especially because I did dual credit when I was in high school. It wasn't this immediate high school to college culture shock type of thing" (Lydia). "It's a small group which is really nice because it kind of relates to the homeschool co-op which was nice, but the first year especially was rough, being away from [my family], but now it's getting better ... I think that the homeschooling experience I had was really beneficial and helpful in my transition. I think basically this college is like a Christian co-op. It was nice to get that same experience here as I did back in high school" (Savannah).

Subtheme 1: Exposure to different opinions. Homeschooled students tend to have less contact with people who have different worldviews (Anderson, 2007; Apple, 2007; Marzluf, 2009; Reich, 2002). This happens in part because some parents want to protect their child from the outside world and want to have a choice as to their children's

social circle (Smedley, 2005; Webb, 1999). Unfortunately, when children are exposed only to the people who their parents choose, they can become extreme in their viewpoints and suspicious of others (Apple, 2005; Apple, 2007; Lubienski, 2000; Reich, 2002). One researcher, however, found homeschoolers are more tolerant of differing political opinions (Cheng, 2014). College exposes students to different opinions. College students are encouraged to think for themselves and to question their worldview (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Reich (2002) believes that this contact with people with different opinions is key to being a part of a pluralistic society.

Several participants mentioned their parents sheltered them from other worldviews. "A lot of—all my other friends avoided college because they didn't want to have to deal with the liberal secular environment ... I was raised in a very conservative Christian homeschooling environment which shut out people who were different. I'm slowly beginning to realize that my life is very outside [my mother's] bubble" (Virginia). "I did notice that a lot of people who were homeschooled tend to be more sheltered, more on the innocent side" (Hannah). " ... [Some homeschoolers] are very vehement about not liking homeschooling because of the social limitations in your community. You're not interacting very much beyond the people that your parents approved for you ... [my] family was not concerned so much with academics but [with] staying in the right community and protecting themselves from worldly influences and such things" (Joanna).

Amelia, Joanna, Lydia and Rose all talked about college opening a new world for them. "Once I got to school, I heard a lot of different perspectives ... which was new. We

have a lot of students here with different ideas ... I hadn't really thought about it before. They have legitimate arguments to make" (Rose). "There were kids from all over the place, people of different nationalities who speak different languages" (Lydia). "Definitely my view on theology has changed a bit and things like that. I would say those have been taught a bit differently than what I was taught while being homeschooled" (Amelia). "I have met different people here. [College] has just kind of opened my world a little bit although it's kind of weird that, for example, gay people existed but I just never met one until a couple of days ago actually" (Joanna).

Subtheme 2: College academics. Homeschooled students do well on measures of potential college success such as the ACT and the SAT (Dumas et al., 2010; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2004; Homeschool Legal Defense Association, 2009; Jones, 2010; Ray, 2000; Ray, 2004; Snyder, 2013). Once in college, they earn better grade point averages, are more committed to getting their degrees, exhibit higher college retention rates, and merit higher ratings from their professors than their traditionally schooled peers (Alvord, 2003; Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012; Golden, 2000; Jones & Gloeckner, 2004a; Klicka, 2003; Kranzow, 2005; Kranzow, 2013; Ray, 2004; Saunders, 2006). Homeschooled students credit their academic success to their homeschooling experience (Duggan, 2010).

The women in this study felt academically prepared for college. "Academically, I was really well-prepared for college. I came in [having taken] seven AP exams. I had taken two college classes as well. I did not find the academic transition hard at all" (Joanna). "My mom and the other parents in our group worked a lot during the last few

years to format our classes the way college classes work. They really did give us tools for independent thinking and time management which I needed the pressure of" (Emma). "I feel like I'm on the same plane with [other students] ... I don't really feel different in the way I was educated" (Hannah). "The material ... it is not difficult ... I haven't really hit anything that I've just been like 'Oh my gosh, I just don't really get that.' (Joanna). "[My college schoolwork] ... it's not anything that I'm put out by" (Mary). "I don't want this to sound arrogant, but I feel like I have a leg up on [other students]. I feel like I have learned the things of the world from a clearer perspective ... " (Savannah). "I was a little academically advanced ... that's kind of remarkable since I dropped out of [elementary] school because I was behind" (Virginia).

Several of the participants in this study felt their homeschool focused more on understanding concepts, while college classes focused more upon grades and assessments. " ... my mom never really worried about [having standards]. As long as we understood the concept, we were good" (Amelia). "[At college] there's a lot more focus on grades" (Chloe). "I think there may be more of an emphasis on the tests and assignments ... there is more of an emphasis on the assignments rather than just the material, I guess" (Claire). "When I was a freshman and sophomore in college, the teaching was very traditional, when you take notes in class, and take your quizzes and tests" (Lydia).

Other studies conclude that homeschoolers feel academically behind their traditionally schooled peers in some areas. Jones (2010) and Kranzow (2013) found homeschooled students are less confident participating in class than traditionally schooled

students. In contrast with these results, most of the participants in this study felt comfortable talking in class. "I kind of feel the same with anyone else. [We have] equal stuff to say in class ... I feel like people who don't talk in class, it has nothing to do with whether they're homeschooled or not homeschooled" (Hannah). "Homeschooling enabled me to talk more without feeling uncomfortable so I can ask questions in class without feeling uncomfortable at all" (Savannah). "It seems like I'm more willing to speak up in class, which seemed kind of odd to me when I noticed it. I think I jump in more" (Chloe). Only one participant mentioned that she preferred not to talk in class. "I would say I don't like talking in class. I don't know if that's just my personality or if it is because I was homeschooled, but I do like talking to my professors, but that's something I prefer to do before or after class or over lunch or something. I'm not a huge fan of talking in class. That's something that I've had to work on throughout college and maybe that was because I never was in a huge classroom" (Lydia).

Jones (2010) and Kranzow (2013) also found that college writing was more difficult for homeschooled students. Several of the participants in this study struggled with their writing. "I wasn't familiar with ... learning to write papers in a certain way ... it was kind of a whole new world for me" (Amelia). "There is more writing here" (Joanna). "I've had to get used to taking information and then analyzing it and being able to write about it, just my thoughts, which I didn't have to do as much before. I just got information and I didn't have to say it again in my own words and show that I understood it" (Rose).

As mentioned in the individualization section of this chapter, many of the students had curricular choice while they homeschooled. Virginia and Lydia, in particular, enjoyed having choice over their curriculum and assessment. Sheffer (1995) mentioned the importance of homeschooled girls having choice over their curriculum. Unfortunately, in college these students did not have the same choice. "I guess we had more of a say when we were homeschooled ... we were in a smaller setting, so there was time to hear back from students. I missed that part when I came to college" (Lydia).

One participant mentioned the difficulty of working on group projects. "I hadn't really had to work on group projects. A lot of times here at school, we have to work in groups. It's very annoying because people don't always do what they're supposed to do and then my grade is hurt because people didn't turn in the assignment ... I had always worked independently and that was great and I could do what I needed to do ... group projects and all, that was a whole new dynamic" (Rose).

Subtheme 3: Relationships with college professors. Creating fulfilling relationships is important to women making the transition to college, especially relationships with roommates and professors (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011) Students who put effort into forming new friendships and into forming relationships with their professors are more likely to have a successful transition to college (Reio et al., 2009). Eight of the participants in this study mentioned feeling more capable of forming relationships with professors than their peers seemed to be. They attributed this to homeschooling. Many of them had taken classes in cooperatives, where there is a very small student-to-teacher ratio. They also attributed their good relationships with

professors to working with people of all ages, rather than associating solely with same-age peers.

Several participants mentioned the importance of learning in small, intimate communities. They felt this offered them more direct access to teachers who would listen to them. " ... I'm more comfortable talking to professors and being able to develop a friendship with them…that might be the result of homeschooling just because I'm used to being taught by different adults in a small setting" (Lydia). "I'm not intimidated by my college professors at all. My teachers at home, my mom and my co-op teachers were easily accessible, easily available, I could just go up and talk to them and that kind of carried on in college. Homeschooling enabled me to talk more without feeling uncomfortable so I can ask questions in class without feeling uncomfortable at all" (Savannah).

Joanna and Virginia were used to being in an intimate setting in which the teachers cared for them and were willing to work with them. "Well ... I'm used to kind of being a center of attention in the classroom. I kind of just expect them to talk to me. It's a little bit interesting, though, because I'm used to being able to negotiate over exams, essays and so on. That's kind of weird, having that just be like the final say ... It's not something that I've ever overly complained about, but it's something that I've sort of had to bring up sometimes and my professors kind of look at me and like, 'What are you saying?' (Joanna). "I think the hardest part for me has been having to deal with bureaucracy. I think one of the things I'm learning is that I don't have a one-on-one

educator anymore and that people don't—aren't going to care about [me] unless I make them care about me" (Virginia).

Amelia felt that working with people from different age groups helped her to form better relationships with her college professors. "I would say that would be another thing that worked out well for me was ... learning how to talk with a lot of different age groups ... especially like with my professors or other teachers. It's been really easy for me to talk with them and meet with them on a regular basis. It's been a really positive experience just because ... having a lot of interaction with adults in more mature conversation ... I've been able to talk with them a lot easier than a lot of my other peers here at college and they're often intimidated by going to the professor ... they have to have a lot of coaching or encouraging before they will actually go up and talk to them ... that's been really helpful actually."

Hannah had a close relationship with one teacher in high school. This teacher helped her to understand the teacher-student dynamic and how to work with adults. "In high school ... I had a really amazing English teacher. Her goal was to teach us how to write English so that we could be successful at a college level. She also gave us a ton of tips on how to approach our professors. It's been good for me coming here because I feel like I know how to meet [professors]. I know how to approach them and talk to them, even if they're so much intellectually above me ... I don't feel like [homeschooling] hindered me at all. I had a really good transition."

Mary felt her parents taught her the skills needed to deal respectfully with professors while making sure that her needs were met. "I think that homeschooling, well,

in my case at least, my parents taught us to respect authorities and communicate when we need help, so I think that helped me when I got to college because I already went in knowing that I was going to respect them as professors and at the same time knew when to ask for help and when to just take initiative." Rose was also taught to treat adults with respect, and as a result she struggled with the student-professor relationship her freshman year. "It was actually really, really strange at first. I hadn't really had many other teachers. The ones I did have were teachers through the internet, so I didn't interact at all with them face-to-face. I guess to me, professors were big, scary, distant people ... so a lot of freshman year I spent kind of standoffish. I'd see teachers in the hall and they'd smile and greet you by name, and I'm like, 'Oh, my goodness.' Professors here really like to get to know people on a personal basis and they're really interested in their lives outside of the classroom. At first it was pretty intimidating, but I tried to be intentional this year about talking to professors about things that aren't just school, making the most of opportunities ... rather than ... walking past as quickly as possible. It was hard at first because I didn't really know how to talk to these people and I wasn't sure if I was supposed to treat them as equals or if there was a student/teacher barrier between you. It was difficult to figure that out at first. That was one of the hardest things about school, figuring out how to interact with professors."

Subtheme 4: Self-directed learners. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, college women who are self-motivated make a more successful transition to college (Wallpe, 2010). Many of the women in this study mentioned they took their learning seriously and personally. They are self-directed learners who wanted to learn and to succeed at school.

Some of them credit their self-motivation to the independent nature of homeschooling. As these women got older and learned to read, they were asked to do increasing amounts of study on their own. Anthony (2009) and Clements (2002) found that this is not an unusual experience for homeschoolers. In homeschooling, reading is heavily employed throughout the curriculum as it encourages independence in students and allows parents to work with other children. Many of the participants in this study found the focus on reading and self-motivation to be of great benefit as they transitioned to college.

Chloe, Claire, Emma, Lydia, Mary, Rose and Savannah all mentioned their personal investment in being first-rate students. "I think maybe I take my academics a little more seriously and more personally, I think, than normally schooled students do. In my experience, [homeschooling] forced me to be a little more self-motivated, instead of doing my assignments with a class" (Claire). "I do think I take [college academics] more seriously than some kids, for sure" (Lydia). "I had to ... think more in-depth about some things because of the fact that I was responsible for what I was learning instead of someone else" (Mary). "I have to eliminate some people time to make sure I'm getting [my studies] in" (Rose). "I go and ask [professors] questions and use them to learn more stuff that I'm interested in" (Chloe). "I was able to pick my own course of study and think about the big picture" (Emma).

Participants also mentioned having a strong work ethic in part because of their homeschooling experience. "I think one of the great things about being homeschooled was that I developed a good work ethic, or just the desire to…study hard. So, that has definitely helped me with transitioning to classes and homework" (Amelia). "I had the

opportunity to work and understand that that was a thing you have to do" (Emma). "In college, people really expect you to be mature and to work hard ... but I feel this was the same when I was learning at home" (Mary).

Several participants also pointed out the resourcefulness they gained while in homeschool and how it translated to college work. They learned how to find outside resources and also learned to rely on their own strengths. "A lot of people will study the Powerpoints [that our professors provide], but I like to make my own tests and take them a few times" (Chloe). "Transitioning to college, I knew if I'd get an assignment, I knew how to finish it and if I didn't know the answers, I knew how to look them up" (Hannah). "I was required to read more and kind of figure things out maybe a little more for myself. I had to ... think more in-depth about some things because of the fact that I was responsible for what I was learning instead of someone else ... I already came in knowing how to study for myself" (Mary). "Compared to traditionally schooled people, I think I'm a little bit more alert in classes because I do have to learn these things on my own" (Savannah).

Theme 3: Social Issues

As mentioned in Chapter 2, there is a widespread concern that homeschooled students aren't socialized normally in a school setting. Most of the participants in this study felt as though they were socially "normal." "When approached, I am very socially normal, I guess. In conversation ... I've actually gotten the comment many times when I do tell people that I was homeschooled they are often very surprised. So I think socially I'm similar to them" (Claire). "A lot of people have said that they wouldn't have guessed

I was homeschooled because I love talking to people and getting to know people and feel very comfortable in conversations, so I would say I'm similar in that way. Most people have told me, 'Oh, I thought you went to public school,' or something like that, or 'I thought you grew up in a normal school.' I've had a lot of people tell me that, which I'm kind of glad ... I would really much thank my mom for that because she ensured that we were with people three to four days a week" (Lydia). "I think that for the most part [transitioning to college] wasn't very different for me. I was still able to make friends. I was still able to be involved on campus and find a job and that kind of stuff" (Mary).

Several participants mentioned the importance of friendships because of their homeschooling environment. For them, homeschooling equated to fewer friends and less time with their friends. "Back home ... I deal with a pretty small pool of people who were my group of friends. I wasn't too motivated to make new friends. Then I come here and I don't know anyone and I'm all, 'Okay, I need to make new friends'" (Chloe). "[Homeschooling] taught me, for one, to appreciate when I did have the chance to be with people. Now I always try to make sure that I dedicate a fair amount of time to talking with friends because I didn't have as much time to do that growing up. When I was with my friends I had to make the most of it. A lot of it has been, I really value the time that I have with friends ... but it also, now that I see people it's kind of like, 'Wow, I really don't know what to do with you. I see you all the time'" (Rose).

Subtheme 1: Socialization during homeschooling. While homeschoolers are socialized differently as they do not interact solely with same-age peers, several measures show that homeschoolers have similar social skills and equal numbers of friends as

traditionally schooled students do (Dumas et al., 2010; Reavis & Zakriski, 2005; Saunders, 2006). The homeschoolers in this study met friends through extracurricular activities, through social and academic homeschool groups (including homeschool cooperatives), and through church. As mentioned above, most of them seemed to feel as socially capable as their traditionally schooled peers, and indeed felt that there were some social benefits to homeschooling (see "Social Benefits of Homeschooling" section that follows).

Extracurricular activities such as drama, choir, band, and athletic teams seemed to be a large part of socializing for many participants in this study. "I did a homeschool band when I was thirteen. I actually auditioned for one of their plays and got the lead ... then I started doing community performances and I did four or five of them in high school. Soccer, I played until I was about fifteen and then I coached four seasons" (Chloe). "Although [socializing] was a struggle at first, I think I did fine with it because I did have those extracurricular activities where I was able to make friends" (Claire). "I did a lot of music ... my family did more music and dancing and the athletics and things. Up until high school, I swam competitively on a swim team. Once in high school, I switched the focus and played a lot of music. I'd meet [other kids] in classes. We'd hang out afterwards" (Hannah). "My mom had me in piano and violin lessons. I was in a dance class. We were in soccer for a long time, [from the time we] were about 6 to maybe about 12 ... it was a Christian league. The families went to Christian private schools or they were homeschooling in the area" (Joanna). " ... we would be with other people, doing ... extracurricular activities, volunteering at places" (Lydia). "[I went to] Spanish Club. And

I went to dances and football games. Most of them were with other homeschoolers in the area ... I feel like I still had social opportunities like others did. Like I was in athletics in high school, in choir ... I did things that I feel were kind of similar to the things that people do in traditional schools" (Mary).

Several of the participants in this study also mentioned the importance of homeschooling groups, including cooperatives, in their social lives. "There was a lot of park days that went on in my homeschooling group, there was a huge homeschooling group. We had park days once a week where we'd go hang out. That was fun" (Hannah). "The main one that we did was we had a weekly meeting with other homeschooled families. My closest friends were definitely from that ... we would meet once a week. It started out as a kind of socializing thing and ... one of the parents volunteered to teach volleyball so it became like a volleyball class every single week. That's how we got the social aspect of it, I guess" (Claire). "I would say our friend group was really big ... with all the co-ops, you would see friends probably on average at least three to four days a week" (Lydia).

Two of the participants brought up church as a major socializing element in their lives. "At church, there'd be a lot of things happening and there were also spontaneous social events, like we'd go to Magic Mountain, like once a year" (Hannah). "I went to a small church back when I was really young and then we moved to another church that was small and then it turned into a really huge church. I would say our friend group was really big" (Lydia).

Subtheme 2: Socialization in college. A typical concern regarding homeschoolers is the perception that homeschoolers lack regular social interaction and are less capable socially as a result (Gathercole, 2007). In fact, homeschooled students are as socially capable as traditionally schooled students (Bolle-Brummond & Wessel, 2012; Pool, 2010; Riley, 2015; Saunders, 2006). In addition, homeschooled students are similar in measures of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Alvord, 2003; Drenovsky & Cohen, 2012). The participants in this study generally found themselves to be as socially capable in college as their traditionally schooled counterparts. They found friends in the dorms, in extracurricular activities, through orientation, in classes, at work, and via general college cultures of inclusion.

"[Finding friends at school is] easy. It's really weird, how you ended up in the social group that you're in now. It just kind of happened. There's not really an intention to 'Oh, we're going to hang out with this group,' or 'We're going to do this together.' I've just had a really easy time finding people that I have common interests with because there's a huge focus here on community life. People take their meals together and the tutors will be there too, people will study together, we pray together ... we go hiking together, a lot of student plays, a lot of dances, because it's such a strong community life. It's pretty amazing, pretty neat. A lot of people just bond together over everything, so I have a lot of really well-rounded friendships" (Hannah). "I would say [it has been easy to find social groups]. I go places that are interesting to me and there's usually someone there that I can agree with. [In] my first few years in school ... I would go to like the Baptist Student Ministries or a school event, maybe like a football game or a dance"

(Mary). "It's such a small, close-knit community at school everybody gets to know each other so it wasn't as hard as I expected. They're really [friendly] and it's easy to find a friend group and find ways to get involved. So, overall it was a lot easier than I expected" (Rose).

Several of the participants mentioned that specific programs meant to create community within the college helped them to find friends. College orientation and dormitory programs in particular were places that these students looked to find friendships. "People I met during orientation [are now my friends]" (Emma). "I met a few people on orientation week and I've kind of stuck with them and become good friends" (Joanna). "I'm really glad that I live in the dorms because the RAs, they organize your halls, and see who has the same degree plan. There's weekly hall events, but I have a really amazing RA who organizes a lot of things, so I would say living in the dorms is really helpful" (Lydia). "I live in a residence hall so I've gotten to know a lot of people just by living in the same hall" (Chloe).

Other participants found friends in classes, in clubs and in their work-study jobs. ""I mostly rely on my classes to find people ... I found that just sticking to people who are all in the same classes together really helped to narrow it down and not be so overwhelmed with all the kids on campus" (Lydia). "I made friends at work. I work at school as a student worker. I made friends in my classes. I guess I met some friends just from incoming freshman events they had" (Mary). "I tried joining a choral group but I just had too much homework to stay in the group, so I didn't really have time to connect

with anyone ... I did contact people in the folk dance group because I like Irish tap dance"
(Emma).

A couple of the women had college friends who they knew prior to college. " ...
one of my friends from [Homeschool Group A] is here and so people that she knows are
now my friends" (Emma). "[People I knew before college], obviously I'm friends with
them ... I certainly have enough friends" (Joanna).

Subtheme 3: Fewer, better friends. Although prior research found
homeschoolers make as many friends and display similar social skills as traditionally
schooled students (Dumas et al., 2010; Reavis & Zakriski, 2005; Saunders, 2006), this
study found quite a few of the participants chose to have fewer, but better friends. Six
participants explained that they choose fewer friends in order to experience deeper
friendships. Some of these women said that they didn't care for popularity, instead
looking to themselves for validation (see sections on self-validation in Chapter 4 and
Chapter 5). "My friends like to have a large friend circle and know a lot of people, where
I tend to have two or three really close friends. Like a lot of acquaintances that I hang out
with, but in terms of close friendships, I only have a few" (Chloe). "I would say ... I feel
like a lot of public school people I've met have a harder time with knowing how to
develop a deep relationship with someone" (Amelia). "I think for me, being
homeschooled showed me that I can choose my friends…it has made me okay with not
having every single person in the world be my friend, I guess. More just having a smaller
group of friends" (Claire). "I kind of assembled ... a set of criteria for people that I'll be
friends with. I still want to meet more people because I do feel like I'm still a little

influenced by my circle of friends, and those people are mostly like me. But it's not like, I mean I feel like I have an adequate and sufficient, fulfilling number of friends, but I would also like to meet more people" (Joanna). "So I tend to spend the majority of my time with just a couple of people compared to going to lots of events where lots of people are ... I'm a little bit more particular about who I spend my time with" (Mary). "I am most likely more confident in who I am than everyone else because I don't want to be friends with everyone else" (Virginia).

Subtheme 4: Comfort. Four of the women who participated in this study mentioned the hindrance of needing comfort and pushing past comfort zones as they transitioned to college. This is a new finding in homeschool research. "Forming new friendships has been tough to me, especially when I was home. Like I didn't want to take that first step. Back home at least, I deal with a pretty small pool of people who were my group of friends. I wasn't too motivated to make new friends" (Chloe). "I was used to being in kind of a more comfortable social setting, [then] being thrown into a very uncomfortable [setting] with strangers pretty much was kind of hard at first" (Claire). "I'd say my transition was really smooth. I really like the way my parents sort of eased me into it instead of shocking me and throwing me into college" (Lydia). "I've had to learn to kind of put myself out there some. A little bit more than I did at home just because at home I was in that comfortable environment. Being in college, I've been in uncomfortable environments and so I've kind of had to learn to be okay with being uncomfortable and sometimes doing things that I wouldn't necessarily do ... I might not

have done as much when I was homeschooled just because I was comfortable a lot of the time" (Mary).

Subtheme 5: Multiage relationships.

Wyatt (2008) found that homeschooled students received a different kind of socialization than their traditionally schooled counterparts. Rather than socializing solely with same-age peers, they had interactions with people of all ages. Homeschoolers experience different socialization (Gathercole, 2007; Wyatt, 2008), but it is not necessarily worse than traditionally schooled students. Ray (2003) pointed out that this different form of socialization should lead to an alteration of assessments of socialization and psychological health to include homeschooled students. Five of the women in this study commented on socializing with people of all ages.

"I don't try to make friends just with people who are close in age to me. I like having friends who are a little bit older or a little bit younger" (Emma). "One thing I noticed that I did miss, being on campus ... I did miss having people around that were different ages and I noticed that sometimes ... I get a little tired of being around just people my age" (Lydia). "I think that my homeschool experience has been beneficial just because of the fact that I, as a homeschool student, had to communicate with peers, but also with people who are younger than me, people that are older than me, at different levels and in different stages of life. I feel like that helped me to ... be able to respect people based on when in life they are at" (Mary). "I think all the interaction that I had with adults while homeschooling has been very helpful ... it's been more my experience with just meeting and talking with adults. I didn't really have a lot of people when I was

growing up and so, most of that would be interacting with parents, either moms or dads, people that were older than me ... I think that's why it's hard for me to participate in a lot of young people's kind of conversation because for me it's really immature ... it doesn't make sense to me ... I've had to learn to adapt to that kind of talking. I would say when I had the opportunity I didn't spend a lot of time with my peers or people my own age, but I had a lot more interaction with adults" (Amelia). "One of the big things is that I haven't spent a lot of time around my [same-age] peers. At church I was with people of all ages. I was friends with the two-year-olds and I was friends with the elderly people and I was friends with everybody in-between. I wasn't ever at school, so I wasn't around people just my age" (Rose).

Subtheme 6: Introversion/extroversion. Introversion and extroversion came up as themes during the interviews. I asked no questions that about introversion and extroversion, so this was surprising. Four of the women (Claire, Lydia, Mary, Virginia) commented on being introverts. To be clear, many of these women felt as though they were socially normal and their natural tendency toward introversion did not stop them from making friends. "I'm more reserved initially and more hesitant to open up to people, but that can probably be attributed to my personality as much as to being homeschooled ... I think homeschooling may have made me more of a reserved person as opposed to people who were schooled regularly just because they were in a social setting pretty much the majority of their day, whereas by being at home it's not as much of a social setting so that's what I was used to ... so I think socially I'm similar to [people who weren't homeschooled] but I'm just not very outgoing whereas they would be more

outgoing. My personality is definitely more reserved" (Claire). "I definitely know I'm an introvert" (Lydia). "Personality-wise, I would say that I am a bit introverted" (Mary). "It becomes hard to separate who I am biologically and who I am because I was homeschooled. Why I don't go around actively seeking friendships is a) because I'm very introverted and b) because I was homeschooled. I would say that homeschooling has really only affected the fact that I don't really go out and party and I tend to just kind of keep to myself. I'm really shy and better at keeping up my grades" (Virginia).

Chloe, Rose and Savannah consider themselves both introverts and extroverts. "I'm a mix of introverted and extroverted. I like spending time with people and being out there, but I need a long time to recharge. I don't really take an interest in [study groups] ... I am really shy and prefer being on my own a lot of the time" (Chloe). "I've always considered myself to be pretty shy and reserved ... also I'm an extrovert, so when I interact with people I get happier…that might have been in part because when I was homeschooling ... I didn't get to have much people time, so people time makes me really happy" (Rose). "I feel like I'm an extrovert when I'm around people, but when I'm studying for a test, or when I just need a break, I go back to my room to watch a movie or read a book ... maybe I'm a little more introverted at college" (Savannah).

Amelia and Rose both behave in an extroverted manner. "I love being with people and I love interacting with people of different cultures. I guess I'm outgoing" (Amelia). Rose considers herself an introvert, but is outgoing. " ... when I was homeschooling, I didn't get to interact with people, so when I did get to interact with people, I'd be like 'Yes, people!' and I'd get really excited. I guess a lot of it was dependent on the

experiences that I had as far as interacting with people. A lot of it depended on, 'Oh, I didn't get to have much people time, so people time makes me really happy."

Subtheme 7: Romantic relationships. Emerging adults, in particular women, place a great deal of importance on starting and maintaining romantic relationships (Arnett, 2004). Few of the women in this study had been in romantic relationships, in part because of the perception of parental and community disapproval. "Romantic relationships? I haven't actually experienced [romantic relationships]. We were never allowed to date either. I was potentially going into a courtship ... it was definitely not encouraged at all. I would have liked the ability to be more free or more open, without having restrictions on dating by yourself, that that would have been available to me" (Amelia). "I haven't had the opportunity to put [forming romantic relationships] to the test yet" (Chloe). "I have a lot of trouble sitting in class next to my male classmates because the other women are going to judge me for it ... It's kind of like I carry over to college a lot of the social norms in the homeschooling community. One of the big ones has been accidental touch, which doesn't really happen ... like I'll bump into somebody and kind of flinch. It's been kind of an adjustment, I guess" (Joanna). "My parents, they're very old-fashioned that way. They didn't allow us to date. Their rule is basically if you're of marriageable age and you can get married then you're allowed to date. I would say that growing up, I thought it was bad to have a crush on a boy ... I would say now I am really grateful for that. I'd say that it keeps me from being foolish and getting into relationships too fast" (Lydia). "I'm 20 and I've never dated. That is because of the

homeschooling culture. I'm ... more conservative with my personal relationships"
(Virginia).

Three participants mentioned feeling as though their homeschooling had little
effect on their ability to form and maintain romantic relationships. "I can't think of any
effects that [homeschooling] has had, negative or positive, I guess" (Claire). "I definitely
did [worry about romantic relationships] when I was ... in high school. Now I feel pretty
normal in that area" (Lydia). "No, I don't think [homeschooling] has affected me"
(Mary). "I dated some guys in high school, like in co-op ... none of the guys that I dated
were really ... what I was looking for" (Savannah).

Subtheme 8: Social benefits of homeschooling. Some of the participants
mentioned ways that homeschooling benefited them socially. They said they are more
invested in friendships and believed they took the initiative in forming friendships more
than their peers did. "I feel like a lot of public school students have a harder time entering
into a friendship or not just as, you know, socially adaptable or oriented. That's my
personal experience" (Amelia). "I would definitely say that [my ability to take the first
step in forming friendships] has been partly influenced by being homeschooled ... I tend
to take the initiative more than [other students] do" (Chloe). "I would say our friend
group [while homeschooling] was really big. Again, with all the co-ops, you would see
friends probably on average at least three to four days a week ... we always had a huge
group of friends and I still do have a really tight group of friends, even though most of us
are off at college, we are still together ... we definitely had a very active social life"
(Lydia). "I always try to make sure that I dedicate a fair amount of time to talking to

friends because I didn't have as much time to do that growing up ... if I'm friends with you, I'm going to hang out with you and I'm going to spend time with you and actually pay attention to you" (Rose). "As a homeschooler, it's more difficult to make lasting friendships, so we work harder to get those relationships" (Savannah). "I created a friend group based off of other people who also, at their core, knew who they were" (Virginia).

Two participants mentioned a social detriment of homeschooling. "Being in a regular school, you're with your classmates long hours every single day, so you have that friendship with people and you don't even have to really work for it. It's just there. Being homeschooled, it came a little harder and was more of a struggle because the friends weren't automatic" (Claire). "I wasn't able to be with people all the time. I didn't go to school every day to be with my friends. I would see them once a week at church on Sunday, or I had a lot of friends I never even saw—we communicated through [our online class] all the time ... in some ways it was good because later on it helped me to have relationships, where I wasn't necessarily seeing people all the time" (Rose).

Subtheme 9: Stereotypes of homeschoolers. Homeschoolers are the brunt of several stereotypes. Homeschoolers are seen as lacking in social skills and there is a belief that they can't form and keep up friendships (Ray, 2001). Another stereotype is homeschoolers can't separate from their parents (Lois, 2006). Claire commented on how stereotypes affected her. "I think maybe I sometimes have a more negative view of myself because of being homeschooled because I know that other people have a negative bias of people who are homeschooled. So yeah, that can sometimes have a negative effect

because when they know that I'm homeschooled, they'll automatically have that negative bias towards me just because of that fact."

The most prevalent stereotype the participants in this study had heard was that homeschooled students hadn't received proper socialization. "I've seen a big change in people's perception of homeschooling ... when I was younger, usually there was the 'S' word, socialization, and people say 'You're homeschooled, you must not have friends'" (Emma). "One of the stereotypes I get is, 'Oh, your siblings are your best friends. You don't have any other friends besides your siblings.' When I went to college, people were like, 'What's homeschooling and is it weird?' I've been asked SO many times, 'Did you have any friends in high school?' and 'Did you have any friends growing up?' ... I'd say that we learned how to make our own friends really well, sometimes I think better than traditionally schooled kids. At first I didn't [feel confident handling stereotypes]. At first it did bother me ... now I'm totally comfortable handling them" (Lydia). "I did notice as a student coming into college there was a lot of questions and a lot of stereotype assumptions that people had placed on me because I was homeschooled. They would automatically assume that I was antisocial or that I was kind of weird ... they would make a stereotype assumption that I didn't know anything or know how to talk to people" (Mary).

A second stereotype participants mentioned is that homeschoolers are extremely smart. "My roommate and I were texting over the summer and I [told her I was homeschooled]. She told me later, 'I was absolutely terrified. I thought you were going to be some freaky genius and I didn't think I was going to be able to compare to you at all. I

thought we weren't going to get along because you were going to be infinitely smarter than I was and you were going to flaunt it or something'" (Virginia). A third stereotype is that homeschoolers are religious, which people believe affects their clothing choice and their ability to date. "In a way, I don't think [a boy who made stereotypes about homeschoolers] thought I was a homeschooler because I don't wear the long dresses and the hair. [Other stereotypes are] dress, act ... no dating ... a lot of non-homeschooled guys are like, 'I don't want to have to deal with that and all'" (Savannah). A last stereotype is that homeschoolers haven't had access to technology or to the modern world. "The technology one that has kind of been true, but it doesn't mean that we don't know how to handle it, or it's like a foreign object or anything. I'm really grateful that we didn't grow up around much technology" (Lydia).

Some of the participants commented they either had dealt with few stereotypes or that the practice of stereotyping homeschoolers is beginning to wane among college students. "It's not really too bad. I would say there's only about 10% of us that were homeschooled ... everyone I've met hasn't been like, 'Oh, you're a homeschooler.' So, that hasn't been too much of an issue, which has been really nice" (Amelia). "Occasionally I'd hear people [at Running Start] make jokes about homeschoolers, but hardly ever" (Chloe). "I don't think that [my acquaintances at college know] any of the stereotypes [that] homeschoolers must be religious or they must be super smart. Some people at [my college] don't even ask questions about it ... [we] just continue with the rest of our conversation" (Emma).

Subtheme 10: 'I come from a different culture." Homeschooled students lack some common experiences with traditionally schooled peers (Bolle, Wessel, and Mulvilhill, 2007; Bolle-Brummond and Wessel, 2012). Many of the participants in this research keenly felt the differences between themselves and traditionally schooled students, in particular in the area of cultural references. One participant even mentioned that it felt as though she came from an entirely different culture. "It's something that I've said a lot to friends that I've made since coming here, it's like I come from a different culture, you know, even though I still speak English" (Joanna).

Amelia and Hannah commented that homeschooling provided a sheltering environment that did not include seeing aspects of the world around them. "I would say ... I was pretty sheltered. Learning about different things or different meanings or music or what people do or don't do. That has been really eye opening and it's sometimes really hard for me to comprehend ... because there's a whole new world for me" (Amelia). "I did notice that a lot of people who were homeschooled tend to be more sheltered, more on the innocent side. They won't be aware of like a crude joke, or all the innuendos that people talk about, they're just not aware of those things, or they go over their heads" (Hannah).

Many participants mentioned that they hadn't been exposed to pop cultural references, including television, music and movies. "I think the hardest personal transition has been not knowing as much about pop culture. The other people here ... persist even though I've been here almost a year. My friends [are] like, 'It's surprising what you don't know ... you need to listen to this music.' I haven't really been able to

connect with too many people who went to a public school because the stuff that that they talk about ... I wasn't allowed to see Star Wars or Indiana Jones growing up ... " (Joanna). "We didn't grow up watching TV, so even small things that come up in conversations ... like 'What kind of TV shows do you follow?' and I'm like 'I don't know, I don't watch TV'' (Lydia). "I guess the main difference with me coming into college being homeschooled ... was just the fact that I maybe hadn't been exposed to as many outside secular movies and music and that was kind of the main thing that I noticed" (Mary). "People make like a SpongeBob reference and I'm like I don't understand what you just said" (Virginia).

Three of the women mentioned they had little experience with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community members. "[I knew] that for example, gay people existed but I just never met one until a couple of days ago actually" (Joanna). "I had my world extended and I've become friends with weird people. I'm far more accepting than many of my friends back home. I am willing to be friends with someone who I know to be bi, or transgender or gay ... " (Virginia). "There are a handful of people that just weren't really aware of the harsher side of life, like gay marriage or whatever, it was more foreign to them. Not the majority of the people, but some homeschooled people could potentially not be as aware of things" (Hannah).

Virginia made some particularly insightful comments regarding traversing two worlds—the more liberal environment at her state college and the conservative, insular environment of her homeschool and family world. "To have to transfer from homeschooling to university is that we live in two different worlds and that people from

neither world understand us anymore. [Homeschooling] has created a certain sense of displacement in my life because I don't identify with any of the cultural references of people in college ... [being with people who are different than my homeschool friends back home] doesn't faze me at all. That makes relationships very interesting for me because I do have these two different cultures in my mind and these two different ways of approaching situations. I kind of pick moment-by-moment which one I'm going to listen to" (Virginia).

Amelia made a request of people who aren't used to homeschoolers. She asked that people be considerate of the homeschool culture. "[I would ask others to be] patient ... it's been really nice for me. If I ask a dumb question ... it's really sincere, like I don't really know what to do and they think it's really funny, and I get it ... but yeah, just for people to realize" (Amelia).

Theme 4: Identity

Baxter Magolda (1999) saw the early adult period as a time of beginning self-authorship, when young adults begin to tell their own story, separate of their family of origin. Arnett (2000) agreed, and saw the late teens and early 20s as a time when emerging adults begin to explore their own identity (Arnett, 2000). The participants in this study expressed in their words the idea of forming an identity of their own. "I would say I definitely formed a lot of opinions while I was growing up and being homeschooled. I have to say I definitely changed a lot of it, ever since I left and have been on my own. Since I've left, I've actually been able to vocalize that more or be able to freely form my own opinions. I would have said I was really discouraged from having

a different opinion from my parents or different ... beliefs ... I've been able to really discover more of who I am and what I think" (Amelia). "I'm kind of out of the umbrella of the oldest [family name] girl and now it's like I'm Chloe. No one here is like 'She's the big sister.' It's been kind of nice to have my own identity a little more" (Chloe). "I've gotten to know myself better as a person. I know I can deal with problems without depending on anybody" (Hannah). "Growing up with love, that really contributed to who I am now and also ... homeschooling taught me to kind of learn things on my own and study for myself. That gave me confidence and spirit, I guess" (Savannah). "And so, kind of, the opposite [of the way I was raised] is because of my homeschooling and fighting against my homeschooling. I am a very open and accepting person ... that's very unique to me" (Virginia).

Most of the women in this study held four traits in common—they were contemplative, independent, mature for their age, and self-validating.

Subtheme 1: Contemplative. The participants showed a great deal of thought in their answers. They frequently presented both sides of an issue or chose not to rush to judgment, choosing instead a position of balance and perspective. "I was really well-equipped to handle everything ... Not that I knew everything that was going to come at me ... I know myself, I know how I react to things, so I was able to adapt really well to [college] ... Kind of like, I knew who I was dealing with" (Hannah). "I think that ... the things I have grown in the most of this year is not academically or mentally ... but it's emotionally and socially. And I'm learning to listen to people ... not that I, I'm not that great at it ... but I'm getting better at it. Getting better at ... kind of affirming or nurturing

... and not ashamed of it" (Joanna). "I would say that I learned more about myself when I was out of homeschooling. When I was homeschooling, my description of myself was still dependent on family and really close friends ... I think that moving out of the house and being more independent has helped me to understand, 'Oh, I think this is generally what I prefer,' 'This is how my personality works'" (Lydia). "I think I am, I guess ... analytical ... I feel like I look at every scenario and I think about what's about to happen, what one action will bring versus another" (Mary). "I generally don't describe myself the way other people describe me" (Rose).

Subtheme 2: Independent. The majority of participants in this study seemed to be securely attached (Bowlby, 1988) to their parents, coming from a protective base of love that allowed them to explore their new lives with confidence. They were relatively individuated (Kenyon & Koerner, 2009), balancing their individual needs with their family's needs. One of the participants was not in communication with her family, which would make her by definition pseudoautonomous (Kenyon & Koerner, 2009), but this was not by her choice. Unlike many pseudoautonomous emerging adults, she would have preferred to remain close to her family had they chose to separate from her because she wanted to get an education.

Six of the participants elaborated upon their independence. Amelia was forced to be on her own by her parents' choice, but seems to have come to peace with their decision. "I think [my identity] has solidified more. I think being ... in school now ... [I've] definitely become more determined and more focused on what I want to do, where I want to go and not have the worry or fear that I might not be able to do that ... I've also

definitely become much more outgoing to people from all different walks of life, where before, I would never really have ... met certain people or interacted with certain people ever." Claire both misses her family and relishes her independence. "At first, I was happy to be independent and be on my own and everything. There's definitely been some times when I've missed them. Overall, it has not been hard. I definitely think of myself more independently, obviously, I guess I'm just more free to be who I want to be, and make my own decisions." Hannah has clearly moved toward becoming an independent, capable adult. "I feel more independent. When I look at myself I feel way more confident. I know I feel confident and I know that I can do things." Joanna needed space to become independent of her family. "I kind of picked a college so that I would be away from home. I felt like I needed to establish myself a little bit away from my family because I could've gone to a community college and just stayed at home but I did not want to do that. I am kind of an independent, stubborn person." In addition, as Uecker (2008) described, Joanna chose to be independent and not to follow the religion of her parents. Lydia used her newfound independence to learn more about herself. "I think that moving out of the house and being more independent has helped me to understand, 'Oh, I think this is generally what I prefer. This is how my personality works.' As I've been more on my own ... I've learned to balance my social life and learned more about my personality ... I feel like I've really learned a healthy balance." "I enjoy being able to kind of be in charge of myself" (Mary). "[God] presents us with challenges and trials that help us ... I found out who I am in Christ, I found out who I was and accepted Him for myself. You can think for yourself" (Savannah). Virginia is a very independent person who, upon

entering college, asked her parents for some space so she could gain autonomy. "I am a very independent human being and [my family knows] that about me. When I attended college ... I told my parents, 'Look, I'm not coming and I don't want you to visit me ... I want to be able to form my life at college."

Subtheme 3: Maturity. Perry (1999) mentioned that adolescents use dualistic thinking, which means seeing situations as right or wrong, black or white. A sign of maturity comes when the recognition of multiple options begins. At this stage, people are able to recognize the legitimacy of many positions and show value for many points of view. The participants in this study believed they were more serious than their peers, felt capable of handling their lives, and were treated like adults by their family. "I think maybe [other students], they've had less experience ... I feel like this is the first time a lot of them have been given adult responsibilities, where it's not ... true for me. My parents had a philosophy that we were young adults when we turned twelve. That's when they started giving us input into decisions about our lives and family decisions. [Other students] seem a little bit unprepared for being an adult by themselves" (Joanna). "I feel like I was really well-equipped to handle everything. I knew how to deal" (Hannah). "I do think I take it more seriously than other kids. Some of my professors have told me I'm such an old soul. I don't mind it and I'm really glad for that" (Lydia). "I guess…in college, people really expect you to be mature and to work hard ... But I feel that was the same when I was learning at home" (Mary).

Subtheme 4: Self-validating. Sheffer (1995) described a trait unique to homeschooled girls. The girls she interviewed tended to look to themselves for authority

instead of looking to peers, parents, or teachers for validation. She believed that homeschooling allowed these girls to find out who they were and what they wanted. Emma had a great deal of support from her mother, who encouraged her to be true to herself. "My mom was always very explicit about 'I don't really care who you want to be as long as you actually work to be that person ... people expected me to have an idea of who I was. I think also I wasn't pressured to grow up as fast, so I didn't come up with a premature adult idea of myself. It's been a bit more organic development and I think education and pursuing knowledge and pursuing my interests is a big part of who I am." Hannah has a strong sense of self. "I just kind of [relied] on myself. I really knew who I was beforehand, so it helps me to move on. Kind of like, I knew who I was dealing with." Savannah was very strong in herself, due in large part because of her belief in God and needing to please God over others. "I have learned from a Christian perspective and I don't have as much peer pressure as I'm sure I would have had in high school. I can think of teachings with a critical eye and decide for myself if what I'm hearing is true or not because of God's spirit in me. I don't worry if I'm in the popular group. There are cliques here at college, but I don't worry if I'm in the popular group just because as a Christian that doesn't really matter. You can think for yourself." Virginia felt strong in herself in part because of a lack of peer pressure. "There wasn't this public school atmosphere of peer pressure. Homeschooling had given me a very firm basis [as to] who I knew that I was outside of any outside influences in high school. Homeschooling allowed me to figure out who I was outside of peer pressure. I could just be whoever I wanted to be without having to fit in to certain cliques or make friends in certain ways. So I didn't

have the typical identity crisis ... which was nice. My goal that I made for myself in

college was to be unapologetic for who I was. Be the kind of person where people are

like, yeah, she just is. I could just ... be whoever I wanted to be and make my own circle

of people around me who were attracted to [me as I am] instead of trying to fit into a

circle of people."

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the difficulty of finding participants.

Martin-Chang, Gould and Meuse (2011) commented on the problems caused by choosing

a population that doesn't trust researchers. I found it very difficult to find participants and

had to use email forwarding from trusted homeschooling sources as the primary method

of finding women to contribute to this study. Goodman (2008) found that a lack of

interested participants tends to skew the results toward those who want to publicize their

stories for some reason. Luckily, most of the participants in this study gave balanced

views of homeschooling and their transition to college, leaning neither toward convincing

me that their homeschool was perfect nor toward maligning their parents and the

homeschool experience. Again, this is a testament to the maturity of the participants in

this study.

Another limitation is the similarity of the participants. Due to the lack of women

interested in participating and the fact that homeschooling is primarily a white, Christian

undertaking in the U.S. at this point (Ray, 2005), all of the women involved in this study

were white and were raised Christian. However, one of the women no longer considers

herself a Christian. Ray (2005) mentions that 95% of homeschooled students come from

a family headed by a married couple. All of the women in this study came from households with married parents. In addition, all of these couples were male-female. All of their fathers worked full-time and their mothers either worked part-time or not at all. All of the participants' fathers and most of the mothers had received at least their B.A. This is a very homogeneous group, which limits the results to a very specific demographic.

Another limitation of this study is the inability of the participants to separate homeschooling from religion, family, and homeschooling community issues. In many cases throughout the interviews, participants made comments regarding homeschooling that may have been better directed at their church, their family, or homeschooling community. It is understandable this would happen, as for many of these women homeschooling equated to an insular life spent primarily with their church, family, or homeschooling community. While this would likely not be a problem for a traditionally schooled student (who doesn't live at school), it is nearly impossible to separate homeschooling from the other aspects of their lives given how intertwined homeschooling is with their lives outside of the homeschool.

There are additional limitations of the results of this study. They only apply to homeschooled women, not homeschooled men. Any outcomes from this study may not be applicable to males. Beyond this, the findings from this study are based on a small, criterion based sample. They cannot be generalized to a larger or substantially different population.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the similarity of the research participants in this study, there is no doubt that future research should be done that focuses on a more diverse sample. While it was difficult to find participants for this study, it is my hope that homeschoolers will become increasingly open to talking to researchers, allowing for more sample diversity in future research. Beyond this, looking at the lives of homeschooled women who choose not to go to college could provide interesting information that would help to better understand the outcomes of homeschooling. In addition, near the end of this research two participants mentioned that they had heard of many homeschooled women whose parents let their ideologies limit their children's educational and social options. This could be explored further. Indeed, one person who could not participate in this study due to age restrictions wrote to me that she had been abused in her homeschooling situation and had no access to mandated reporters because of her homeschooling status. She and Joanna also mentioned that they are aware of many homeschoolers who are forced to stay at home well past the age of 18 in order to take care of younger brothers and sisters. It was mentioned that frequently these homeschoolers are not presented with other options and have no ability to work because of their low skill level as well as no other place to live, so they cannot see another life for themselves. While I do not believe that this happens regularly in homeschooling families, it is important that this be studied in order to truly understand the extent of this practice.

Implications

This study has implications for homeschoolers, homeschooling parents, colleges, and policymakers. Parents, colleges, and policymakers will be happy to know that as a whole, the participants in this study found their homeschooling experience primarily beneficial. As a group, they are socially capable, academically skilled, self-motivated to learn, close to their families, yet capable of living an independent life. They are interested in the ideas of others (even if they are different than their own) and feel capable of forming relationships with their professors at college. They are mature, thoughtful, and do not look to others for validation.

The results from this study should calm some of the fears of homeschooling parents that their daughters won't be able to adapt to college because of their homeschooling status. These parents will also be able to plan curriculum to better meet their daughter's needs as potential college students, knowing that math and science are areas that tend to be more challenging for homeschooled students. Homeschooling parents can also rest assured that encouraging multi-age as opposed to same-age socializing can be beneficial to their children and that the focus on teaching oneself in homeschooling can encourage their children to be self-directed learners in college.

College professionals can likewise be assured that the female students they are receiving from homeschools are, as a group, internally motivated to learn, academically capable, and mature. The results from this study should help college professionals to see that it would help to develop programs that encourage student empowerment. In addition, programs that create a sense of caring about individual students within the larger college

would help homeschooled women along with their traditionally schooled cohort. Given these programs, homeschooled women should thrive in the college environment and add greatly to their cohort.

While policymakers may need to consider ways they can help support homeschooling parents by providing high-quality supplemental educational programs, they also may need to consider ways to root out abuse and educational neglect in the homeschooling setting that are respectful of parents' rights to educate their children. Specific recommendations for parents, colleges and policymakers are as follows.

College Admissions Professionals and Professors

College admissions professionals and professors can do a great deal to help the homeschooled woman to transition from the homeschool to college. These women have a lot to offer colleges (including more engagement in the classroom, an inherent interest in learning, and a more mature outlook on their studies), and it will be worth the effort it takes to be inclusive of them.

Allow for more choice on assignments. Many of the participants in this study commented on the change from having a great deal of choice and investment in their assignments to having assignments chosen for them. If professors could either give a choice of several assignments or have an open-ended policy regarding the choice of assignments, they will likely see homeschooled women rise to the challenge, as they are self-directed learners who want to be invested in their learning.

Focus more on understanding, less on assessment. Several of the women in this study commented on the different focus of their homeschool. The homeschool was a

place that concentrated more on understanding concepts and honing skills as opposed to remembering specific facts. A more open-ended assessment system that concentrates on understanding the material and making personal connections with classroom material would be beneficial to homeschooled women.

Expect more mature, self-motivated students. As mentioned above, the homeschooled women interviewed for this study were a mature, self-motivated group. They react better to being treated as adults and disdain being "spoon-fed" their classwork. They know who they are and how they learn best. They may ask for more leeway in terms of assignment choice and due dates, but they are mature and given their tendency toward being self-directed learners will likely use this time to improve their work.

Make an effort with homeschooled students. A large number of the women in this study feel very comfortable talking to their professors, although one mentioned her discomfort with talking to professors at first. This was a result of having little contact with adults outside her family and church, and being taught that adults were to be revered. This woman was learning to see herself as an adult capable of speaking to her professors as an equal. Making an effort to seek out students and to be approachable could go far toward helping these women figure out how to converse as an adult.

Avoid stereotyping. Several of the women in this study commented about being uncomfortable with stereotypes regarding homeschoolers. One woman had to confront a stereotype that her professor mentioned in class. Professors should be aware that the majority of stereotypes regarding homeschoolers are unfounded. They are socially capable, hard-working people who can adapt to technology and new ideas.

Group projects may be difficult. The women in this study were highly self-directed learners, most of whom taught themselves during homeschooling. Although many commented that they helped to teach others and were taught in small classes, several mentioned the difficulty of working in groups. One woman in particular said that her college focused on group projects in order to prepare students for work post-college. While this is a laudable goal, the stress of having grades dependent on the work of others was significant. It might help to structure these assignments so they are still done as a group, but in which each person receives his or her own grade based upon individual contribution to the project.

Small learning communities. One of the students compared the transition from homeschool to college as similar to going from a caring environment into a bureaucracy. She felt that her college didn't care about her. It might help homeschooled students to have the option of enrolling in smaller learning communities, in living-learning communities, or to have college counselors who were given specialized training in working with the homeschooled student. These students may need more connection within the college environment.

Focus on community life. Several participants commented on the importance of community-building programs to their happiness at college. They felt that programs such as orientation, dorm programs, on-campus church, and clubs helped them to bridge the gap between their close-knit homeschooling experience and moving to a new school. An increase in these types of programs would likely help homeschooled women to adapt to the college environment.

Parents

Homeschooling parents have the greatest impact on their daughters' adjustment to college. Their curricular choices, relationship with their daughters, encouragement of their daughters' dreams, and commitment to the skills needed to thrive in college all lay the foundation for their daughters' success.

Science and math. Several participants mentioned that they didn't have a full science program (including labs) and they had to teach themselves math and science, which some found difficult to do well. Given the low number of math and science majors from homeschool environments (Phillips, 2010), it may behoove the homeschooled if their parents looked into providing a high-quality education in this area. This might include math tutors and lab science courses outside of the home. In addition, a high-quality curriculum, a focus on mastery learning, and direct teaching of math topics help to ensure that homeschoolers receive a solid education in mathematics (Cardinale, 2014).

Curriculum that fits children's needs. One of the participants in this study went into some depth regarding how her parents' educational philosophy did not meet her needs and how this affected her as an emerging adult. In order to combat Reich's (2002) concerns that children have a say in their education, homeschooling parents should encourage children to discuss their educational goals and career plans. Ray (2000) and van Schalkwyk and Bouwer (2011) suggest that parents plan a curriculum that addresses their student's abilities and styles in order to be effective. Parents may want to consider testing their children regularly to determine whether homeschooling is meeting their children's academic goals.

Abuse. As mentioned in Chapter 2, abuse can be an issue in homeschools. It is unknown whether there is more or less abuse among homeschools than in the general public because homeschooling children do not need to have regular contact with adults outside their family (Waterman, 2016). Reich (2002) comments that we need to focus less on the parents' interests and more on the child's interests. It may behoove homeschooling parents to begin talking about ways to ensure that abuse in the homeschool is found and stopped. Beyond this, there are concerns regarding educational neglect in homeschool settings, including in one of the homeschools discussed in this study (Barnett, 2013; Conroy, 2010; Goldberg, 2013; Jennens, 2011; Olsen, 2009; Pollack, 2012; Willard and Oplinger, 2004). Given that the state has a right to regulate homeschools (Kunzman, 2009), it may help homeschooling parents to be a part of crafting legislation, ensuring that the legislation is both respectful of the homeschool and respectful of the potentially abused or neglected child.

Multiple adult teachers. One of the findings of this study is students who were in cooperatives with multiple adult teachers in small settings transitioned better to their relationships with professors. They felt uniquely comfortable talking to professors and were better able to personalize their education as a result. The homeschool cooperative experience (in particular, the small student-to-teacher ratio in these classes) helped them to be more proactive and bold, asking for their needs to be met in college. Parents might want to consider a homeschool cooperative for their high school-age homeschooled child.

Self-directed learners. Many of the participants in this study taught themselves in their homeschools. Instead of receiving information from teachers, they read texts and

did the assessments on their own. This was largely beneficial to these women, as they became self-directed learners who took responsibility for their education and were invested in their learning. However, these results should not be mistaken for advocating educational neglect. The women in this study maintained a great deal of independence in their learning, but also checked in regularly with their parents who took end responsibility for their daughter's learning. In addition, most of the women in my study were in homeschool cooperatives, in which they discussed and shared their learning.

Policymakers

Legislators and school district policymakers may want to consider funding lab science and math classes meant specifically for homeschooled students. Given that these seem to be areas of weakness in some homeschools, it would be beneficial to have classes available. Legislators and policymakers may also need to consider a way to check homeschooled children for abuse. If such a policy were enacted, it would be far better to include the homeschooling community in policy development. They are understandably reticent to have the state looking into their home life and family decisions (and some may be concerned regarding issues of religious freedom), but they are also parents who want the best for children. Beyond this, homeschoolers have unique insight as to forming policies that might help to root out abuse without giving too much power to the state.

This study helped to clarify the unique needs of homeschooled women as they transition to college. Hopefully, this information will help inform the stakeholders in the homeschooling movement to make decisions that will be most beneficial to homeschooled women.

Conclusion

This dissertation focused on the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. Eleven homeschooled women were interviewed using an in-depth format that focused on understanding their experiences in the homeschool and as they transitioned to college. Specific areas of questioning included homeschooling and college academic experiences, their relationship with their family both during homeschooling and while in college, their ability to form friendships and romantic relationships, and their relationships with professors at college. As a group, the women in this study showed themselves to be proficient both socially and academically.

The women interviewed were a capable, mature, insightful group of participants. Their responses were enlightening and in many cases directly disagreed with much of the traditional rhetoric surrounding homeschooling. The results from this research show that homeschooling, for the participants in this study, was largely a positive experience that contributed to their development as strong, capable women. Knowledge of the homeschooling experience is nascent, but growing. In addition, the number of homeschooling students is increasing significantly. These students are becoming part of the fabric of our country, yet they are frequently misunderstood. Stereotypes abound regarding homeschoolers, many of which are not true. Through research and hearing the stories of homeschoolers instead of reacting to stereotypes, we may come to a true understanding of the ways homeschooling affects students and better be able to plan for them as they enter our society as adults.

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Appendix A: Study Eligibility Questions

These questions will be asked of all people who show interest in participating in

the study-

1. In which grades were you homeschooled? (Circle all that apply)

    K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

2. By which methods were you homeschooled (Circle all that apply)

    Unschooling

    Charlotte Mason

    Traditional curriculum (much like you would see in a traditional school)

    Montessori homeschooling

    Waldorf homeschooling

    Part-time in traditional public school classroom

    Part-time in parent partnership program

    Part-time in private/independent homeschool group

3. Did you ever attend a traditional school?

4. If yes, for how long?

5. Were you in a Running Start or equivalent program during your latter years of

    homeschooling?

6. How would you rate your homeschooling experience (Circle one number)

    Poor   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   Excellent

7. When you homeschooled, how much time did you spend interacting with

peers per week?

8. In which activities did you meet with peers? (possible ideas might include Scouts, church activities, sports, 4H, clubs)

9. Are you living on or near campus? Are you living separate from your parents?

10. Where are you currently going to school?

Do you have a student identification card to verify this?

11. How many years have you been living at your college?

12. In terms of credits, what year are you in college?

13. How would you rate your college experience so far?

Poor   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   Excellent

14. Are you male or female?

15. Ethnicity

___European American

___African American

___ Hispanic

___Asian American

___Native American

___Other _____

16. What age are you?

17. Do you consider your family of lower, lower-middle, middle, upper-middle or upper socioeconomic status?

18. Who is in your immediate family? How many of your siblings were homeschooled?

19. What religion is your family?

20. Who was your primary homeschooling teacher?

21. What is your mother's highest level of education?

22. What is your father's highest level of education?

23. Did your parents both work away from the home? If so, were they part time or full time workers?

24. What is your college grade point average?

25. How did you find out about the study?

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study on the college transition experiences of homeschooled women. You were chosen for this study because you are a woman who is currently enrolled as an undergraduate in college, are between the ages of 18-25, were homeschooled for all four years of high school (this can include college classes taken while homeschooling), and are living on or near campus. Please read this form and ask me any questions that you may have prior to agreeing to be part of this study.

If you agree to participate in this study, we will spend between an hour and a hour and a half talking about your experiences transitioning to college, with possible follow up questions via email or phone after the interview. I will ask questions about how your academic transition is going, how you are transitioning in terms of forming relationships, and about your relationship with your family now that you are transitioning to college. All information I gain during this interview will be completely confidential and your participation is voluntary. You may choose to leave the study at any time with no consequences whatsoever. You may skip questions that you consider too personal. I will offer you the opportunity to review my initial analysis of your transcripts after I am done transcribing them, but you are not required to review the analysis.

Risks and Benefits of Participating in this Study:

You may feel some discomfort when talking about certain aspects of your homeschooling or college transition experiences. If this is the case, please feel free to skip a question, stop the interview and take a break, or end the interview entirely. There will be no consequences whatsoever if you choose to do this.

You may also be concerned about the safety of the information you give me. Once I have transcribed the audio recording of our interview, I will delete the recording. All transcriptions and notes pertinent to this interview will use a pseudonym instead of your actual name. After the study, I will keep a list of pseudonyms and actual contact information in a locked box in my home office so that I may contact you if I have questions. Transcriptions will be kept on my password-protected computer and will be completely deleted between five and fifteen years after my research is published.

Although you will not be paid for participating in this study, the results of this study may be helpful to several groups. Parents who are considering homeschooling their daughters will have data about the outcomes of homeschooling and may make decisions about how and whether to homeschool based on the information you provide. Educators who work with the homeschooled will better understand how to tailor their programs in order to meet the needs of homeschooled women who go to college. College transition professionals will be able to plan programs that better meet the needs of homeschooled women. Legislators will be able to better tailor policies and programs to the needs and

interests of homeschooled women. Your experiences and opinions will be heard by those who are in a position to make decisions about and for homeschooled women.

Confidentiality:

As mentioned above, all information you give me will be kept confidential. Your real name and identifying information will not be included in any reports of this study.

Contact Information and Questions:

My name is Jeanine SanClemente. I am a Ph.D. student currently the dissertation phase of my doctoral studies. My dissertation chair at Walden University is Ruth Crocker, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or at ruth.crocker@waldenu.edu. You may ask any questions you have at any time. You may contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx or at jeanine.sanclemente@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, please contact Dr. Laura Night Lynn at laura.lynn@waldenu.edu.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form for your own reference.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in this study.

Printed name of participant

Signature

Participant email address-

Participant phone number-

Appendix C: Participant Textural-Structural Descriptions

Amelia. Amelia was raised in a conservative Christian family with six siblings, all of whom were homeschooled for all of their K-12 years. Her mother used an eclectic approach that included elements of unschooling, a Charlotte Mason curriculum, and a more traditional curriculum as the children got older. Amelia didn't rate her homeschooling experience highly, in part because of the holes left in the curriculum. She had very little interaction with peers, although she did interact frequently with adults.

Amelia's parents homeschooled primarily for religious reasons. They didn't want to expose their children to worldly influences, and particularly wanted their daughters to be sheltered from the outside world. Amelia was close to her siblings during her homeschooling years, but her parents were unhappy that Amelia chose to go to college and as a result have broken off relations with her. Upon going to college, Amelia realized that she was missing out on many of the cultural references that traditionally schooled students had access to—she didn't understand the culture of the classroom and lacked knowledge of the pop culture of which many of her classmates were aware. College has also been a place for Amelia to learn about diverse opinions and to form her own opinions. When in her homeschooling environment, she had been encouraged to keep differing opinions to herself.

Upon starting college, Amelia had no difficulties finding friends. She looks for people with whom she holds commonalities and who are taking a similar life direction.

She has met most of her friends in the dorms, but also feels comfortable talking to her professors. She attributes this to her extensive experiences with adults during her formative years. She is older than many of her classmates, but is able to move beyond the difference in maturity to find friends. She values true, deep friendships and doesn't have difficulty forming them.

Amelia describes herself as determined, self-motivated, outgoing, and interested in other cultures. Her college experience has opened doors for her—she is learning about people from other cultures and walks of life. She has had some difficulties in specific areas of college academics. When she first started college, she found paper writing difficult as it was not a centerpiece of her homeschooling. After talking to classmates and professors, she quickly learned the format for college writing and now feels comfortable in this area. While being homeschooled, she was asked to understand concepts. In college, she is held to a higher standard.

Chloe. Chloe homeschooled K-12, but took Running Start classes at a local community college later in her high school years. She was involved in outside activities, acting in several plays, playing several instruments in a homeschool band, and was both a soccer player and a coach. She was homeschooled along with six siblings. She was the second child and the oldest daughter. This role as eldest daughter and mother's helper was a defining factor for her when she lived at home. While she missed her family a great deal during her first year of college, she now enjoys having more independence and a separate identity. Chloe's relationship with her mother (her primary learning coach) has changed from a teacher-student relationship into more of a confidante relationship.

Chloe sees herself as an introvert who recharges by being alone, but also is willing to take the risk and the initiative to make friends. While this type of behavior was outside of her comfort level when she was at home, she made a very mature and rational decision to take the initiative in college. In her mind, someone had to take the risk, so it may as well be her. As a result, she has many acquaintances. Chloe carefully chooses just a few people to be her close friends. She has not yet had a romantic relationship. Chloe speaks up in class comfortably and goes to her professors' office hours both to ask questions and to learn more about topics of interest.

Academically, Chloe has made a successful transition to college. When she was in Running Start, she felt academically quite capable. At her college, she feels about the same as the other students in her school. Chloe feels that the self-directed nature of homeschooling helped her to transition to college and that she understands her learning style and pace, which allows her to adapt her methods of studying to meet her needs better. When Chloe homeschooled, she enjoyed being able to adapt her assessment instruments, but she cannot do this in college. She also enjoyed the focus on learning the material for its own sake as opposed to learning for grades. She is self-motivated to learn and likes being able to choose her own classes.

Claire. Claire is a forthright and pragmatic young woman who feels comfortable taking a measured, balanced stand in regards to her homeschooling experience. She is thoughtful about her experiences and shows herself to be an inherently motivated young woman who does not need to please others or change herself to gain friendship. She seems to be fine with herself as she is.

Claire was homeschooled for most of her K-12 education, with the exception of second, third and fourth grades, when she went to a private school. Her parents chose to homeschool for religious reasons and because they wanted to be responsible for their children's education. Both her mother and father taught her. Her parents had different teaching styles and different teaching responsibilities. She was involved in a homeschool co-op in which she played volleyball. This was a primary means of socializing while homeschooling. She felt that socializing was a little more difficult for homeschoolers because students who went to school had a built-in socializing mechanism—all of their school day was spent with other students, whereas her day was spent primarily with family.

Claire has not found it difficult to transition to college. Although she is more reserved than many of her counterparts, she has the friends that she wants. She is able to meet up with people if and when she wants. She considers herself socially normal and doesn't feel that she stands out as being any different than others socially. Given this, she chooses to have fewer, closer friends and isn't quite as outgoing as others. She considers both of these traits due to her personality, not the homeschooling experience. She is close to her family, and in fact has grown closer to her siblings since she went to college. She spends time on the phone with them, discussing her younger siblings' lives and getting advice from her older siblings. Her relationship with her parents has remained the same since she went to college, although she'd like to spend more time communicating with them. This has become more difficult since she went to college because of schedule restraints. She realizes how important her family is to her now that

she is at college, but enjoys her independence at school. She does not feel that homeschooling affected her ability to have romantic relationships. She has felt that she is stereotyped because she is a homeschooler, and sometimes this affects her self-confidence.

Claire feels inherently motivated educationally. She feels that her homeschooling experience encouraged this. College moves at a much faster pace and with more discussion than homeschooling, and there is more of an emphasis on tests and assignments because there seemed to be so much material to cover, but she took it day-by-day and found the workload manageable.

Emma. Emma presents herself as a mature, insightful young woman. Emma homeschooled throughout her K-12 school career alongside her older brother. They were involved in a homeschool cooperative that held large events, classes, and book clubs. While Emma had the choice of going to a traditional school in high school, she chose to stay home because she enjoyed the flexible schedule. Her parents chose to homeschool their children because they wanted to be able to individualize their children's education. They saw that their children were ahead in some areas and behind in others, and wanted to be able to specialize curriculum based on their needs and interests.

Emma struggled during her first year of college, but assigns this primarily to dealing with the loss of her mother, who died Emma's senior year. When Emma began college, at first she chose to go to a local school with which she had personal ties, and later moved to a larger school that was farther away from home. At this school, she feels more a part of the community because she lives on campus. She is making new friends

and gets along well with her roommate. At times, the course load at school makes it difficult for her to find time for making new friends, but she is making efforts.

Emma generally doesn't share that she was homeschooled, but has heard stereotypes of homeschoolers. In one case, a professor made an assumption about homeschoolers, but in general Emma feels that the traditional antisocial, religious stereotype of homeschoolers is changing as more homeschoolers enter college. Emma feels that homeschooling encouraged her to be a self-motivated learner with high standards. She appreciates several things about homeschooling, including the ability to pick her own course of study, the flexibility that allowed her to work in high school, the time to self-reflect and the ability to see herself as part of a bigger picture. She doesn't necessarily think that traditionally schooled students get these opportunities as a direct result of their schooling.

Hannah. Hannah is a homeschooled woman who is currently enrolled in a small Catholic college. She came from a close-knit family and credits homeschooling for much of their closeness. All of her school-age siblings have been homeschooled, although her brother is currently at a weekday boarding school because Hannah's parents felt that it was a better fit for his academic needs.

Hannah's parents originally homeschooled to avoid the testing-centered environment they felt traditional schools would espouse. They used a variety of approaches, working in conjunction with a Catholic homeschooling service that taught small classes and handled administrative paperwork. Hannah's family also was part of a homeschooling group that went on weekly outings to the park. She has fond memories of

unit studies that she did as a child that were centered on a single topic—Roman History, Greek History, etc. Her life during homeschooling was very social and included going out dancing with friends and taking dance lessons. When she met up with friends who went to a traditional high school, she felt that they were largely negative about their schooling and teachers and was happy to be homeschooled.

As Hannah grew older, her learning became more independent. She read from textbooks and when she ran into a problem worked with her mother to find the answer. At this point, she felt more like a collaborator than in a traditional pedagogical relationship. As Hannah started high school, she also began to work with a female professor specifically in the area of writing. This teacher talked to Hannah's homeschooling group about what to expect in college and how to talk to professors. Hannah still has a close relationship with this teacher and she credits this relationship with helping her to not be intimidated by her college professors.

Hannah remains close to her family even though she's at college. She enjoys going home to visit and relies on her parents for support and advice. She has made a successful transition to college and considers herself a happy, social, independent and capable person. She has many friends at college and doesn't feel that homeschooling hindered her ability to make friends in any way. She feels just as academically capable as her cohort in school, and is grateful that she was homeschooled.

Joanna. Joanna is an engaging, introspective, candid and unusually mature young woman. She was homeschooled from the second half of kindergarten through high school. She used primarily a traditional curriculum and was enrolled in a homeschool

cooperative. Her parents chose to homeschool because they wanted to protect her and her three siblings from viewpoints that didn't align with their conservative Christian values. While homeschooled, Joanna played instruments, played sports, was in a Christian youth group, and was involved in a debate club. However, she had a very limited social group and had little choice of friends due to homeschooling.

Since moving to college, Joanna has realized that the sheltered nature of her homeschool has led to some difficulties with the transition. She doesn't understand many pop culture references that her classmates make, describing herself as being from an entirely different culture. She feels uncomfortable wearing more form-fitting fashions, even though others on her campus would consider them modest. She also struggles with accidental touch from men and with forming relationships with men. During her upbringing, touching men and having casual relationships with men was frowned upon, but she is making steps toward becoming more comfortable with men and wearing more form-fitting clothing. Joanna is in the process of navigating a world that is foreign to her.

Although Joanna has formed different viewpoints than her parents, she feels close to them. She calls them at least weekly to share the news of her life. She chose to go to a college that is far away from her family in order to gain independence, but she misses her family.

Joanna came to college well-prepared for academic life. She was used to having to self-motivate and found the degree to which her classmates expected professors to break down assignments into smaller, more palatable units surprising. Homeschooling had taught her to do this type of work for herself. Joanna is used to speaking to adults, so

she had no difficulty talking to and negotiating with professors. While college has not changed her personality, meeting people from different backgrounds and with different opinions has opened her horizons.

Joanna is in the process of recovering from portions of her homeschooling experience. She spends time reading about other homeschoolers who have been denied regular interactions with a variety of people and is going to therapy to help her integrate her pre-college experiences. She feels that much of her strong, assertive and analytical personality is due to the subjugation of more feminine traits by her church community and is working to encourage more feminine traits as well. I have no doubt that with Joanna's unique set of personality traits, she will be able to move past the more difficult parts of her experience and become the person she wants to be.

Lydia. Although Lydia describes herself as an introvert who recharges by being alone, she does feel comfortable making friends and has no problems relating to people of different ages. She attributes this to her homeschooling, where she was asked to work closely with adults, older children, and younger children. She enjoys living a busy life that includes both work and school, as she works with people of different ages and she likes the structure that additional work gives to her study and social schedules. She takes school seriously and would like to go on to graduate school.

She looks back on her homeschooling days with gratitude toward her parents, especially her mother. She feels that she was provided a structured education that also allowed her some choice. She grew up in a tight-knit group of family and friends that she knew for many years. Although her closest friends are going to school elsewhere in the

country, many of her other friends still live at home. Lydia was schooled at home for most of her K-12 years, but worked with a homeschool co-op later in her educational career. The co-op was made up of parents who specialized in teaching specific classes, so she felt as though she was receiving a balanced and thorough education. From the age of 14, Lydia went on mission trips every summer. Lydia went to junior college during her senior year of high school. While at junior college, she met people from different backgrounds. Occasionally, she felt that people stereotyped her because she was a homeschooled student, but she learned to laugh at the stereotypes. These stereotypes have also been an alienating factor for her in college.

Lydia lived at home during her first year of college, but then moved onto campus. She remains close to her family, traveling home once a week to go to church. She is particularly close to her younger sister, with whom she shared a room.

At college, Lydia counts her professors amongst her friends. She enjoys going to meals with them and attributes her comfort with adults to her small teacher-to-student ratio in her homeschool co-op. While Lydia enjoys talking with individuals and in small groups, she prefers not to speak in class.

Lydia sees that homeschooling was a very positive experience for her, and that it largely had positive effects on her transition to college. She feels academically and socially capable, in some ways more capable than her traditionally schooled contemporaries. She is not currently dating, but feels comfortable forming romantic relationships. While there have been some problems transitioning in terms of

understanding technology and the lack of academic choice, she enjoys her roommates (one of whom is an international student) and her school cohort.

Mary. Mary presents as a very friendly, positive person who feels that homeschooling was beneficial to her. She describes herself as introverted, but does not attribute this to homeschooling because she has outgoing friends who were homeschooled. She prefers to spend her time with fewer, better friends rather than with lots of people. If she is introverted, she doesn't allow it to stand in the way of doing what she wants. She found a job, searched for a church that would meet her needs, and goes to campus ministries. Mary makes friends in her classes and at incoming freshman events, and joined the school choir. She enjoys the independence of college and likes figuring things out for herself. She is willing to take risks if she perceives that the outcome is going to be positive. Mary seems to be a reflective and thoughtful young woman who thinks outside the box and likes to think over her options before acting.

Mary was homeschooled throughout her K-12 career along with all six of her siblings. This was done for primarily religious reasons, but her parents also wanted to be the primary influence in their children's education. She received socialization through a homeschool co-op that seems to have had many activities that a traditional school would have, including classes, football games, choir and dances. Her parents both taught her, but as she got older, she did more independent learning. Mary found homeschooling to be a very comfortable environment. Her specific educational needs and interests were catered to, but a traditional curriculum was also followed. Mary enjoyed the flexible schedule offered by homeschooling.

Mary feels that while homeschooling didn't affect her ability to make friends and to form romantic relationships, it has made her closer to her family. She felt that they were more invested in her learning and enjoyment of life. Now that she's in school, she appreciates them even more and feels closer to them. Mary visits them monthly, but isn't able to talk to them as much as she would like due to scheduling issues at school. She doesn't see her peers as having quite as close a relationship with their families.

One social difference that Mary mentioned was that she hadn't been exposed to much mainstream media prior to college and didn't know of the music and movies of which her peers were aware. She has struggled with how to deal with stereotypes of homeschoolers, and is now choosing to wait to tell others that she was homeschooled in order to avoid immediate stereotyping. One positive difference that she sees with homeschooling is that she learned to communicate with people of all ages on their level, rather than just with same-age peers. Mary is friendly with many different types of people, but chooses her close friends very carefully She doesn't necessarily choose to spend time with other homeschoolers just because they have similar backgrounds. Mary feels comfortable asking for help from her professors because her parents taught her to take initiative when she has questions.

Academically, Mary feels that she started college knowing how to study. She feels that many of her classmates had to learn how to study at the same time that they were transitioning to college curriculum, and that this made the school transition harder for them. Mary felt that she learned the same subjects as traditionally schooled students, but was required to read more and think in greater depth about the subjects she learned. In

fact, she's been told by other students that she reads much more quickly than they do and she feels as though she comprehends her reading more thoroughly. She feels responsible for her own learning.

Rose. Rose is a well-spoken, thoughtful and outgoing young woman. She is an extrovert and being around others makes her happy. She began homeschooling in kindergarten, largely because her parents couldn't find a suitable school in her area. They wanted her to receive a Christian education. They didn't agree with the teachings in public schools and didn't like the environment provided by public schools. Her mother was her primary teacher, although her father taught her higher math. Rose took some online courses, went to a cooperative school for some classes, and paired up with her brother for her other courses.

Rose was worried about going off to college because it was so far from her home. However, she chose to go to the same small liberal arts college that her brother (with whom she maintains a very close relationship) attends. Upon coming to school, Rose's brother introduced her to his friends and she immediately had a contact group. Beyond this, Rose is a very social person who found her own group of friends quickly. Many of the people in her school were also homeschooled and the shared backgrounds and values help them to understand and relate to one another.

Rose maintains a close relationship with her family via phone calls, texts and Skype. She feels she is closer to her family than traditionally schooled students. She is particularly close to her brother and is surprised when people talk about siblings disliking one another. She feels that this was helped by homeschooling as they spent a great deal of

time together. She relies on her parents for advice as opposed to going to the on-campus counselor.

Rose enjoyed the flexibility offered in homeschooling. Although she was expected to complete a full high school curriculum, she was able to set aside time to work on a political campaign and was able to do studies that were particular to her interests. She was interested in fashion design and was allowed the time to pursue her passion. Rose considers the flexibility in curriculum and the timing of school a major advantage of homeschooling over traditional schooling.

Rose feels that the time spent at home and away from peers her age had benefits and consequences. On one hand, she is close to her family and feels comfortable conversing with people of different ages as opposed to only feeling comfortable conversing with peers. On the other hand, she didn't get the same amount of time to spend with peers as her traditionally schooled friends. However, this only increased her interest in spending time with peers. At college, she was thrilled to be with people her age and became a "social butterfly." After focusing too much on friends her first quarter, she decided that school needed to be a higher priority and became better at balancing friend time and school time. When she does spend time with friends, she chooses to focus on them instead of trying to do other activities because she considers friends too important to divide her focus.

It was difficult at first for Rose to talk to professors. At her school, professors make a point of seeking out their students to talk to them. In the beginning, Rose gave short answers and moved on (in part because she wasn't sure about the power dynamics

of the professor-student relationship), but now she's more comfortable talking to her professors. In her school, she is taught to look at multiple perspectives. Although her homeschool encouraged her to understand, she wasn't given multiple perspectives and asked to analyze them. This was new to her at first, but she now enjoys this aspect of her schooling. College is also different than homeschool in that she is expected to do group projects. Her college encourages group projects out of its focus on preparing students for the real world. However, (as is typical with group projects) it can be frustrating for her when some people choose not to do their part and it affects her grade. Going to college has also taught her organizational and time management skills. She has learned that she does better at her schoolwork when she works alone and sticks to a schedule.

Savannah. Savannah is a very composed, well-spoken young woman. She and her younger sister were homeschooled throughout their K-12 years primarily for religious reasons. Their mother was the primary teacher and their father was the "principal," who dealt with any behavior issues that arose. He also had curricular input. Savannah went to several cooperative schools during her education and took classes such as grammar, science, reading and speech. These classes forced her outside her comfort zone and she met many of her friends at coop, including a couple of boyfriends. She is still in touch with her friends today. Savannah was also very involved in outside activities including soccer, tennis, tae kwon do, and volleyball.

Savannah has a close relationship with her parents and sister. She talks to them frequently and relies on her mother as a close confidante. She feels even closer to her sister now that she has left the home, in part because she recognizes the importance of

their relationship now that she is farther away. She also talks to her father frequently, and he makes special efforts to reach out to her in college. Savannah's transition to college was difficult because geographically she is very far away from her parents.

Savannah is confident and has a strong inner compass. Her relationship with God is very important to her and helps her to avoid trivial worries, such as whether or not she is popular. Her belief in God also helps her to deal with the distance from her family, as she believes that she is exactly where she is meant to be. It is important to Savannah that she thinks and analyzes for herself, with God's guidance.

This ability to think and act independently and with maturity helps her in school. She feels that homeschooling encouraged her to be self-motivated to learn and think. She also appreciates that she had little to no peer pressure growing up. Savannah feels that homeschooling contributed to her ability to make friends, because when she homeschooled it was harder to make friends and required more effort and investment in the relationship. Her friends consider her to be a joyful, upbeat person. She is slightly less outgoing now than she was in high school, but has made friends on campus.

Savannah feels that homeschooling helped her to form relationships with her professors. The small format of homeschool coops allowed her to feel more comfortable talking to adults and she isn't as intimidated as many of her traditionally schooled peers. She also feels personally invested in her schoolwork and motivated to understand, which she attributes to the independent learning typically employed during homeschooling.

Virginia. Virginia is an insightful, strong, mature, well-spoken and candid young woman. She was homeschooled from third grade through high school primarily to

individualize her education, although she was also unhappy in her traditional school. She thrived academically in the homeschool environment, starting below grade level in reading and finishing a couple years above her age level peers. Virginia's family had an eclectic homeschooling style, using different curricular and teaching resources as needed. Student choice and personal interest were driving factors in curriculum choice. Virginia's mother was the primary teacher but homeschooling co-ops were also part of the family's educational approach.

Although Virginia is close to her family, she is an independent woman who wants to make her own way in the world. When she went to college, she asked to be left to her own devices for a period of time. She formed her own close-knit friend group that meets weekly and has started her own club on campus. She joined college athletics and campus ministries during her first year at college.

Virginia is grateful for her homeschooling experience. She feels she received a personalized education free from peer pressure. She was allowed to be unique and grew up in a family relatively free of conflict. On the other hand, being away from mainstream schooling has meant that she doesn't understand many cultural references. Virginia has found herself in a dichotomy as she branches out into the world. She traverses both the conservative homeschooling culture and a quite liberal, "hippy" college. She finds that she has things in common with both groups of people, but doesn't fit completely into either world.