Home schooling and the transmission of civic culture

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This qualitative study explored the nature of civic education in home-based educational programs. A second purpose was to determine if there is a set of issues which distinguish African-American and European-American home schooling families. A multiple-case study design was developed to gather data relevant to answering eight research questions. Case studies of eight families in metropolitan Atlanta were generated based on responses to questionnaires, intensive interviewing, and direct observation. Books, articles, newsletters, and other documents were also analyzed. A multiple-case analysis showed that while parents' reasons for home schooling vary, their primary motivation is to situate the process of values transmission within the home. These values relate not only to religious or moral beliefs, but also to desired roles for their children as adult-citizens. Parents favor the cultivation of an independent,
critical perspective as the basis for civic culture. Questions are raise about the feasibility of attaining this goal in homes where the dominant concern is imparting a monolithic world-view. The findings further suggest that the home schooling movement is more diverse than has been thought previously. This diversity is not only philosophical or ideological, but cultural as well. For African-American home schooling parents, their shared experience as members of a cultural minority sets them apart from the general home schooling population and has a significant impact on their programs. Therefore, additional investigation is warranted in order to assess the civic education found in home-based educational programs and to fully understand the motivations, goals, and practices of cultural minorities who home school their children.
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

HOME SCHOOLING AND THE TRANSMISSION
OF CIVIC CULTURE

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TRACY ROMM

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Once a common feature of frontier life, the practice of parents schooling their children at home was gradually eclipsed by the rise of the American common school in the nineteenth century and a system of mass public schooling in the twentieth. In recent years, however, home schooling has re-emerged and has evolved into a popular, albeit controversial, educational alternative. In 1981 Lines described home schooling as "underground education that seems to be growing" (p.2). By 1990 this "underground" activity was referred to in Time Magazine as "an eccentricity that has become a national movement" (Allis 1990, 84).

The growth of home schooling in the United States over the past two decades has been phenomenal. Although the number of children involved remains a small percentage of the total school-age population, "the increasing incidence of home education...is a development that is significant and symbolic out of proportion with its relatively small numbers" (Fantini 1985a, 18). McGurdy (1985) refers to home education as one of the fastest growing segments of American education.

For the first time, in 1985, Gallup included a question about home schools in the annual Phi Delta Kappan "Gallup Poll
of American Attitudes About Education." Although only sixteen percent of the respondents to the 1985 poll thought that home education was good for the nation, by 1988 the approval rating had risen to twenty-eight percent (Gallup 1985, 1988). This low level of public support is indicative of the controversy which has been generated by the revival of this age-old educational method. In the eyes of many citizens, equal opportunity for self and collective advancement through education is symbolic of the American ethos. Its importance is evidenced by the vast sums of money the nation invests in public education every year. Formal education is a central institution for producing both norms and values in the younger generations of society as well as the skills and division of labor needed for a productive economy. To question the value of formal schooling is seen by many as a challenge to the very fabric of our social order.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to describe the process of socialization in home schooling families, with particular reference to the transmission of civic culture. This focus is suggested by the concerns of those educators and policy-makers who view home schooling as evidence of a divisive trend in our society. They argue that schools are not only a means to social mobility for the individual; they are also touted as a developer of democratic values and practices. Socialization
to these values is seen as a moral undertaking to shape the minds of young people so that they can create a future society organized along the principles to which they were exposed in their schooling experience. The stated objective is to prepare young people for an adult life of public participation in guiding the institutions which constitute our democratic society.

This study examines the nature of civic education among a cadre of parents who choose not to participate in systems of formal schooling, whether public or private. Instead they are willing to take total responsibility for the education of their children, despite the sacrifices and hardships this might entail. Information was collected about the characteristics, perceptions, practices, and experiences of these parents in their roles as teachers of civic education. Their civic education programs were explored in terms of such factors as parental goals, curriculum content, and style of instruction. Further, the study addressed the question of whether a hidden curriculum exists in these home schools which may influence the nature of the civic education found there. Finally, African-American parents who home school their children were included in the study so that the diversity of families who are participants in the movement was represented. The results and conclusions of this study provide insight into the process of developing civic community in general as well as into home schooling specifically.
Background of the Problem

Although this study focused on the United States, home schooling is not a uniquely American phenomenon. Home schools are present in significant numbers in many countries, including the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, France, West Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa (Knowles 1988, 4). Home education has even caught the attention of the "futurists." Toffler (1980, 386), for example, regards home schooling as "the wave of the future." In his popular book Megatrends, Naisbett placed home schooling in the context of a general trend in western societies toward "self-help": "Home education represents the most radical approach to educational self-help, and more and more parents are becoming interested in the idea" (1982, 144).

Exactly how many children are being educated at home is unknown. In many states home schooling is legal only under specific, often restrictive, conditions. Therefore, some parents who do not meet the established criteria choose to teach their children "underground" (Cizek 1988). Some parents are home schooling in an effort to lessen the influence of the state in their private lives and resist any attempt by state education officials to identify them. For fear of harassment, exposure, or prosecution, many parents thus fail to register their children with authorities. Consequently, estimates of the actual number of children involved in the movement vary greatly. Patricia Lines, former director of the Law and
Education Center of the Education Commission of the States, estimated that there were anywhere from 120,000 to 250,000 children involved in the 1985-86 school year, compared to only 15,000 in the early seventies (Lines 1987). Others, such as Naisbitt (1982), suggest that the figure may be as high as one million. Brian Ray (1989), president of the National Home Education Research Institute, places the true figure at between one quarter and one half million. In a recent article in The New York Times, Celis (1990) noted a fivefold increase in the past five years alone, to between 300,000 and 500,000 from between 60,000 and 120,000 children. The lower estimates are those of the United States Government and professional education associations, and the higher are those of advocacy groups.

The state of Georgia is experiencing a similar increase in the number of home schooling families. Families were first required to identify themselves during the 1984-85 school year. During the 1984-92 school years, the total number of home school programs registered with the state was 653; 936; 1,420; 1,756; 3,043; 2,828; 3100; and 3953 (Gene Crawford, telephone interview, July 1992). It is fair to assume, however, that some families choose not to register their children with the state for many of the reasons outlined above. Thus it is unlikely that these numbers accurately reflect the true extent of home schooling in Georgia.

As the movement has grown in numbers, it has also
matured. An attorney with the Home Schools Legal Defense Association observed that in the past "schooling at home was viewed like brain surgery at home; people didn't know what they were doing; now that view is changing" (Soloranizio 1985, 59). The ready availability of works of advocacy and resource materials often tailored for home schooling families, as well as nationally distributed magazines for those involved in or considering becoming involved in home schooling, offers evidence of the movement's new sophistication. Thousands of self-help groups have been organized in communities across the nation to offer support and advice for parents. In Georgia alone there are at least forty active support groups and a statewide organization publishes a quarterly newsletter. A May, 1990 conference on home schooling drew over 3,000 participants from throughout the southeast to an Atlanta church where they heard presentations from both local and national figures.

It is obvious that home schooling is a growing movement both nationally and in the state of Georgia. The number of families attracted to this educational alternative, however, will likely be limited by several factors. First, the trend is toward more parents of young children entering the work-force; two-income families have become commonplace in our society. Second, the increasing availability of private schools is likely to attract many parents who might otherwise consider home schooling. Finally, not many of the parents are
willing to make the commitment of time, energy, and lost income ("opportunity costs") which home schooling requires. It seems unlikely that the home schooling movement will fundamentally challenge the public and private education systems of the country for large numbers of their students.

Nonetheless growing interest in home schooling has brought expressions of increased concern from professional educators and policy makers. The focus of their concern is usually on the quality of the education being received by the children (Feinstein 1986; Lines 1986). They question whether parents have the time and understanding of either subject matter or teaching methods to instruct their own children (Soloranzo 1985). A common reservation is that children schooled at home will fail academically or socially, that they are not acquiring the fundamental skills needed for good citizenship or economic self-sufficiency (Celis 1990). Officials also object to home schooling on financial grounds because reduced public school attendance reduces state and local aid to school districts. The National Education Association (1989) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1989) have adopted resolutions critical of home education.

Some boards of education have resorted to legal action to prevent parents from educating their children at home. "The extent and at times virulence of legal activity is, in itself, a startling phenomenon" (Pitman 1986, 12). Lines observed
that "enforcement efforts appear to be directed at families who place their children in unapproved education settings, more than at truants enrolled in school and full time truants on the street" (1985, 26). Across the nation home schooling parents have been threatened with civil fines, court injunctions, and even the loss of custody of their children.

To counteract governmental intrusion into a realm that many families and legal experts consider a fundamental right, some parents have taken the initiative to compel authorities to recognize their rights to educate their children according to personal conviction (Sacken 1988). In Georgia, for example, parents have been successful in getting compulsory attendance laws modified to accommodate home education. Several other states "have been forced to change previously vague statutes regarding home instruction as a direct result of political and legal actions launched by well-organized home-instruction advocates. This trend is likely to quicken in the years ahead" (Roach 1989, 61). In 1988 the National Association of State Boards of Education issued a resource document to assist local authorities in establishing equitable guidelines for home schoolers; a further aim was to encourage cooperation between parents and schools. The expense of litigation for school boards and courts, combined with unfavorable publicity resulting from generally unsuccessful efforts to prosecute parents, may have prompted a new approach (Holt 1983). Yet many in the educational community continue
to oppose home schooling despite the clear trend toward liberalization of compulsory attendance laws (Ranbom 1985).

It is the tension caused by the need to balance the competing interests of the society in an educated citizenry and of parents to control their own children’s upbringing that frames the home schooling movement as a phenomenon of sociological and educational importance. Clearly parents who school their children at home are not the only ones dissatisfied with the state of American schooling, as evidenced by the spate of commission reports and reform initiatives over the past decade. These initiatives are viewed by home schooling parents as “confirmation by the public school system itself that all (is) not well” (Knowles 1988a, 8). In the process, however, of accepting total responsibility for the education of their children, home schooling parents are pursuing a highly personal solution to what is usually thought of as a social concern. "And they are willing to be different, to take a socially unorthodox route to rearing the kind of children they want" (Divoky 1983, 397).

Home education is a "socially unorthodox" route to raising children in contemporary America. In the eyes of the public, schools are a guardian of society’s values and a symbol of what America stands for. Even the debate over the state of American education, framed so often in the language of crisis, does not include in any serious way a challenge to the notion that every child should attend school. Parents who choose
home education are turning their backs on one of our most cherished, though widely criticized, institutions. The fact is that "We live in a country where a challenge to the universal necessity of schools is not merely eccentric, not merely radical, but fundamentally un-American" (Guterson 1990, 58). To withdraw one's children from school is, in the eyes of many, to question the very fabric of society.

For schooling means more than teaching reading and writing or a trade, the tools for economic self-reliance and advancement. From the earliest days of public education in the United States, it has been argued that a democracy could only survive if there was an institution that produced democratic men and a democratic culture with a consensus of values and beliefs. The common school, according to Horace Mann, was to produce the common man with the common culture and ideology. Social, economic, and political strife was to be eliminated through the experience of this common schooling, based upon the republican principles of our political system and the moral principles of Christianity upon which all religions could agree (Spring 1974). In other words, the school was seen as a character-producing institution.

In contemporary times school continues to be seen as an essential force for social cohesion. Formal education is projected as an instrument facilitating what John Dewey called the "social continuity of life": the transmission of the dominant culture, including a language, moral codes, the norms
of proper and appropriate behavior, and at least some of its history. It is the school to which we give primary responsibility for reconciling the interests of the individual, group, and society. Socialization is the term that is usually employed to describe the process by which this balance is struck. Through socialization individuals are taught, it is argued, to be members both of groups and society at large.

In the United States today the school is the first major public institution encountered in the life of virtually every citizen. Research into political socialization suggests that it is through the school that one begins to formulate attitudes and modes of behavior towards other public institutions (Spring 1974). Although families also play an important role in this process, the state is restrained from interfering directly in the family's socialization—though many argue that there is considerable indirect influence (Torney 1984). "One component of socialization that generally is acknowledged to belong directly to the schools is the transmission of civic culture—those norms, values, and beliefs that pertain directly to citizenship and governance (Serow 1983, 14). These are in effect the ground rules for social and political toleration in American life in that they specify the rights and responsibilities of government, individuals, and groups in their dealings with one another. The term generally used to refer to this process is civic
education. Gumbert (1987, 11) notes that civic education...seeks, among other objectives, to create and maintain a national community of shared goals and values; to elicit voluntary cooperation in striving for them; to conform individual to civic interests; and to develop such desirable civic habits of thought and action as honesty, obedience to laws, service, and sacrifice.

Civic education thus aims at both cognitive (i.e. knowledge of the government and laws) and affective (i.e. loyalty and patriotism) outcomes.

Conflict over the character-building function of schools is not new to America. "Indeed, the development of private education in this country, with an implied sense of independence from the dictates of the State, originated in the desire to be free--free, that is, to inculcate the right religion. Not even that development, however, was allowed to be unpatriotic or politically heretical" (Wirt and Kirst 1982, 41). Concern over the provincial values taught in private or religious schools, for example, led to legislative efforts to limit or outlaw them in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A landmark case decided in 1925 by the United States Supreme Court, Pierce v. Society of Sisters, confirmed the right of parents to send their children to private schools. At the same time, the Pierce compromise granted the state broad authority to supervise non-public schools because of the state's interest in an educated and loyal citizenry. The Supreme Court continues to recognize the "importance of education to our democratic society....It is the very
foundation of good citizenship" (Brown v. Board of Education 1954).

Conflict over values transmission to the younger generations helps to explain the antagonism of the public in general and the educational community specifically to the home schooling movement. It seems clear from the review of the literature that the decision to home school reflects not just a rejection of contemporary schools but a disillusionment with the contemporary social order. As Van Galen (1987, 161) noted: "Home schooling is not simply a matter of pedagogical preference but instead could be viewed as an integral component of the family’s broader lifestyle and a public declaration of those values." According to Mayberry (1988), most home school parents feel that contemporary society is in a period of moral decay, and lack confidence in mainstream social institutions, maintaining only a peripheral relationship with these institutions. Those who support using public schools to foster community cohesion, according to Arons, are "insulted" by those who dissent from the mainstream practice on institutionalized education. Arons' comments in this regard are worth quoting at length:

The feeling that home education insults the community also arises from a sincerely held belief that publicly run schooling, however imperfect, is a major achievement of community cooperation and a significant expression of the process of community building. From this point of view, those who opt out of the school system do more than just reject the values that currently appear to hold sway among the general public; they refuse to acknowledge any
obligation to participate in public value formation on its most logical and accessible level....(These) individualistic families do not accept the argument that society may use child rearing as a process for creating and recreating group cohesion. The idea that the public can validly involve itself in nonreligious indoctrination and belief formation through schooling is at the heart of civic pride in public schools. (1983, 120)

Home schooling controversies, in effect, bring out the problematic nature of the agreement about which values and beliefs are really valid expressions of community sentiment.

The suspicion that home school families are racist is illustrative of the skepticism which many of these families face. Just as the founding Christian schools of the 1970s were accused of racism—"white flight"—so have home schoolers been suspected. It is almost assumed that home schooling parents do not want their children to 'mix' with children of other racial groupings. Notwithstanding the fact that some of these parents may harbor racist feelings, as do some parents of schooled children, there seems to be other types of value conflicts, as well as a host of academic concerns, motivating parents. The presence of African-Americans and other minority groups in the home school movement attests to its diversity. Perhaps because they are not a large percentage of the movement, however, these families have been overlooked by researchers. A recent nationwide survey, for example, failed to even inquire as to the respondents' race (Brian Ray, telephone interview, March 1990). Thus we have no way of knowing anything about the experiences of these families,
either within their own homes, in the society at large, or among other home schoolers.

The home school movement is growing despite the fact that our society discourages education outside of the standard, formalized settings, whether public or private. A real question remains as to the nature and quality of the education given to the children. While growing interest in the academic community has been focused on the academic achievement of home schooled children, less attention has been directed to the affective domain. If one of the purposes of schooling is to socialize children into public (civic) life, it is important to inquire as to how home schooling parents attempt to fulfill this objective.

Statement of the Problem

Presently there is no research that directly explores the transmission of civic culture in home-based education programs. The home school movement, however, continues to grow despite the restrictions of compulsory attendance laws, legal battles, and community disapproval. The increasing number of home schooled children raises questions as to the implications of this educational alternative for our society. More information is needed in order to examine the balance between the interests of the society in promoting political and social stability through socialization and of parents in exercising their constitutional and natural rights to educate
their children according to their own personal beliefs.

Significance of the Study

As the number of families teaching their children at home has grown, the need for reliable information about the home school movement increases. Much of the available literature exists in the form of advocacy and resource materials. Most of the articles appearing in the mass media are anecdotal and offer little empirical evidence. It is only recently that educational researchers have begun to address the topic: "A review of the literature clearly indicates that home school research is in the early stages of systematic development" (Wright 1988, 96).

As a result, both advocates and opponents of home schools often confront each other with inappropriate, ill-conceived or erroneous views. Consequently "policy debates over home education are often grounded on 'worst-case scenarios' of harm that will come to children taught by presumably ignorant parents" (Van Galen 1988a, 89). It is incumbent upon educational researchers to develop a greater understanding of and insight into home schooling, into its advantages and disadvantages, through well-designed research projects. It is the intent of this study to enable people to become more knowledgeable about home schooling so that they can better appreciate and understand the movement.

The growing numbers of children involved further supports
this interest. With anywhere from one-half to a million children receiving their principal schooling at home, it is of obvious interest to ask how these children are being prepared to assume the responsibilities of adult life. In a democracy this should mean more than preparation for economic self-sufficiency. The socialization of tolerance, for example, which may be considered to be the effort to build support for the rights and freedoms of individuals and groups, is part of the conventional wisdom about the purposes of American education. If one of the aims of home schooling parents is to limit their children's exposure to values, ideas, and people whose beliefs diverge from their own, how well will their children be able to function in our increasingly diverse, multicultural society? As Ray (1988, 27) asks: "Will the typical home school milieu provide enough social interaction for a child to develop a sense of democratic community, an ability to negotiate and compromise, and the motivation to enhance the welfare of others?"

Some writers point out that research into home schools presents an opportunity to further the development of educational practices to benefit all children—not just those educated at home. Holt (1983, 393) likened the home school to a "laboratory" for a "research project, done at no cost, of a kind for which neither the public schools nor the government could afford to pay." The home education experience offers a chance to enrich our understanding into child development and
learning. Fruitful areas for research include the effects of child-centered learning, tutorial learning, peer pressure, and less structured schooling in general (Lines 1987). Knowles (1988a, 12) sees the home school as a significant arena in which to grapple with educational issues and problems. In particular, the issues confronted by home school parents are often issues that the community at large is concerned with and reflects in microcosm the problems facing the United States education community.

Studies involving home schooling offer an opportunity to look at the spectrum of ways parents influence their children's education, and into how to involve parents more fully and effectively in the education process. An expanding body of research into the influence of the home on child development and into the value of parental involvement where parents are seen as essential partners for optimal learning leads directly to an interest in studying home schooling. Ironically the home school movement has been expanding rapidly at a time that school officials are beginning to invite greater parental participation in schooling.

The present study is thus significant in several ways. First, it contributes to a limited body of knowledge describing a recent educational trend which challenges some of the fundamental assumptions about institutionalized education. Second, it looks at the broader societal and sociological implications of home schooling by focusing on the transmission of civic culture, an area that has not been directly addressed
by the research to date. Finally, it incorporates the viewpoint and experiences of a group of home schooling families (African-American) that has been largely overlooked by researchers.

Limitations

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. The sample was limited to eight families who served as case studies for the project. Consequently, the results of the study must be generalized to the home schooling movement with that understanding.

2. The protocol for the case studies was developed for the purpose of conducting the research. The reliability and validity of the information-gathering and analysis techniques, however, were established.

3. The study involved only the collection and analysis of information concerning home schools and the perceptions of parents on home school-related issues.

Research Questions

The following research questions were relevant to this study:

1. What are the backgrounds and current life circumstances of these home schooling families?
2. What are these parents motivations for home schooling their children?
3. What goals do these parents hold for their children?
4. How are these goals pursued in these home schooling programs?
5. How are the civic education programs structured in these homes and why?
6. How does the home schooling experience impact on these families and their programs?
7. Is there a hidden curriculum operating in these home schools which affects the nature of the civic education found there?
8. Is there a set of issues which differentiates European-American and African-American home schooling families?

**Summary**

Home schooling has experienced phenomenal growth in the United States over the past decade. This educational alternative challenges much of the conventional wisdom which has guided thinking about schools and, as a result, has drawn a great deal of criticism from the educational community, policy makers, and the general public. A key aspect of this conflict concerns the character-producing function of schooling in our democratic society. This study examined the process of socialization in home schooling families, with particular reference to the preparation of the children educated there for civic (public) life.
The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Chapter Two presents a review of the research literature to date on home schooling, including an attempt to place this movement in an historical context. Chapter Three provides the research methodology and procedures which will guide this study. A profile of each home schooling family that participated in the study is found in Chapter Four. Chapter Five contains an analysis of the collected data. The paper concludes with the findings, conclusions, and implications of the study, as well as recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Though research into home schooling is in the early stages of systematic development, a considerable amount of empirical research into this educational alternative has been conducted over the past decade. The purpose of this review is to examine the research and to establish how the present study adds to the expanding body of knowledge about home schooling.

This review will report what other researchers have learned regarding the backgrounds and attitudes of home schooling parents, the nature of their home schools, and the effectiveness of their programs. The review opens with an historical perspective on the rise of home schooling. The following sections are organized according to the topic of the research findings. First, the literature related to the characteristics of home schooling families and their schools will be reviewed. Second, the literature related to educational aspects of home schooling will be reviewed. Third, the literature related to social development among home schoolers will be reviewed. Where specific research studies concerned with home schooling are discussed in these three
brief description of the nature of the study. The fifth and final section of the review summarizes the implications of earlier studies and thereby establishes the significance of the present study.

The History of Home Schooling in America

Every human society educates its children, its new and future members. Education expresses what is perhaps our deepest wish - to go on, to persist, to continue into the future generations. It is a program for social survival based on cultural continuity (Walzer 1983). Throughout the prehistory and history of the human race, however, mass public schooling occupies little more than a century, a period that is minuscule in the history of mankind. For most American children, formal schooling hardly existed until the twentieth century. For many, educational provisions based on notions of equality were not legally guaranteed until the 1950s. Rather, children grew up within the environs of home and neighborhood. Universal compulsory schooling at a site outside of the home is a very recent invention in the context of American history.

Since the advent of compulsory schooling in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, considerable debate has been directed at the proper role of American public schools in the rearing of the nation's youth. Prior to this time, there was little cause for controversy. When the
Constitution was adopted in 1789, schooling was neither compulsory nor universal. Concerned that future generations might not be as committed to the precepts of the new nation as they were, some of the "Founding Fathers" looked to the potential value of education as a means whereby citizens could be trained in the principles of republican democracy and convinced of their worth. (Serow 1983) Their concerns, however, were generally directed at the nation's future leaders which, because of stringent property qualifications for voting and office-holding, was quite limited in size. Both the Constitution and the Bill of Rights remained silent when it came to the question of providing such education.

The assumption seems to have been that each family would provide its children with the formal and informal education which they needed to assume their place in society. Formal education was considered to be a family decision dependent on family resources. Tax-supported schools were not the norm (Cremins 1970). Consequently, during America's colonial and early national periods, home schooling was commonplace and, in fact, the predominant form of education (Rakestraw and Rakestraw 1990).

As a result inequalities in educational provisions were commonplace. During the 300 years of their enslavement, for example, most African-American children were precluded along with their elders from any formal education. In many states it was a crime to even teach a black child or adult to read.
Other inequalities based on class or gender operated to distort the presumption of family responsibility for education. European-American children generally learned the skills deemed necessary for survival either in their own homes or in apprenticeships in nearby homes or businesses. The child was taught values and skills by the family and the community, and the "child growing up in such a community could see work-family-religion-recreation-school as an organically related system of human relationships" (Tyack 1974, 15). Few but the wealthy could afford to provide grammar schools for their children, and then usually male children attended (Cremin 1970). Private tutors were commonly employed to educate wealthy children at home in both American and in other European cultures (Cremin 1976). At this point few in the culture suggested that society had either the power or responsibility to provide formal schooling.

The exception was found in the New England colonies where Calvinist Puritans were eager to adopt plans for compulsory education to "ensure the perpetuation of Calvinism and the suppression of possible dissent" (Rothbard 1974, 13). After the founding of the American Republic, it was the Massachusetts Bay Colony that pioneered in establishing public schools and compulsory attendance legislation. Other New England states rapidly followed their example, with only Rhode Island, founded and peopled by heretics from the Puritan orthodoxy, abstaining (Rothbard 1974).
Though there were some "charity schools" established to provide formal schooling on a local level to those in need, American education remained a private or religious matter until the mid-nineteenth century. The rise of the "common school" in the northern states at this time is generally thought to be related to the influx of large numbers of immigrants into the United States. On the one hand, it is likely that some immigrants were eager to have their children learn the language and culture of their new homeland so as to enhance the chances of their success. Equally important, however, was the rise of America's first group of professional educators. Their arguments in favor of schooling were based on concern about how to tame, mould, and assimilate the newcomers (Rothbard 1974). Henry Steele Commager (1990), the eminent educational historian, describes the views of the new "educationists" thusly:

Education was to provide the solution to all problems....Schools were to be the great instrument of Americanization, bringing together and harmonizing many cultures, languages, and faiths. They were to train for self-government, for liberty, for unity. They were to provide not only a common language, but a common culture. They were, at the same time, to take on many of the moral functions traditionally performed by family and church (p.7).

Universal public education in the common school was the means by which individual liberty and a democratic state would be guaranteed.

Though education in the northern states gradually moved toward a model of state-sponsored, secular schooling, the
southern states still maintained family responsibility. Wealthy southern families generally employed a tutor or established a family school on the site of the plantation (O’Neill 1988). After the Civil War, even the recalcitrant South passed legislation providing for free public education. By the early 1900s every state had public schools. Nevertheless, it was well understood who controlled the schools and the education of children: the parents and the local community (Arons 1981; Tyack 1974).

The strength of the parental prerogative in education can be gauged by the "right of excusal." Prior to the early twentieth century, state courts generally upheld the right of parents to remove their children from any course or program of study with no questions asked regarding motives. Families remained in legal control not only of the question of the content of individual education, but also over whether children attended school at all (Arons 1981). Schooling was viewed as an opportunity to which Americans were entitled, and not as a mandate to which they must comply (Pitman 1986). One factor in the decision whether to send a child to school, for example, was the family’s economic and labor needs. Among farming families, for example, it was generally accepted that planting and harvesting seasons were periods when children’s labor power was needed in the fields.

The relationship of families to schooling changed dramatically toward the beginning of the twentieth century.
This change is generally described by its technical component, in all that is implied by the term Industrial Revolution. The relationship between economic developments and schooling in America has been well-documented, but the various historians who have sought to explain the advent of compulsory education differ in their perceptions of what interests were served by it. Ravitch (1978), for example, describes a series of conflicts over the control of schooling as resulting in a shifting compromise which meant that no one group's interest dominated for long. On the other hand, Nasaw (1979) sees schools as institutions designed foremost to preserve social peace within the context of private property and the governmental structures that safeguard it. The need of ruling elites to preserve their power by promoting an ideology which claimed that schooling was the key to personal advancement - the meritocracy - is emphasized by Katz (1968). This ideology served to co-opt lower classes into supporting a "sorting machine" which in effect recreated inequalities in the class system (Spring 1976). Bowles and Gintis (1976) describe the history of compulsory schooling as one of increased domination by capitalism: schools inculcated the attitudes and values needed by the industrial workplace, such as punctuality and respect for external authority.

Coleman takes a somewhat different approach by focusing on changes in family life that took place around the turn of the century: namely, "the creation of a structure of
productive social activities that was independent of the household" (1987, 32). The rise of capitalism and industrial work-life moved economically productive activities outside of the home. As men ceased working in or near the home, the possibility of sons learning adult's work from him or others in the community diminished. This movement of men's work out of the household was paralleled by new social investment in public schooling. Further changes have been brought by the entry of large numbers of women into the work-force during this century. As Tyack notes, "Households in American industrial cities became more like units of consumption than of production" (1976, 363).

A school education became not only compulsory but it became more popular and provided greater status. The goals of public education, generally accepted, reflected a national concern over advancing the ideals of and preserving a democracy, economically strengthening the country, and providing equal opportunity for different races and classes of citizens. "In addition, the socialization of children in the school was a major emphasis of compulsory education, as it provided a powerful means of political control" (Rakestraw and Rakestraw 1990, 69).

Clearly education came to be seen by many as a deliberate tool for social manipulation in the name of social progress. Whether viewed as a service to the ruling elite in recreating their class dominance, to the managers of American industry in
providing a capable work-force, or to the young people who would have to find employment in an industrially based economy,
schools became systematized and bureaucratic, amalgamating culturally diverse family values into an homogenized curriculum and predictable pedagogy. For the next 50 years, from the 1920s to the 1970s, American children went to school. School was a place away from home, and with the advent of consolidation in the 1960s, it was further and further away. Those who attempted to choose home-based learning over institutionalized schooling found themselves in conflict with an inflexible ideology in support of compulsory school attendance (Pitman 1986, 11).

Tyack relates compulsory school attendance to a perspective among social reformers which saw families as inadequate in modern society for child care and rearing: "Much of the drive for compulsory schooling reflected an animus against parents considered incompetent to train their children" (1976, 363). Moreover, laws compelling school attendance were only part of a major transformation in the legal and social rules governing children; child labor laws, the rise of pediatrics as a specialized branch of medicine, and the founding of juvenile courts are examples from this period. Formerly regarded as a central function of the family, education came to be considered as synonymous with schooling. The result, in Coleman's words, is that "the family has become ...a kind of backwater in society, cut off from the mainstream" (1987, 33).

This is not to suggest that home education completely faded out of sight; it never really disappeared. "Many wealthy children continued to learn at home, as well as many
handicapped children and children of traveling families such as missionaries, entertainers, and military personnel" (Eidsmore 1989, 53). Indeed, many of our Presidents were homeschooled, including not just earlier ones such as Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln, but also Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt of this century. Such famous men as scientist Albert Einstein, writer Mark Twain, inventor Thomas Edison, industrialist Andrew Carnagie, and Generals George Patton and Douglas MacArthur are reputed to have received their early education at home (Klicka 1988). A list of publicly known figures who received at least part of their education at home would also include such diverse persons as Margaret Mead, Pearl Buck, Agatha Christie, Charlie Chaplin, Abigail Adams, Louisa Mae Alcott, and current Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Conner (Pitman 1986). Prior to the advent of public schooling and even beyond, home schooling was neither new nor unusual or unsuccessful in many American homes.

Accelerated growth in the numbers of home-educated children over the past twenty years was stimulated in large part by the alternative education movement of the 1960s (Shepherd 1986). From the beginning, the premises and practices of American education have been challenged and pressure to reform them has been brought to bear. Many Americans questioned the effectiveness and appropriateness of the school’s character-producing function. In the aftermath of the Sputnik launch in 1957, when many of the educational
innovations and practices of the present were being formulated and implemented, a new generation of parents began looking for solutions outside of the public schools. Books by liberal education reformers such as John Holt, Ivan Illich, Herbert Kohl, and Jonathan Kozol, to name a few, initiated a period of contention with public schools. These critics spoke of conventional schools and compulsory education as forms of indoctrination and social control, stifling to the individual spirit and creativity. They called for more individual freedom and experiments in education; "free schools", "community schools", and "alternative schools" sprang up across the country. Many of these schools were and still are successful today, as evidenced by the existence of the National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools and similar networks. Others lived a shaky existence, failing in large measure because of a lack of funding.

The alternative schools movement significantly contributed to the re-emergence of home schooling by challenging the conventional wisdom of the educational establishment. These schools employed uncertified personnel and provided curricular content and pedagogical options outside of the mainstream of education. They rejected notions of schooling which confined the process to the four walls of the classroom with a single, professionally trained teacher at the head. The movement produced leaders who embraced and even began to advocate home learning as a valid
option: "It was natural for alternative schools to accommodate home schooling as one more alternative approach to education" (Shepherd 1986, 47).

In particular, John Holt became one of the best-known advocates of home schooling during the ten years prior to his death in 1986. During the 1960s Holt criticized schools as places where children were taught to be passive and indifferent, to hate learning and to feel incompetent. He argued for the abolition of testing, fixed curricula, and compulsory attendance. He encouraged educators to give children more freedom in the choice of subjects and of books, and to allow them to judge their own work (Holt 1964; 1967; 1969). In the 1970s he changed his stance on educational problems from one of arguing for school reform to one of offering support and encouragement to parents who recognized the potential of educating their children at home (Holt 1981). Influenced by Illich's (1970) call to "deschool" society and develop informal learning networks in their place, Holt asserted that compulsory education "is such a gross violation of civil liberties that few adults would stand for it. But the child who resists is treated as a criminal" (1974, 241). Holt's contention was that the full growth of the individual is incompatible with any form of institutional control, whether built on an alleged community consensus or not. He believed that parents and the home, not teachers and the school, are the child's best educators. His libertarian
philosophy would give to parents and youth final authority in educational matters—to decide if, when, where, by whom, how much, and what they want to be taught or to learn.

While most of the early home school movement shared Holt's decidedly secular orientation, in recent years there has been a major influx of parents who are choosing the same educational option for somewhat different reasons. Shepherd (1986) pointed out that the search for religious liberty attracted many parents in the 1980s who were less interested in educational innovation than in the freedom to transmit their own values and world-view to their children independently of the school's socializing influences. These values assert the primacy of religious life and of the traditional family structure, among others, and decry the "secular humanism" of the public schools. By 1983 Divoky was indicating that a majority of home schooling parents in America were religious fundamentalists.

What John Holt is to the heirs of the alternative schools movement, Dr. Raymond Moore is to many of the religious home schoolers. According to Gustafson (1987), Dr. Moore began his research into the detrimental effects of early schooling on children's development long before he began advocating home schooling. Moore (1982) contends that research drawn from a variety of fields provides overwhelming evidence in favor of keeping young children within a "reasonably good home" as long as possible before school enrollment, but at least until the
age of eight or nine. Being a conservative Seventh-Day Adventist, Dr. Moore also believes that children should learn religious and moral principles from their parents before being exposed to the secular culture of the schools (Moore and Moore 1975). As Dr. Moore suggests, it all depends on your aim:

Parents should make up their minds what kind of children they want, and what sacrifices they are willing to make....They should consider carefully how much they risk when they place their children in environments over which they have little control. (p.33)

Moore's belief in the benefits of delayed entry into schools led easily into support for home schooling. His work with the Hewitt Research Foundation (now The Moore Foundation) has established him as one of the most influential leaders of the home schooling movement.

As suggested by these brief profiles of John Holt and Ray Moore, home schoolers differ greatly in fundamental ways concerning their reasons for choosing it and in their approaches to it. Some are political conservatives, while others are liberals or progressives. Some are religious fundamentalists, while others are not religious at all. And while the majority may be motivated by religious considerations, this fact alone does not begin to reflect the diversity of the movement. As Michael Farris, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association says: "We have everything from Black Muslims to Jews and one woman who is a cross between a Zen Buddhist and Winnie the Pooh" (quoted in Allis 1990, 84).
The home school movement comfortably spans a wide range of perspectives, including those of every ideological stripe. One belief that binds them together is the fundamental distinction between schooling and education. The growth of formalized school systems has led to a common perception that schooling and education are synonymous, and that the only legitimate learning takes place within the institutions designed for this purpose. But parents and families educate; so do a host of other 'nonformal' agencies such as the media, peers, and the workplace (Cole 1983).

Fantini (1985b) has created a model which is useful for placing the re-emergence of home schooling in an historical context. In particular, Fantini believes that the relationship between school and nonschool agencies of education changed in accordance with larger, societal transformations as America moved from an agricultural to an industrial to a post-industrial society. Thus while compulsory public schooling may have "originated from genuine societal needs" (Rakestraw and Rakestraw 1990), present and future conditions are creating the need for other approaches.

Fantini identifies four overlapping stages in the evolution of the relationship between school and nonschool settings in America. The first two stages correspond to the years of nation-building that were discussed earlier in this section. The first stage, the Shared Model, made sense in a rural, agricultural society where communities tended to be
homogenous and education was home-based. Each separate agency within the community (i.e. church, neighbors, apprenticeship) contributed in its own way to the education and socialization of the young. The second stage, the Comprehensive Delegative Stage, was useful for an industrializing society that was incorporating a large number of immigrants as well as new relations of work and political life. Delegation of responsibility to professional educators led to a de-emphasis of the nonformal agencies and educators, including the family.

The transformation in America to a knowledge-based, high technology economy in the second half of the twentieth century has brought about different relationships between schools and their communities. A better educated citizenry led to parents demanding a greater role in school governance and reform. Business and industry called for changes to keep pace with the new requirements of the economy. Growing diversity of the population brought about a recognition of the value of pluralism in schools and society. Greater understanding of human development and a recognition of distinct learning styles brought curricular experimentation and flexibility. Rediscovery of the many stakeholders and diverse interests in the educational arena led to a renewed emphasis on community education. Collaboration and partnerships in education became the slogans of the day in this third or Coordinative Stage. "There was, after all, strong concern for developing a series of legitimate options in education" (p. 52).
Fantini sees home education as "only one of a range of educational options in which parents seek increased and occasionally direct control" (p. 52). Into the same category he places alternative schools, magnet schools, and thematic schools and programs. He relates the expansion of choice, as does Naisbitt (1984), to the growth of self-help philosophies, the efforts of people to assume more direct responsibility for their lives and their learning.

According to Fantini, the information age requires new connections between school and nonschool learning environments. He writes:

> The advent of new tools for learning, such as telecommunications, will increase the capacity of all people to pursue learning regardless of age of background. Education will undergo dramatic redefinitions and more learning resources will be available to the individual than ever before. (p.58)

He urges the educational community to move from a preoccupation with the delivery of services to the fourth or Facilitative Stage. In his book, *A Place Called School*, John Goodlad pointed toward the need for a similar evolution, toward what he called the "educative community": an optimally structured community that links the various learning centers of the region into one comprehensive system of education. Historian Lawrence Cremin (1976) similarly proposed an "ecology of education" in which the community would become the basic context for education, tying together the different educative forces in the community. One of the most taken-for-granted aspects of education in modern America has
been its location in a special building, the school. From an emphasis on teaching in schools, we may well need to move to an emphasis on learning, whenever, however, and wherever it best occurs. Seen in this light, the return to home schooling may represent a movement along a necessary evolutionary path—the affirmation that there are many valid "locations of learning" (Meighan 1980)

Home Schooling Families and Their Schools

Any attempt to generalize about home schooling families and their schools must begin with three caveats. First, as Ray (1988) points out, the more we try to generalize about these families in order to understand them, the more we seem to get "further from capturing the plurality and multiple dimensions that are so much a part of the home schooling group" (p.17). The wide variety within home schooling, representing diverse philosophical and political perspectives, has been amply attested to by numerous researchers. Second, the uncertain legal status of home schooling in many states along with the distrust of many parents toward anyone investigating home-based education means that many participants may not be represented in the studies that do exist (Cizek 1988). Third, reviews of home school studies indicate that many are plagued by extremely small samples or by sampling procedures that greatly limit the extent to which their findings can be generalized (Mayberry 1988; Pitman 1986;
Wright 1988).

Bearing these points in mind, the progress of research into home schooling over the past decade has led to an accumulation of knowledge about this population and a composite picture is beginning to emerge. This section of the literature review attempts to provide a descriptive profile of the characteristics of home schooling families and their schools. The discussion is organized into three parts: 1) demographics; 2) motivation to home school; and 3) characteristics of the programs.

Demographics

Gustavsen (1981) conducted one of the earliest and most comprehensive research studies of actual home schools. His descriptive, analytical study focused on selected characteristics of home schools and of the parents who operate them. His self-designed, 63-item survey instrument was mailed to families in 44 states. The subjects of his research were 312 families drawn from a pool of approximately 3,000 families on file at the Hewitt Research Foundation. Frequency distributions and measures of central tendency were used to analyze the data.

Based on a 70.8% return rate, Gustavsen found that the majority of the parents had the following characteristics:

1. They predominately lived in rural areas and small towns.
2. They came from diverse, non-traditional religious backgrounds.

3. They had small households, typically four people.

4. The typical profession of the female was mother/housewife/homemaker, while the males were for the most part skilled workers or professionals.

5. Their median income was between $15,000 and $20,000.

6. They typically had attended between one and three years of college.

7. They were religious, but not greatly involved in church life.

8. They had limited community involvement due to preoccupation in the home.

9. Travel was a family priority.

Linden (1983) conducted a less comprehensive but similar descriptive survey of home schools in Texas. Her population of 108 parents was drawn from a variety of sources, including a curriculum supplier, local attorneys, the Hewitt Research Foundation and other home schooling families. The return rate was 61%. Frequency distributions and measures of central tendency were used to analyze the data. She reported that the majority of the respondents had the following characteristics:

1. They lived in suburban areas.

2. They were part of a Protestant religious community.

3. The highest level of formal education attained by the parent who served as the main teacher was high school.
4. The range of incomes most frequently mentioned was $10,000-$14,999.

5. They liked to travel to locations of educational interest to the children. The sampling procedures of both Gustavsen and Linden led them to religiously-oriented families. Thus their findings are not necessarily representative of the movement as a whole.

Wartes (1985, 1988) is the project leader for the Washington Homeschool Research Project, a cooperative effort to gather information about home schooling families in Washington state. In a 1985 pilot study Wartes reported results similar to Gustavsen (1981): that the male parent was a professional or skilled worker, the parents had one to three years of college, and they were only average socializers. He also found that 55% of the families had an income from $15,000 to $35,000, 60% of the parents were 31 to 40 years old, and that 74% of the parents were Caucasian. The results of a more recent survey described the typical family as a two-parent family (93%) that earns a little more than $25,000 per year. The parents were somewhat above average in their level of education; 26% had a Bachelor’s degree and only 5% had less than a high school diploma. The family typically had two or three children, and again the overwhelming majority were Caucasian (96% of the students).

Rose (1985) conducted a qualitative study of home schooling families in South Carolina and the perceptions of
district school personnel there. The subjects of the study were 10 of the 31 approved home schools in the state for the 1984-85 school year. These 10 families were selected because they were the only ones he could locate. Rose reported the following demographic information based on an 18-item interview instrument he designed:

1. Most mothers were homemakers.
2. Most fathers were secure in their jobs and established in their professions.
3. Most families had an annual income in excess of $25,000.
4. The majority of parents had attended college, with some having received degrees.
5. Most parents had attended public schools.
6. Most families were Caucasian.

While Taylor's (1986) study focused on socialization among home school children, some demographic information concerning these families was gathered. His sample was randomly drawn from the mailing lists of two of the earliest home-schooling support agencies: the Hewitt Research Foundation and Holt Associates. The combined mailing list totaled approximately 45,000 names, representing all regions of the United States. Two thousand names were randomly selected, and a 47% return rate was obtained. The relevant demographic findings were:

1. There is an approximately balanced distribution of
home schoolers in terms of geographical region and gender.

2. It appears that families frequently have more children than the national average.

3. The educational level and socioeconomic status attained by families is considerably higher than that of the comparable general population.

4. The locale of families is more rural than that of the comparable general population.

Gustafson (1987) developed a 30-item survey which was mailed out to families whose names were drawn from the directory of Growing Without Schooling, a magazine published by Holt Associates. A total of 143 families representing 275 children participated in the survey. The sample must be looked at critically, however, because all of these parents had previously indicated an interest in responding to such surveys. Moreover, the directory of this magazine is in no way representative of the home schooling population as a whole. Gustafson had a 60% return rate and used frequency distributions and measures of central tendency to analyze the data. She reported that the parents had 2.2 children and 66% had some religious affiliation. Her results agreed with other studies in that these families were on the whole well educated and fairly stable economically. Nearly half reported earnings between $15,000 and $30,000 annually, while another 42% had higher earnings.

Gladin (1987) used a sample drawn from the Bob Jones
University Press home schooling mailing list to investigate the characteristics of home school families and their schools. The purpose of the study was to identify the characteristics of families who were teaching their children at home, the characteristics of their schools, the opinions of these families about their schools and homes, and the relationships between these characteristics and opinions. A total of 416 questionnaires were mailed out to families in 11 states, and 253 (62%) were returned. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Gladin reported the following characteristics of home schooling families in his sample:

1. Mothers are primarily homemakers, while fathers are primarily professional or self-employed in jobs which offer enough autonomy for them to participate in home schooling.

2. The majority of parents had some college experience.

3. The mean annual income was $30,972 with the majority selecting a range from under $20,000 to $30,000.

4. Over half of the families lived in the suburbs and 36% lived in rural areas.

5. The average family attended religious services 2-3 times per week.

This last point is not at all surprising in light of the bias of the sample toward families who are on a mailing list of a department of a Christian university.

Mayberry (1988) conducted a state-wide survey of home
schooling families in Oregon. Her survey examined the variety of demographic characteristics and religious, political, and educational attitudes held by families who home school. It was designed specifically to provide a comparison between home school parents and the general population. Complementary in-depth interviews were used to learn something about the experiences and personal meaning systems that inform the values and beliefs of these families. A return rate of 35% was obtained from the 1600 questionnaires mailed. The demographic findings suggest a number of differences between these families and the general Oregonian and national populations:

1. Home school parents tend to be more educated and economically secure.

2. They are more likely to live in small residential areas.

3. A greater percentage work in either professional or technical fields.

4. A greater percentage are either self-employed or employed in small-scale organizations that offer a relative degree of job autonomy.

5. They tend to be more religiously committed and more likely to attend church on a regular basis.

6. Many have left the traditional religions in which they were raised and joined nontraditional religious organizations.
Two studies have been carried out in Georgia in recent years. O'Neill (1988) has conducted the only doctoral-level research into home schooling families in Georgia to date. The purpose of his study was to survey the perceptions of home schooling parents and superintendents in the state by using one of the Regional Educational Service Divisions as the sample. Seven research questions were posed concerning demographics of parents, a comparison of the perceptions of the two groups on home schooling issues, the identification of variables which differentiated these groups, and the identification of variables which differentiated religious and non-religious parents. A 30-item author-developed questionnaire was used to collect data, which was then analyzed using measures of central tendencies, chi-square analysis, and discriminant analysis. The overall return rate was 81%. O'Neill made the following conclusions concerning demographics:

1. The overwhelming majority of main educators (primary teacher/parent) had training beyond high school, and nearly half had earned a bachelor’s or graduate degree.

2. Parents were primarily a product of the public school system.

Unfortunately O'Neill failed to gather any other data which would aid in developing an accurate profile of home schooling families in Georgia. It is important to further recognize that his population was limited to those parents who had
officially registered with district school officials.

Groover (1989) researched home schoolers in Georgia in order to evaluate whether differences exist between them and non-home schooling parents in the areas of educational and child-rearing values and practices. A second purpose was to determine whether any differences exist between these two groups in the area of family social relationships. Her sample consisted of 70 home schooling and 20 non-home schooling families. A survey questionnaire based on the Purdue Questionnaire for Parents of Primary Grade Children was used. The data was analyzed by a one-way analysis of variance procedure and the Tukey-HSD procedure. Demographic information revealed that all of the families were Caucasian and had two parents at the head. The families had an average of three children. All mothers were homemakers, though a surprising percentage of them (39%) were certified teachers. The parents' average level of education was a college degree.

Ray (1988,1989) has written a very thorough review of home school related literature in which he evaluated the appropriateness of their analyses and organized their findings. He synthesized the various reports to yield the following major characteristics of home schooling families, which serves to summarize this section:

1. Both parents are actively involved in the home school with the mother as the main teacher.

2. Most parents have attended or graduated from college.
3. Total household income is $20,000 to $30,000 annually.
4. 65-70% regularly attend religious services, with a wide variety of religious backgrounds represented.
5. Three children are in the family.
6. A nearly equal number of boys and girls are educated at home.
7. 70% of the children are between nine and twelve years old.

Ray (1988) carried his profile one step further by comparing these characteristics to data on the national populace. He concludes that "home school parents and families are not drastically different from mainstream America" (p.19). There is, however, at least one crucial difference, and it is this common belief that unifies the home school movement; that is, "that the education of children is primarily the responsibility and the right of parents" (p.19). The literature suggests that parents who home school their children are willing to go to the extreme in terms of parental involvement. The next section of the review examines the motivations of the parents in these previously described home schools and in studies of other researchers.
Motivation to Home School

The question "Why home school?" has been the focal issue in many of the studies conducted to date. A review of this literature suggests a variety of religious, academic, and lifestyle concerns motivate parents to educate their children at home.

Gustavsen (1981) collected extensive attitudinal information from the home schooling parents in his nationwide survey. He listed the following five reasons for home schooling in order of their importance:

1. Concern for the moral health of their children.
2. Concern for their character development.
3. Excess competition and peer pressure in conventional schools.
4. The poor quality of education in public schools.
5. The desire to enjoy children at home during their early years and to extend parent-child contact.

Gustavsen also reported that parents operating home schools for the most part shared the following opinions:

1. There was too much violence in the public schools.
2. Their children were better prepared for life than children going to conventional schools.
3. Their children were healthier and better behaved than most other children in the community.
4. The needs of children should come first when making family educational decisions.
5. With determination, people can change the circumstances around them.

Linden (1983) also conducted a fairly extensive survey of attitudes of home schooling families in Texas. The findings indicated that parents preferred home schooling because in public schools: a) the theory of evolution ("ungodly, humanistic philosophies") was being taught; b) there was a lack of religious freedom; c) creativity was stifled; d) drugs and alcohol were prevalent; e) respect among peers was absent; f) discipline was lacking; and g) classes were too large. Linden also reported that many parents were influenced by literature, religious groups, and home schooling support groups.

Greene (1984) researched home school families that were involved in Alaska's Centralized Correspondence Study program (CCS). This program covers grades K-12 and is operated by the Alaska Department of Education. It is available to any resident in the state and is considered equivalent to normal public education. These schools differed from the home schools discussed in this review in that they were actually part of the public school system. Although the parent was the teacher, these schools operated under the supervision of a certified teacher provided by the state.

Greene randomly selected 189 homes from a 457-name directory. Her 27-item survey (with 16 items for parents and 11 items for students) was returned by 47% of the families.
These families reported the following reasons for choosing home study:

1. The teaching of religious/spiritual and moral values (58%).

2. The opportunity to integrate schooling with daily personal life skills (52%).

3. The belief that home schooling is more consistent with their lifestyle (30%).

In a study similar to the present one, Williams et.al. (1984) conducted two types of research activities in order to better understand the home schooling movement. First, informal descriptions of home schools and their participants based on published materials were compiled (a 'review of the literature'). Second, several case studies of families at various stages in the process of home schooling were conducted. Based upon observations and interviews over a 10-month period, qualitative descriptions of their activities and the meanings behind their behavior were offered. Williams et.al. gave the following reasons why parents choose to home school:

1. The child seemed unsuited for conventional schooling because of a perceived academic gift or academic/social difficulties.

2. Parents wanted to feel in control of a home-centered, not school-centered, family.

3. Parents wanted to improve socialization by raising
their children to be peer independent.

4. They felt that schools did not encourage independent thinking and learning how to learn.

5. Parents' ideas about content diverged from schools, with a greater emphasis on values and on materials based on students' interests.

6. Parents enjoyed watching their children learn; they enjoyed being parents and learning with their children.

Williams et al. failed to provide much information, however, about the values parents wanted to inculcate, the specific methods they used to accomplish their goals, or their perceptions of how this training prepared their children for civic life.

Rose (1985) reported that most of the 10 home schooling families he studied in South Carolina withdrew their children from public or private school because of religion, poor discipline in schools, and wrong values being taught. He further noted that while parents had aspirations for their children to obtain a college degree, they wanted them to remain healthy and happy foremost.

Schemmer (1985) conducted a case study of four home schooling families in Indiana. The main purpose of the study was to describe the curricula and methods used in these homes and to evaluate the effects of home schooling on the families involved. Schemmer designed four instruments to aid in interviewing parents and children, observing actual
instruction, and gathering parental attitudes; she also administered an achievement test to the five children from these families. In the area of motivation she reported the following findings:

1. All of the parents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements: a) age requirements for entrance into public schools take into account developmental differences of children; b) certified teachers are best prepared to teach children; c) parents are being patriotic by sending their children to public schools; and d) competition of one child with another is important for academic and social growth.

2. All of the parents agreed or strongly agreed with these statements: a) value training is as important as academic training; and b) the social needs of home-educated children can be met through planned experiences such as those offered by a support group.

To her credit Schemmer selected these families because each represented a different approach to home schooling. Her findings suggest that for these families in Indiana, concern for socialization and values training overshadow academic considerations.

Van Galen (1987) employed the qualitative research techniques of participant observation, open-ended interviewing, and document analysis in her 18-month case study of 16 home schooling families in North Carolina. These families identified three primary reasons for choosing home
schooling: a) home schooling builds and strengthens the family relative to other social institutions; b) it enables parents to protect their children from the influence of others who hold values and beliefs different from their own; and c) it enables parents to respond to the unique needs of their children in a manner that is not possible in the ordinary classroom setting. A corollary to the second reason is that parents believe they are able to pass on their own values to their children without interference.

Gladin's (1987) sample of religiously-oriented parents offered rationales similar to the parents in Van Galen's study. Their reasons for choosing home schooling are listed as follows in rank order of importance, though the mean scores separating each were minimal:

1. Fulfill God-given responsibility.
2. Have more control over what children learn.
3. Reduce effects of peer pressure.
4. Reduce effects of rivalry and competition.
5. Improve quality of family life.
6. Spend more time with children.
7. Address the specific needs of children; promote greater academic achievement.

The parents in Gustafson's (1987) nationwide survey reported three reasons as being the most important in deciding whether or not to home school: the quality of teaching in conventional schools, the quality of the moral atmosphere.
there, and the quality of the social atmosphere found in the home. These parents felt that academic achievement was important, along with moral development and the social environment in which children were nurtured. The three most important advantages to home schooling to these parents were flexibility, the ability to avoid negative influences, and the opportunity to individualize instruction based upon a child's genuine interests and natural desire to learn.

Wartes (1988), in his survey of home schoolers in Washington, reported that motives related to religion or philosophy were most often cited by parents. Reasons pertaining to a smaller and more personal environment, however, were also rated highly — generally above considerations of academic accomplishment. He believes that in time we may see a larger proportion of parents who choose home schooling for nonreligious reasons.

Data obtained from the Oregon Home School Study enabled Mayberry (1988) to identify four categories of home school parents in that state. Each category represents a common set of issues or themes related to motivation. The parents categories are as follows:

1. Those motivated by religious beliefs (65%): These parents are primarily concerned with what they perceive as their right to take charge of the education of their children. They believe it is their duty to instill particular religious beliefs and values, and they oppose the secular orientation of
public schools.

2. Those whose major concern is academic achievement (22%): These parents believe that public schools do a poor job of addressing the academic needs of their children, and that home-based instruction is best suited to facilitate their academic growth. Some believe that home schools have more rigorous academic standards, and some have children with special needs. Many state that one-on-one teaching is the most important component of academic achievement.

3. Those whose major concern is the social development of their children (11%): These parents cite the negative effects of peer pressure and competition. Other concerns include a desire to preserve family unity and to allow children to learn at their own pace. They believe that public schools are unable to design programs sensitive to the developmental stages of young children, and that children are not ready for intense classroom interaction until at least 10 or 11 years of age.

4. Those who desire a "New Age" orientation to schooling (2%): Families in this underreported group believe that schools are ill-equipped to provide cultural beliefs and values that are consistent with New Age philosophy. "They desire instruction that emphasizes the interrelatedness of all life, presents a global view, and nurtures a spirituality that emphasizes peaceful coexistence with others" (p.38).

O’Neill’s (1988) survey of home schooling parents in one
of Georgia's regional school districts yielded some information related to parent's reasons for home schooling. His data showed "a nearly perfect split between home school parents who identified themselves as being motivated by either religious or non-religious reasons" (p.177). Parents chose the home school option in reaction to the perceived low quality of public education, as evidenced by low moral standards, inappropriate subject matter (i.e. secular humanism), and the lack of individualized instruction. Analysis of the data led O'Neill to conclude that the degree of differences in the views of religious and non-religious parents were so minimal that attempts to understand the home school movement as a religious movement are unfounded.

Groover (1989) collected only subjective responses regarding motivation from the Georgia parents in her study. These responses were grouped to enable comparisons between parents who listed "academic," "beliefs/values," or a combination of the two as their reasons for home schooling. She found that differences within her home schooling sample were as great as those between home schoolers and public schoolers. Despite this diversity she discovered some commonalities among the home schoolers:

1. They adhere to certain ideologies, religious and otherwise, and wish to instill strongly-held beliefs in their children.

2. They are concerned with strengthening their families.
3. They want to control outside influences that compete with or negate their attempts to instill their beliefs in their children and to strengthen their families.

4. They believe that they can provide a quality of education equal to or better than what the schools can offer. She concludes that "their decision to home school appears to be a reaction to societal changes" (p.37) though she fails to explore this statement in any detail.

Overall, the multiple conclusions reached by researchers highlight the difficulty of understanding the complex reasons why parents elect to school their children at home. Rationales fall into several categories: dissatisfaction with academic standards in schools, with standards of discipline and morality there, and with the socialization process there; desire for family unity, to provide for the spiritual needs of children, and to use alternative teaching methodologies emphasizing direct and experiential learning. Ray's (1989) overview of home schooling similarly mentions "concerns for both the cognitive (i.e. to accomplish more academically and more individualized learning) and affective (i.e. to learn selected religious or philosophical values, avoid peer pressure, greater parent-child contact, and better self-concept) development of children" (p.7).

The fact remains that the prevailing view of home schooling parents depicts them as overzealous, religious fanatics: "reactionaries who choose home schooling as the best
line of defense against negative influences" (Resetar 1990, 2). On the other hand, recent attempts to create a typology of parents' reasons for home schooling suggest that their motivations may be less defensive than is commonly assumed. Pitman's (1987) four categories of home schooling parents - religious, socio-emotional, New Age, and academic - are very similar to Mayberry's (1988); both reflect a range of rationales motivating parents. Despite the differences, for these families,

home schooling simply makes sense. What does not make sense is to send their young children off to an institution to join dozens of other youngsters in a round of activities largely unrelated to their lives at home in order to learn information that can be learned at least as well and probably better in their own home environment" (Pitman 1987, 283).

From her case studies of families in North Carolina, Van Galen (1988b) has identified two broad categories of home schooling parents - "Ideologues" and "Pedagogues". The former choose home schooling for what could be described as defensive reasons related to the values and beliefs taught in schools; the latter teach at home primarily for pedagogical reasons, because "schools teach what they teach ineptly" (p.55). Both groups, however, emphasize positive motivations as well: Ideologues have "specific values, beliefs, and skills that they want their children to learn" while Pedagogues share "a belief that children learn best when pedagogy taps into the child's innate desire to learn" (p.55). Both groups report growing confidence to accomplish their goals for their
children more effectively than schools.

Resetar (1990) elaborated on the distinction between "defensive" and "offensive" rationales in his longitudinal study of home schooling families in Pennsylvania. This is one of the only studies which has followed a large, fairly constant group over a period of time. In the first phase Resetar mailed a questionnaire to 300 families which was completed and returned by 76 of them. Closed and open-ended questions were used to ask parents about their initial reasons for choosing to home school and whether these reasons had changed over time. Other information related to academic achievement and affect of home schooling on family life was also gathered. In a follow-up study three years later Resetar used closed and open-ended questions to gather more information regarding parents’ educational philosophy and goals, their instructional approach and curriculum, and any changes in their reasons for home schooling.

Data from these surveys led Resetar to suggest that previous research characterizing parents according to why they home school on the basis of one survey at one point in time may have done so prematurely. His "Experiential Phases of Home Schooling Families Model" pictures families as progressing through a series of experiential phases from the time they first decide to home school until their home schooling is complete. The model differentiates parents on the basis of their original rationales for choosing home
schooling, and then illustrates pathways for each group which show offensive/positive rationales being increasingly emphasized over defensive/negative ones the longer a family is home schooling. Thus, the reasons some parents have for home schooling are subject to change and may evolve over time as the parents make meaning of their home school experiences. That is, we believe the broad categories of the Ideologues and Pedagogues may represent parents at different stages in their development as home schoolers rather than differentiating between two distinct types of home schooling parents" (p.3).

Resetar believes that re-analysis of the results from previous studies investigating parents' motivations tends to confirm his model. The growing confidence of parents reported by both Van Galen (1988b) and Resetar (1990) means that over time parents may find it easier to emphasize the positive advantages of educating their children at home rather than merely reacting to the perceived deficiencies of conventional schooling. According to Knowles (1989), there may be a more general societal component to the process of change in home schooling families as well. He identified four phases in the growth of the home schooling movement which are operative at the level of both society and individual families:

1. Contentions about schools.
2. Confrontations with schools and courts.
3. Cooperation with schools.

Knowles commented on the "tendency of individual families to
undergo the same sequence of phases" as characterize the movement as a whole (p.396). Moreover, growing public acceptance of home schooling means that the experiences of contemporary families are far less confrontational compared to the experiences of home schooling families of ten years ago. The evolution from contention to consolidation is increasingly becoming shorter and "the confrontation phase is becoming diffused and obviously less pivotal and formative in the individual family’s course of action" (p.396).

The significance of understanding parental motivations is underscored by the work of those researchers who are moving home school research from an exploratory stage to a stage marked by more clearly defined hypotheses and theoretical positions. Some of the studies reviewed above suggest a relationship between parent’s rationales for choosing home schooling and how they actually conduct their programs there (Mayberry, 1989; Resetar, 1990; Van Galen, 1988b). This review now turns to a description of the home schools and the instructional practices found there.
Characteristics of Home Schools

Virtually all overviews of home schooling, whether research-based (Pitman 1986; Ray 1988) or journalistic (Divoky 1983; Kohn 1988; Lines 1987), attest to the wide variety of educational philosophies and approaches found there. Parents "can be found anywhere along a continuum of educational philosophies, stretching from a free-form, non-directive approach to a regimented, almost institutional style of teaching" (Kohn 1988, 22). Ray (1988) described the variety of approaches in home schooling as "no different in essence than the variety of opinion and practice found among theorists, educators, and teachers who are associated with conventional schools" (p. 17-18). After surveying the studies which describe the characteristics of home schools, this section will examine the salient points in the context of the hypothesized relationship between the parents' motivation and the ways they operate their schools.

Based on his national sample, Gustavsen (1981) found that the typical home school had the following characteristics:

1. It was a family enterprise which both parents sponsored but the mother operated.

2. It was small in size with an average of two students.

3. Instruction was informal, child-centered and flexible.

4. The majority did not use standardized achievement tests.

5. Formal instruction averaged 3.7 hours per day with
children studying on their own for an average of 2.7 hours daily.

6. It was approved by local authorities.

7. Instructional materials were prepared by 44% of the parents but most parents used a combination of materials including commercially prepared and conventional materials.

8. Curriculum covered the wide range of conventional subjects with science, math, and reading most emphasized.

9. It was operated for more than two years.

Linden's (1983) survey of Texas home schoolers revealed information similar to that of Gustavsen. The subjects taught there were similar to those found in the public schools, with 41% of the parents using materials likely to be found in conventional schools and 56% using commercially prepared home schooling materials. The school day averaged 3 hours daily with an additional 2.5 hours daily for independent work. In almost all cases the mother was the primary teacher, and she usually used standardized tests as the method of evaluating her children's progress.

Greene (1984) reported that parents in Alaskan home schools considered their programs to be informal, child-centered and relatively flexible. The curriculum there was also based on conventional subject offerings, and the mother was the primary teacher in 92% of the homes.

In their case studies Williams et.al (1984) observed that original source materials such as periodicals were used more
often in home schools. Learning also tended to be more experiential in that "hands-on" activities were emphasized, and holistic in that intellectual, social, physical, and spiritual ideas were not learned as separate subjects. Willams et.al. also reported that where children had previously attended conventional schools, learning at home began with more structure and formality, yet eventually grew more flexible. Where children had never attended schools, learning began from a more flexible and informal basis.

Research into ten home schools in South Carolina led Rose (1985) to conclude that most of their curriculum was of a religious nature with secular materials added. An important observation was that the type of testing used by parents varied so widely that it would be difficult to use any results as the basis for comparison with other groups. This statement confirms one of Cizek's (1988) arguments against the use of standardized testing as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of home schooling.

In the four Indiana families studied by Schemmer (1985) it was determined that three of the parents followed a curriculum purchased from commercial publishers. Two schools followed a fairly rigid time schedule while the other two used little scheduling. Planning and delivery of lessons and activities was carried out by the mother in all four cases, and was considered structured in three of the four homes. The method of instruction was evenly split between the mother
being a facilitator of learning and being the initiator of direct instruction.

Taylor's (1986) research into the socialization of home schooled children yielded only a little information related to the characteristics of the school itself. The average home school had been in operation for 2.66 years and involved an average of 2.46 children. The children were concentrated toward the lower grade levels and tended to begin formal instruction at a later age than the national average.

The Christian families surveyed by Gladin (1987) provided much insight into the characteristics of their schools. Gladin reported the following information:

1. 65% of the students had attended some school previously, with most having attended a Christian private school.

2. Less than 10% had operated for more than 3 years, while the average was 18.5 month and the most frequent 9 months.

3. In most cases the mother was the main teacher, and in most cases the exclusive teacher.

4. The total school day averaged 6 hours, with one hour for teaching preparation, 2.5 hours for student instruction, and 2.5 hours for supervision of independent study or participation in a cottage industry.

5. The pattern of subjects was typical of a conventional Christian school.
6. Most parents planned to continue home schooling through the middle grades.

7. A large number used purchased instructional materials. Most of the respondents also reported that they found the experience of home schooling their children a very positive one, and few described it as very frustrating.

Wartes (1988) described the home education programs in Washington as being slightly toward the more structured side of middle on a "very unstructured" to "very structured" continuum. The student spent a median of 11-15 hours per week in formal schooling, and typically had been home schooled for 1-3 years. Most of the children had previously attended conventional schools, and most of these had left private schools (54%). On a proportional basis, however, private schools were considerably overrepresented in this sample, confirming Gladin’s finding that many parents object to formal schooling as such. A majority (62%) of the parents attended support group meetings or activities at least bimonthly and 85% utilized community resources in the education of their children at least twice monthly.

O’Neill (1988) reported that the Georgia families in his survey primarily used instructional materials developed either for private schools or especially for home schoolers. The largest percentage were in their initial year of operation with nearly 70% being in their first two years. The majority of parents (64.5%) participated in support groups, generally
at the local level. Less than half of the children had been administered an achievement test, though this is not surprising in light of the large number of new home schooling families. The fact that the majority of parents expected their children to obtain college degrees suggests that academic achievement was valued, though this question was not directly addressed. The paucity of specific information about the characteristics of these Georgia home schools is a clear limitation to the utility of O’Neill’s study.

Groover (1989) also failed to explore deeper than a superficial level into the nature of the Georgia home schools she studied. She noted that academic achievement was important to these parents and that they held educational expectations for their children as high as those held by the public school parents in her sample. Home schooling parents did report more hands-on involvement in their children’s education, however, than did the control group of public school parents. The amount of books and educational materials present in the homes of home schoolers was also significantly greater than that of the public schoolers, though a fairly large number (29%) of the home schooling families chose not to own a television set.

Van Galen (1988b) focused much of her research on the form of the pedagogy created by the North Carolina home schoolers in her case study. The distinction she identified in rationales between Ideologues and Pedagogues seemed to
operate at the level of pedagogy as well. Ideological parents had few complaints about the structure of formal education, and thus tended to mimic conventional practices in their homes: "Many of these parents go so far as to create a schoolroom at home, with chalkboards, alphabet charts, and a flag mounted on the wall" (p.57-58). Coming to home education because they objected to specific elements of the curriculum, Ideologues merely substituted their own ideology for that of the schools while attempting to reconstruct schools in their homes. Their dependence on workbooks and textbooks as well as on correspondence courses led Van Galen to observe that

the parents who are most suspicious of the schools are more likely than others to employ methods and materials that most closely resemble those employed by traditional school, and these parents who argue most strongly that they alone should have authority over their children’s learning are among the least actively involved in teaching their children. (p.62).

Thus the physical detachment of Ideologues from conventional schools was not matched by any ideological detachment from the pedagogical structure of formal education.

Many of the Pedagogues, on the other hand, consciously attempted to make their home schools different from conventional schools. Commercial materials were modified to fit into days that were organized around more informal and experiential learning: "These parents do not merely supervise their child’s learning, but instead deliberately choose among alternatives, experiment with various techniques or materials, and define their own goals" (p.60). Spontaneity and
creativity were valued more highly by these parents than how far one progressed through a text or course. To a far greater extent than Ideologues, the Pedagogues encouraged their children to analyze and criticize, rather than merely memorize information.

As in the case of parental motivations, following these families over time enabled Van Galen (1988b) to observe a process of change in the structure of the home schooling. By the end of the first year many of the Ideologues grew dissatisfied with the purchased curriculum materials and began making more of their own decisions about how their children should be taught. With experience parents developed more confidence in their ability to make choices about their children's education; learning became more spontaneous and self-directed as they allowed their children more autonomy and freedom. Ideologues "moved from an unchallenged belief that they could passively structure their children's education around purchased materials to a more critical understanding of the limitations of traditional pedagogy" (p.64). Van Galen described this metamorphosis as a process of growing from their early specific and personal criticisms of their children's schooling to questioning the validity of the institution of schooling itself.

The "Experiential Phases of Home Schooling Families Model," developed by Resetar (1990) from his longitudinal study of Pennsylvania families, attempted to describe the
changes that occur in parents and how they carry out their home schooling as they gain experience. Resetar agrees with Van Galen that the original reasons for home schooling directly effect how the parents structure their home school activities. As a result, initially there was great pedagogical variation between the families in his study. Just as experience in home schooling resulted in a re-evaluation of parents' motives, Resetar observed a gradual "pedagogical refinement" as parents gained more experience in teaching their children. Even among those parents who began with a tightly structured, formal, performance-oriented approach, most eventually came to emphasize children's choice and freedom, flexibility, parental nurturance, and appropriateness. Resetar described the maturation of these parents away from feelings that they needed to "prove" the viability of their programs to self or others and toward more relaxed phases where pedagogical development and innovation can be approached with confidence. He posited that such a transformation may be a key ingredient in the ability of parents to avoid burnout from the stresses inherent in adopting an unorthodox educational alternative for their children.

In summary of this section, it appears that it is impossible to arrive at a single characterization of all home schools. There is a continuum of pedagogical philosophies and practices which can be described variously as
Ideological-Pedagogical, structured-unstructured, or as Experiential Phases. The studies of Van Galen (1988b) and Resetar (1990) suggest that parents gain confidence in their abilities to operate a home school over time, and that they increasingly shed dependence on a formal curriculum in favor of more informal, flexible programs. This change may be analogous to what has been described (Divoky 1983; Holt 1981) as the need of those children who have previously attended conventional schools to adjust to home schools gradually, to shed habits learned there and to regain a sense of self-direction. Home schooling parents who overcome their anxieties seem to realize the advice of Moore (1982) in their practices:

Mothers and fathers need not worry about 'teaching' as such. The evidence suggest that they simply should be good parents—warm, responsive, and as consistent as possible. Share the work of the home with the children, giving them the experience of feeling wanted and depended on and the altruistic experience of doing something for others. This will usually bring to the (home) school youngsters who are more stable, optimistic, self-directed, better disciplined, and more highly motivated. Such a program is integrative instead of divisive from the family point of view and normally should provide for the child the warm, unbroken environment and self-worth he needs. (p.370)

It is likely that critics take less comfort in these lofty words than in empirical research. Thus it is to the effects of home schooling that this review now turns.
Educational Aspects of Home Schooling

Critics of home schooling commonly express concern about the academic achievement of students educated there. Since the primary purpose of all schools—whether public, private, or home—is to educate their children, this aspect of home education must now be considered.

As the preceding section on the characteristics of home schooling families and their schools evidences, academic considerations play a major role in both the motivation and instructional practices of parents who choose to home school. Parallel to the growth of the movement through the 1980s, documentation and media publicity over the past decade dealing with the failings of American schools have stimulated a national debate over their status. Many parents see these reports as validating their dissatisfaction with conventional settings (Knowles 1988a). Many educational advantages are cited as rationales by home schooling parents, such as the increased opportunities for individualized instruction. Parents also recognize that schools are unwilling or unable to develop programs based on children's unique learning styles or interests, and believe that they can do this at home (Gladin 1987; Gustafson 1987; Linden, 1983; Mayberry 1988; O'Neill 1988; Van Galen 1987; Wartes 1988; Williams et.al. 1984).

The structure of classrooms in public and private schools, with their large numbers of students, militate against diversity. Parents at home, however, do not have to
manage a whole class of children with widely varying backgrounds and behaviors. They can focus on one or two students at a time and give them the attention that would not be possible in a group situation. The belief that superior academic progress is possible at home is commonly found in the literature on motivation.

The instructional strategies used by parents reflect a commitment to maintaining high academic standards at home. Many studies report that the range of conventional subjects covered in schools are part of the home school program. For those parents who rely upon conventional textbooks and worksheets or purchased curricula, keeping their children at a level comparable to their school-educated age-group is clearly a priority. For many parents this is seen as a necessity because of the likelihood of their children returning to formal schools at some future point. Even those parents who emphasize child-led learning using informal, flexible methodologies do so from a belief that preserving a child’s love of learning is the surest guarantee of intellectual development. The flexibility and informality possible with home education appeals to families across the ideological spectrum (Van Galen, 1987). The large number of parents who state educational goals for their children in terms of college degrees (Knopf 1988; O’Neill 1988; Rose 1985) is a further sign of the importance they place on academic achievement.
The obvious question which arises is how well are home school students prepared academically. Anecdotal accounts concerning the outcomes of home schooling abound. Feinstein (1986) quoted Mary Ann Pitman, a professor of Educational Anthropology who has been studying home schooling, as saying that "from what I have seen so far, these children are learning better than their counterparts in schools, and they are in no way damaged by the experience" (p.22). Ray (1988) cited McGurdy as concluding that "these children achieve as well or better than those in schools" (p.20). Lines (1987) quoted Della Bella as reporting that 90% of Connecticut children who begin a program of home instruction are already at or above grade level when they re-enter conventional schools.

While some home schooled children may suffer from inadequate or negligent parent/teachers, some clearly flourish. Perhaps the most publicized success story concerns the Colfax family whose three sons, each educated primarily or totally at home, gained admission to Harvard University (Colfax and Colfax 1988). Another example is that of a Florida boy who had been schooled at home through the sixth grade and won top individual honors in a 1986 Mathcounts competition (Lines 1987). Klicka (1988) cited a list of almost twenty colleges and universities to which home schoolers have been accepted. Two of the leading spokesmen of the movement, Raymond Moore (1982) and John Holt (1981), made
similar claims regarding the adequacy of the academic preparation found at home:

1. On standardized tests, home schooled children outperform students educated conventionally.

2. Many home schooled children rank in the 80th percentile on standardized tests, about 30 points above the average.

3. They get better grades when they go back to conventional schools.

4. They nearly all go to college.

The problem with such claims is that they come from proponents and are not substantiated by any hard data.

Scattered testing data does exists, however, and a few researchers have collected and analyzed it. In four instances data was collected through survey questions. Gustavsen (1981) found that standardized tests were used by 40.3% of the families in his nationwide sample, and he concluded that children's achievement rated above average for those who reported using them. Unfortunately this conclusion was not supported by any data presented in the report. Linden (1983) also reported children's test scores for the Texas families in her study. She noted that home schooled children tested at an academic rate equal to that of students who attended public schools. For the Georgia families in O'Neill's study (1988), the overwhelming majority of those who had administered a standardized test (less than half) reported that their
children had performed above average. The Pennsylvania home schoolers who participated in the first phase of Resetar’s (1990) research reported that the children in their programs average at the 80th percentile on standardized achievement tests.

A handful of other researchers have been able to analyze the test scores of home schoolers directly without having to assume parents’ unbiased reporting of them. The Alaska Department of Education routinely tests home schooled children, and they are beginning to collect longitudinal data on achievement test scores. Early results led Greene (1984) to conclude that not only do these students outperform their school-based peers in both verbal and math achievement at all grade levels, but the longer the child is in the home school program, "the more likely he or she is to perform better than those in the program for a shorter time" (p. 18). On the other hand, Schemmer (1985) administered an achievement test to the five children in her case study and found that only two of them were able to achieve at or above their grade level.

In the spring of 1986 the Tennessee Department of Education found that home schooled children in third grade averaged in the 90th percentile in reading on a standardized test while public school students averaged in the 76th percentile. In math, the home schooled children scored, on the average, in the 86.8 percentile while their public school counterparts averaged in the 80th percentile (Klicka 1988).
Rakestraw (1987) administered the Stanford Achievement Test directly to 84 home schooled children in the state of Alabama. The results indicated that: a) in the areas of reading, listening, language and mathematics, these children performed at comparable levels to public schooled children; b) home schooled boys and girls performed comparably to each other; c) parents' level of educational attainment was not a significant factor in the level of the children's achievement scores; d) children whose parents were not certified to teach performed as well as those whose parents were certified; and e) overall, the home schooled children performed above national norm levels on this test.

Wartes (1988) has studied home school students' achievement in Washington for several years. His 1987 study found that the median score among 426 home school students on the SAT was at the 68th percentile on national norms. When the sampling more than doubled to 873 students the following year, the median scores were again in the 65-66 percentile range. These results led Wartes to conclude that "fears that home schooled children are at an academic disadvantage compared to conventionally educated students are not confirmed" (p.46). The latter study also looked at several relationship issues which may be relevant to policymaking. The 1987 sampling indicated that there were no significant relationships between the following sets of variables:

1. Parent educational level and home school outcomes.
2. Contact with a certified teacher and student outcomes.
3. Level of structure and hours of schooling and academic outcomes.
4. Length of time a student has been home schooled and academic outcomes.
5. Grade level and academic outcomes.
6. Family income level and test scores.
7. Degree of religious content in the home school program and students' academic achievement.

Whereas educators and legislators have often thought to evaluate home schools in terms of the conventional wisdom (i.e. hours of instruction, sequenced curriculum, certified teacher, group of students arranged by age, etc.), Wartes argued that these variables do not offer an appropriate framework by which to judge home schooling: "attempts to judge home schools must be outcome based" (1988, 50). Ray’s synthesis of the research on learner outcomes led him to conclude that when outcome-based measures are used, "the available evidence indicates that home school youth of compulsory education age have been scoring equal to or better than their conventional school peers on measures of cognitive achievement" (1988, 25).

The administration of standardized tests to home schoolers is required by law in a number of states. Lines (1987) noted that there is a difficulty in gathering this data, however, since in some states the tests are scored at
the state level but in others the state does not require its scoring contractors to aggregate data. In Georgia, for example, tests must be administered by law to home schooled children every five years but there is no requirement that they be reported to anyone. Parents are only required to keep test records on file at home. In other states the district offices register home schoolers and collect test results but may never report them to any central office at the state level. In these situations it may be extremely difficult to analyze test scores in order to assess academic progress.

No discussion of academic outcomes in home schooling should overlook the concerns Cizek (1988) raises regarding the appropriateness of using standardized tests to assess the quality of home-based programs. Cizek argues that these methods are not a reasonable means of assessing home-based students. He argues against the use of such tests, especially when the results are used to evaluate the permissibility of programs:

1. The use of percentile ranks from a norm-referenced test to make judgments about content mastery for an individual student has been soundly rejected by experts in the field of measurement.

2. The use of scores obtained by individual students on norm-referenced tests as a measure of individual standard attainment is improper. One can imagine the uproar if a conventionally-schooled student's 'failure' to attain
standards resulted in the blame being fixed on the teacher. Yet this is exactly what happens if permissibility is tied to attainment of standards.

3. Home educated students are usually less familiar with the types, content, format, and context of standardized tests than are students in institutionalized settings.

4. Home education yields a vastly different educational experience than that encountered by the typical student, yet standardized tests are normed based on the characteristics of the typical public and private school student.

5. There is the danger that testing requirements may force parents to structure their programs so that they 'teach to the test', thus having a curriculum-restricting effect.

6. Testing in the United States is generally used to monitor the success of schools in their various functions rather than to monitor the performance of individual students. Cizek believes that it would be unfair to hold home schooling students to assessment methods that would be unacceptable in conventional settings. He calls upon all concerned parties to create new instruments by which the educational effectiveness of home-based programs can be fairly gauged.

Nonetheless, the research that is available suggests that home schooled students perform at least as well as their peers in public and private schools on standard measures of academic achievement. A recent study by Williams (1990) also suggests that home school children maybe more creative than their
conventional school peers. Williams administered the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) to the oldest child in his random sample of home schooling families drawn from the Oak Meadow School mailing list. Though there was no conventional school control group in this study, it was possible to compare the results with normed scores based on 34,000 conventional school children and provided by the testmaker. A t-test indicated that the home school children scored significantly higher than the norm on the global mean and on three out of five subscales. Correlations, however, suggested that creativity is not related to variations in instructional approaches in the home school but to a combination of factors that lie outside of the instructional domain—household income, the age of the parent/teacher, and the extent to which the student had attended a conventional school in the past. The latter was noted for its possible confounding effect because the nature of the test favored students who were accustomed to taking pen and paper tests.

Based on Williams' findings home schooled children do appear to be more creative than their non-home schooling peers. Conclusions about causation must be approached with caution, however, because the study simply explored correlations: It may be that

more creative children are found in the home school environment not because home schooling made them that way, but because they were already more creative than their peers and thus they (or their parents) were attracted to the home school environment, presumably because of the greater opportunities for freedom and
flexibility that it affords. (p.8).
Williams' cautious discussion of his findings is a healthy reminder that it would be premature to attribute causation to home schooling in any of the studies reviewed in this section. What is known is that home schooled children appear to be progressing in their homes. This review now turns to the literature on the psychological effects of home schooling to assess how home-based students are faring in their social development.
Social Development in Home Schooling

Concern for their children’s ethical, moral, and spiritual development runs deeply through parents’ explanations of why they choose home schooling. While they may differ over the values and beliefs they want to transmit to their children and those they want to protect their children from, home schooling parents have deliberately chosen to maintain distance from one of the nation’s most pervasive institutions and thus from the mainstream of society. Critics raise fears about the social development of children deprived of the company of their peers. Feinstein (1986) expressed the concern that "home schoolers can easily become social isolates" (p.1). Indeed, questions about the socialization needs of home schooling children are asked more frequently than any other question (Taylor 1986).

Moore (1982) points out that educators and parents usually talk about sociability without differentiating the kind of sociability they prefer. He draws a distinction between the positive sociability which is characterized by a sense of self-worth and a stable value system and negative sociability; the former is seen as growing out of feeling needed, wanted and depended on at home to share responsibilities and chores while the latter "develops when a child surrenders to his peers" (p.366).

The literature suggests that the desire to mitigate the negative aspects of peer-dependence is one of the most common
concerns expressed by home-schooling parents. Holt (1981) described the negative aspects of institutionalized socialization found in schools in the following terms:

In all but a very few of the schools I have taught in, visited, or know anything about, the social life of the children is mean-spirited, competitive, exclusive, status-seeking, snobbish, full of talk about who went to whose birthday party and who got what Christmas presents and who got how many Valentine cards and who is talking to so-and-so and who is not. Even in the first grade, classes soon divide up into leaders (energetic—and often deservedly—popular kids), their bands of followers, and other outsiders who are pointedly excluded from the group. (p. 44-45).

Bronfenbrenner (1970) is also specific in his warnings about schools:

As for the school—in which the child spends most of his time—it is debarred by tradition, lack of experience, and preoccupation with subject matter from concerning itself in any major way with the child’s development as a person....If the institutions of our society continue to remove parents, other adults, and older youth from active participation in the lives of children, and if the resulting vacuum is filled by the age-segregated peer group, we can anticipate increased alienation, indifference, antagonism and violence on the part of the younger generation in all segments of our society—middle-class children as well as the disadvantaged.... (p. 11-17, 152-53).

Many home schooling parents thus insist that the reality of a child’s social life at school is, if anything, a good argument for schooling (Kohn 1988).

Home schoolers also respond to critics that their children are not social isolates. Their children interact regularly with other children, home-schooled and conventionally-schooled, in a variety of extracurricular and recreational activities. Ray (1988) stated that "it is common
for home-schooled children to have significant interactions with adults and children outside of their immediate families" (p.5). Rakestraw (1987), for example, found that home-schooled children in Alabama participated in religious or Sunday school activities (98.3%), interaction with other home-schooled children (90%), neighborhood children (88.3%), music activities (50%), sports activities (48.3%), public or private school functions (35%), and neighborhood or community service organizations such as scouts (18.3%).

Wartes (cited in Ray, 1988) was also concerned with socialization. He found that 52.8% of the Washington home schoolers in his sample spent 20 to more than 30 hours per month in organized community activities. Fifty percent of the children spent more than 30 hours each month with age peers outside of the family. Interaction with non-age peers was common as well, with 67.9% spending 20 to more than 30 hours monthly with youth of more than one year difference in age. Wartes concluded that these home schooled youth are not being socially deprived.

Three researchers have conducted empirical studies to address the concerns about socialization of home schooled students. In the first and best-known study, Taylor (1986) "sought to analyze the relationship which exists between home schooling and the self-concept of children in grades four through twelve" among home schoolers (p.5). He used home schooled children’s scores on the Piers-Harris Self-Concept
Scale, a measure of the "central core of personality," in his study. Some of his findings were as follows:

1. The self-concept of the home schoolers was significantly higher than that of the conventionally schooled population on all scales of the Scale. Half of the home schoolers scored at or above the 91st percentile on the global scale.

2. The best predictive model of self-concept in home schoolers is related to lower grade-equivalence, higher years of home schooling, higher socioeconomic status, higher number of home schoolers in the family, and higher beginning school age.

3. The self-concept of the home schoolers decreased significantly as age and grade level rose.

4. Higher socioeconomic status and an increase in the number of home schoolers in the family are significantly related to a more positive self-concept.

Taylor concluded that insofar as self-concept is a reflector of socialization, it appears that few home schooled children are socially deprived. Questions have been raised, however, about the adequacy of the Piers-Harris Scale as a valid measure of socialization for this population. Moreover, as with the case of academic achievement, the question remained as to whether home schooled children exhibited a higher self-concept because they were being home schooled, or whether it was due to the fact that these children were being raised
in a stimulating and child-centered environment.

Delahooke (1986) more directly addressed the socialization issue in a comparative study of privately educated children and home schoolers. She used what she considered to be fairly equivalent groups of home schooled (n=28) and privately schooled (n=32) children averaging 9.1 years of age. Analysis of covariance and t-tests were used to determine if the groups would differ. She found no difference between the two groups on reading, arithmetic, or intelligence scores. She also found that both groups scored in the "well-adjusted" range of the Roberts Apperception Test for Children which measures the construct of personality. In addition, home educated children appeared to be less peer-oriented than their peers in the private school.

More recently, Montgomery (1989) researched the effect of home schooling on the leadership skills of home schooled students. Drawing from the literature on leadership, Montgomery concluded that "it is not IQ scores, socioeconomic status, or grade point average that are most predictive of a student's taking on leadership roles in adulthood, but rather his or her leadership experiences while in school" (p.3). Montgomery wanted to know if there was something occurring in the home school environment which adequately compensates for the extracurricular program and leadership experiences of the conventional school setting. To answer this question Montgomery designed a 26-item interview schedule based upon
her identification of the key ingredients in students' leadership development, as indicated by a review of the literature. She interviewed a stratified random sample of fifty urban, rural, and suburban families in the state of Washington representing a range of family values and motivations for home schooling; both parents and children over ten years of age were questioned. In addition, she interviewed a control group of conventionally schooled students at a local private school. From the results of her study she found that "Home schooling is not generally repressive of a student's potential leadership, and may in fact, nurture leadership at least as well as does the conventional system" (p.8). Three patterns stand out as characteristics of her home schooling population which might account for her conclusion:

1. Home schooling students have as their models parents who are leaders and who demonstrate on an ongoing basis those traits that are identified in the literature as important leadership traits.

2. The message that home schooled children receive from their parents, both explicitly and implicitly, is that they are special people, valued and capable members of the family.

3. Home schooled children are not isolated from social interaction with their peer group nor denied participation in a variety of at-home and out-of-home organized group activities. In fact, "there were a number of students who
reported having increased social contact and group participation because school required less of their time" (p.9).

In her study comparing home schooling and public schooling families in Georgia, Groover (1989) was able to find little significant difference in the area of social relationships. Out of five measures of social relationships (level of peer interaction, extent of children's social involvement, involvement with church, parent community involvement, and involvement with relatives), only one, involvement with church, revealed any significant difference. In general, regardless of schooling type, children had between six and ten friends outside the home and got together with them once or twice weekly. Children belonged to roughly three or four groups outside the family and attended activities outside the home once a week or more. There was no evidence to suggest that home schooling parents are social isolates either, as they had an equal number of contact with community organizations as did the parents of public school children. At the same time subjective parent responses "revealed that 34% of home school parents specifically mentioned a concern with peer pressure or peer dependency as a reason for home schooling..." (p.34). Groover suggests that "future studies should examine more closely the home schooling families' attempts to control their children's social interactions and the effects..." (p.35.).
Clearly the social development of their children is a major concern of home schooling parents. It is not uncommon to hear parents themselves expressing fears that their children will be socially isolated, nor for home schooled students to feel the same. This anxiety is particularly present when the children at home are very young or when a family is just beginning to home school. The research studies that do exist indicate, however, that many of the social needs of home-educated children can be met through planned experiences such as those offered by a support group or community organizations.

Studies suggest that home schooling parents who provide reasonable and responsive home environments, as well as opportunities for social interaction outside of the home, produce children who display confidence, a sense of direction, and freedom from dependence on the values, beliefs and behaviors of their peers. Most home schooling parents would be encouraged by these findings. They consider peer dependency to be one of the negative effects of socialization, and the desire to avoid it often figures in their decision to home school in the first place.

What these studies fail to question, however, is the extent to which a heightened sense of individuality is compatible with a democratic community. Franzosa (1984) criticizes Holt because of his contention that the full growth of the individual is incompatible with any form of institutional control built on community
consensus....Holt’s conservative libertarianism defines a society in which the individual’s welfare is not the legitimate concern of the state, one’s children can be thought of strictly as one’s own, and the individual need feel no responsibility for the good of all. The best and wisest parent within this ideological context chooses to reject social participation in favor of personal independence and autonomy. (p.229)

Francoza believes that the "ideal political order" articulated by Holt is based on "non-interference and the protection of personal liberty rather than collectivism and strategies designed to foster group solidarity" (p.232).

Yet, as has already been noted, there is a long-standing belief among Americans that schooling is somehow able to shape the members of each new generations into the kinds of citizens who will advance the ideal and reality of democratic governance. Moreover, schooling is supposed to prepare these new generations to work toward a more equitable and tolerant social order. The provision of public schooling, freely available and based upon notions of equal opportunity, epitomizes this belief. Our acceptance of the alternatives provided by private schools is contingent (in law) upon their upholding the principles of democratic education and loyalty to the nation. The nature of the civic education to which home schooling children are being exposed has not been investigated by previous researchers. It is to this question that the present study is directed.
Summary of the Review of the Literature

In summary, this review has described the research into growing national movement which has broad appeal to a diverse group of parents who are motivated by a variety of reasons. This diversity is reflected in the fact that parents from a wide range of socioeconomic levels as well as cultural and religious backgrounds are choosing this educational alternative for their children. It is also reflected in the assortment of methods, curricula, and scheduling patterns which characterize the educational programs offered in their homes. The most common characteristic of these families is the deep commitment of parents to pursue what they feel is best for their children. This belief has led them to remove their children from the experience of one of the most common social institutions in contemporary America, even at the considerable expense of time, energy, money, and social disapproval.

It is too early to evaluate with any certainty the success of these home schools. When examined on the basis of conventional tests of efficacy, there is no reason to assume that home schooling is detrimental for the majority of children involved. The research into the cognitive learning outcomes of home schooling suggests that the overwhelming majority of home schooled children score at average or above-average levels on standardized achievement tests. Research into affective outcomes similarly suggests that these
children are developing healthy self-concepts and effective socialization skills. Worst-case scenarios of the harm that will result when children are schooled primarily or exclusively in the home appear unfounded.

At the same time there is much that is not known about what takes place in a home education program. One area that has not been investigated is the nature of the civic education offered in these homes. Civic education is that portion of the curriculum of educational institutions which socializes individuals to membership in their political community (at both the local and national levels). This review has established that the desire for socializing young people into civic life has been a primary motivating force in the establishment and expansion of the American educational system since its earliest days. Although many question how substantial (or successful) the school’s influence has been in shaping citizenship in American society, researchers agree that schools play a role in transmitting political knowledge and attitudes (Torney-Puta 1987). No one disputes that families also influence the acquisition of values, political values among them. Home schooling, however, presents a situation in which parents have considerably more control over children’s value formation than most schools could ever have. It is the desire to maintain this control and dissension from the values taught in conventional school settings, in fact, which motivates many of these parents to choose home schooling.
in the first place. Examination of the nature of the civic education found in home schools is the first step toward assessing the implications of this educational alternative for the continued development of democratic community in America. This study thus breaks new ground substantively in looking at an issue that is suggested by the research literature but which has not been directly investigated therein.

Previous research does provide insight for the direction this inquiry should take. In particular, the studies of Van Galen (1986, 1988b), Mayberry (1988), and Resetar (1990) suggest that a typology of parental motivations for home schooling can be constructed, and that a relationship exists between parental motivations and the nature of the educational programs found in home schools. Van Galen and Resetar caution, however, that such a typology may be of limited utility in understanding home schooling if this relationship is viewed as more than one point in time in the parent's development as educators. As parents gain more confidence in their abilities to make more decisions about their children's education without feeling compelled to mimic the structure of formal schooling, they appear to allow their children more autonomy and freedom. Thus parental motivations and level of experience (confidence) are indicated as factors to be explored in the transmission of civic culture. Van Galen (1988b) further suggests that there is a "hidden curriculum" operating in home schools. She notes that when parents
dissent from school, they often do so at considerable legal, personal, and political risk. The notion of a hidden curriculum in home schooling goes beyond the content of the texts or other instructional materials found in the home; it also "incorporates the personal and political conflicts the families find themselves in as they face opposition from friends, relatives, and public officials..." (1988b, 65). Often at the core of this hidden curriculum are lessons about society's limited tolerance for dissent and support for individual differences.

It is widely recognized in the research on civics education that a hidden curriculum influences the civic attitudes which students acquire in schools (Torney-Puta 1985). This implicit curriculum extends beyond mandated civics courses and explicit goals of instruction. Students in schools also learn values from the ways that schools embody these values in organization, teaching practice, and social climate. Research has demonstrated, for example, the ways in which fairness in the administration of school rules and students' beliefs about their power in school decision-making influence attitudes and behavior (Ehman 1980). Thus an inquiry into civic education in home schools which stops at identifying parents' social goals for their children and how they are pursued may provide only limited insights. The extent to which a hidden curriculum operates in the home school, both in terms of their pedagogy and the relationship
of the family to potential critics, is relevant to any investigation of civic education there. The question of goals that should be achieved through citizenship education remains a critical one. The most important thing to understand about civic education is the kind of citizenship it encourages. "Because democracy is a living ideal, (civic) education cannot be reduced to a pious defense of the status quo, and it cannot end with studying the mechanics of democratic government" (Parker 1990, 17). Democratic citizenship is not merely a matter of preserving democracy; it is also a matter of creating democracy. The questions which give rise to this study concern the extent to which home schooling children are being prepared for a life of participation in civic community, of acting on a sense of responsibility to others beyond their immediate family and community. It is the strong individualistic orientation of home schooling families that informs many critiques of this re-emerging alternative. As Van Galen (1988b, 62) notes, "allowing their children the freedom to earn independently cannot be assumed to ensure independence of thought and action in the political and economic world."

This is not to suggest that home schooling families should be held to a standard that does not prevail within the conventional school system. Ample research has documented the failure of the public schools, despite their mandates and resources, to produce citizens who are supportive of
democratic values and committed to active participation in guiding the public institutions of American society (Torney-Puta and Schwille 1986). What is missing from most efforts at civic education is the notion that a democratic society needs to nurture in its young people a sense of social responsibility and social efficacy; that is, a personal investment in the well-being of others and confidence in their ability to affect constructive social or political change (Berman 1990). Chapter Three provides detailed information about the methods and procedures which will be used to examine how home schooling parents attempt to prepare their children for the challenging tasks of civic life.
CHAPTER THREE
METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The objective of this study was to describe the process of socialization found in home schooling families, with particular reference to the manner in which they transmit civic culture. In order to do so, case eight of several home schooling families in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia were conducted. Extensive descriptions of these families were generated based upon multiple sources of evidence. Detailed descriptions of each family and the nature of their home schooling programs are included in this report, facilitating independent assessment of the findings.

Chapter Three contains an explanation of the methods and procedures used to obtain and analyze the data. It describes the research design, setting, sampling procedures, the instruments, data collection procedures, and analysis of the data. The chapter concludes with a summary of the methods and procedures.

Research Design

The design selected for this study is case study
research. A case study is an empirical inquiry that provides detailed information about a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. This approach is particularly useful when the goal of research is exploratory: to describe a phenomenon in order to develop tentative propositions for further inquiry. It is preferred to the experimental design, moreover, when the researcher has little or no control over actual behavioral events (Yin 1989). A common concern about case studies is whether or not they provide the basis for scientific generalization. Relatively large quantities of data about the research questions may be gathered in order to describe and analyze a complex social phenomenon without providing insights relevant beyond the single case being investigated. It can be argued that in exploratory case study research, generalizability is not a concern because emphasis is placed on the unique characteristics of each case. If case study research in home schooling is viewed as composed of isolated situations, however, such research has a limited value in the development of cumulative knowledge or contributions to the development of theoretical frameworks (Wright 1988).

The present study employed a multiple-case study design to avoid this situation. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being stronger (Yin 1989). The key is to consider the multiple cases as one would consider multiple
experiments. Each individual case study consists of a "whole" study in which convergent evidence is sought for the facts and conclusions for the case. Cross-case comparisons are then made to identify convergent and divergent patterns. The individual cases are reported in Chapter Four and the multiple-case results are reported in Chapter Five.

This research was not intended to show cause-and-effect relationships. Instead it is an exploratory study to describe and analyze the process of civic education among home schooling families in qualitative terms. The goals were to gain insight into the existing phenomenon of home schooling and to generate hypotheses which might guide future inquiries. The parent(s) in each of these families and their home schooling programs were the cases studied, and the parent(s) in each individual home served as the primary units of analysis.

One of the quality control strategies of data collection and analysis used in many case studies is triangulation. Triangulation involves collecting data from multiple sources such as documents, diaries, questionnaires, direct observations, and intensive interviews. This strategy is helpful for establishing the validity and reliability of the results of the study. By using a variety of data collection techniques, the researcher has access to a variety of viewpoints and perspectives, alleviating the criticism that the analyses appear to be personally generated and therefore
less rigorous than statistical procedures. Several of these techniques were employed in the present study and are discussed in detail in the section on data collection procedures.

Description of the Setting

The setting of the study was the homes of the parent-informants. One of the difficulties in implementing case studies involving home schooling is gaining access to the private domain of the home. For this reason many case study researchers have used families previously known to them.

Difficulty does not necessarily equal impossibility, however, and this study utilized a variety of strategies in order to gain the trust of a sample of home schooling parents so that the research could be carried out. First, an assurance of anonymity was made to all informants. The real names of persons and places were not used in any data logging and analysis activities; pseudonyms were substituted for their names. Since the goal is understanding the phenomenon being researched, one advantage of anonymity is that the absence of real names enables both the researcher and the reader to focus on the generalizable patterns emerging from the data rather than the personalities involved in a human interest story (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Second, the researcher drew upon already established contacts in the local and national home schooling movement in order to gain introduction to
prospective informants. Third, all prospective informants were provided with a brief account of the proposed research outlining both the methods of data collection (what was expected of the participants) and the significance of the project. Finally, the researcher conducted himself in a thoroughly courteous and professional manner in all interactions with prospective and actual informants.

**Sampling Procedures**

The population of the study was composed of home schooling parents in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia. The sample consisted of the parents of eight home schooling families in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia.

Although the subjects of the study were not randomly selected, the results and conclusions should be considered as generalizable to the population albeit with reservations. Selection is a threat to the external validity of the study. In order to reflect the diversity of the home schooling movement and to establish the credibility of the findings, however, a representative cross-section of families was selected. The selection process was based upon parents' motivation for choosing home schooling for their children, using Van Galen's (1986) two categories of home schooling parents: parents primarily motivated by religious beliefs (Ideologues) or academic concerns (Pedagogues). Motivations
were identified by responses to an initial questionnaire. The sample also included an equal number of European-American and African-American home schooling families.

**Description of the Instruments**

Two instruments were developed by the researcher to assist in data collection. An initial questionnaire was sent to all prospective informants to gather information relevant to demographics, motivations, characteristics of the home schooling programs, and social goals of parents. The first step in developing this instrument was to devise questions which would gather data related to these objectives. Questions were based on the review of the literature as well as instruments which have been developed and used by other researchers of home schooling. Unambiguous questions were developed to minimize the chance that different respondents might interpret them differently.

The original questionnaire was then subject to review in two distinct ways. First, several home schooling parents were asked to evaluate the questionnaire in an effort to obtain feedback as to the quality, clarity, and completeness of the instrument. Face validity is a judgment that the items appear to be relevant, and this threat to internal validity will be addressed as well by this review. Because of their participation in this stage of the research, these parents were disqualified as prospective informants. A panel of
experts, composed of professional educators with advanced degrees, were also asked to examine the instrument. Following the input of these two groups of reviewers, the questionnaire was revised and finalized.

The second instrument consisted of a series of open-ended questions which guided the researcher in the intensive interviewing of the case study informants. These questions were used by the researcher to probe more deeply than the initial questionnaire in gathering information relevant to the full set of concerns reflected by the research questions. Because intensive interviewing is a guided conservation whose goal is to elicit from the informant rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis, its structure must necessarily remain flexible in the case study approach. The aim is less to discover the frequency of predetermined alternative answers to preformed questions (as in a survey) than to discover the informant’s experience of a particular topic or situation (Lofland and Lofland 1984). Thus this instrument actually served more as a reminder to the researcher regarding information that needed to be collected. The main purpose of these questions was to keep the researcher on track as the interview proceeds. This interview schedule was also evaluated by the panel of educational professionals to ensure that all of the concerns relevant to the research questions of the study were adequately addressed.
Data Collection Procedures

The steps in the collection of the data were guided by what is referred to in the literature as a "case study protocol." A case study protocol is more than an instrument; it should contain the instrument(s) but it also contains the procedures and general rules that should be followed in using the instrument(s) or other data collection strategies. The protocol is a major tactic in increasing the reliability of case study research because it demonstrates that the operations of the study, such as the data collection procedures, can be repeated by another researcher with the same results. The goal is to minimize the errors and biases in the study, and to ensure that the objectives of the study - answering the research questions - are achieved.

Data collection took place over a six month period. At the outset prospective informants were mailed a copy of the questionnaire; they were asked to complete and return the instrument within one week to the researcher. Responses to this questionnaire were analyzed by the researcher both for content related to answering the research questions, and to establish membership of parents in groups by their motivations for home schooling and race. Selection of the families who served as case studies was based upon parents' responses to the questionnaire.

An initial interview was then scheduled by the researcher to take place in the home of the informant at a time that was
convenient to them. The latter point was important to ensure that the interview was conducted without time pressures and external distractions. During the course of the interview the researcher took field notes; these initial notes acted only as "memory jogs" of the key points of the interview and not as complete records. An important consideration in interview technique is for the researcher to pay close attention to the course of the interview and not to be distracted by trying to write down everything that was said. All interviews were tape recorded in their entirety by the researcher. Following the interview the researcher prepared a written record of the interview including: summaries and notes of what the informant said generally at some point; verbatim transcripts of responses that seemed important to the study; tentative pieces of analysis; methodological difficulties or successes; and personal emotional experiences of the researcher in the field.

While at the home the researcher also examined documentary evidence which was relevant to the objectives of the study. Such documents included, but were not necessarily limited to: textbooks, self-designed or purchased curricula, periodicals, classrooms, testing results, and records of any correspondence with other home schooling families or interested parties. These documents were useful in providing details to corroborate or contradict information gathered from other sources and to gain insight into areas worthy of further
investigation in the follow-up interview.

All informants were asked to maintain a journal or diary over the course of the data collection process. These diaries were intended to serve as observational logs maintained by the person being studied which would then reviewed by the researcher as the basis for the follow-up interview. The diary method allows the informant to record observations and insights which are not readily available during the brief span of an interview but which are relevant to the study. Unfortunately this aspect of data collection was unsuccessful. None of the respondents was willing to invest the time and effort required to maintain such a record of their activities or reflections.

Toward the end of the six month period the researcher telephoned each informant for a second intensive interview which served as the concluding step of the data collection process. The researcher used the same methods for data collection and recording as were used in the first interview. Field notes and a written record of the interview were prepared; the interview was also tape recorded.

Construct validity and the reliability of the study were addressed in several ways during the data collection process. Reliability is a test to ensure that if a later researcher followed exactly the same procedures as described by an earlier researcher and conducted the same case study over again, the later researcher should arrive at the same findings
and conclusions. One strategy for satisfying this requirement in case study research is the careful documentation of the procedures followed in the earlier study (Yin 1989). The case study protocol served this purpose. Additional support for reliability is provided by the creation of a case study data base. The researcher maintained a formal, retrievable data base of all data generated by the study. This data base included the responses to the initial questionnaire, taped interviews, field notes, copies of all relevant correspondence and documents, and the written summaries of the interviews.

Construct validity is especially problematic in case study research. Many case study researchers fail to develop a sufficiently operational set of measures and appear to rely on subjective judgments instead in their collection and analysis of the data. While arguments can be made that barriers to the validity of the direct knowledge of others through face-to-face interaction are nothing compared to the difficulties engendered by indirect perceptions (Lofland and Lofland 1989), three tactics are available to increase construct validity in case study research. First, the use of multiple sources of evidence allows the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process known as triangulation. In this manner the multiple sources of evidence essentially provide multiple measures of the same phenomenon, thus strengthening any findings or conclusions drawn by the researcher. Second, maintaining a "chain of evidence"
throughout the research enables an external observer - the reader of the case study, for example - to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate conclusions. This chain of evidence is maintained by generating and preserving the case study data base, making sufficient citations to this data base in the case study reports (Chapters Four and Five), and developing the case study protocol so that the linkages between data collection and the procedures outlined there are evidenced. Third, the draft report can be reviewed by the informants in the case in order to further corroborate the essential facts and evidence presented there. Though the informants may not agree with the conclusions and interpretations of the researcher, they should not disagree over the actual facts of the case. If indeed the informants have different renditions of the same phenomenon - where no objective truth exists - this procedure helps to further identify the various perspectives which can then be incorporated in the final case study report. All three of these tactics for establishing construct validity were employed in this study.

Data Analysis

Just as there many different styles of qualitative research, there are a variety of ways of handling and analyzing qualitative data. Most strategies fall into one of two primary modes. The first represents an approach where
analysis is concurrent with data collection and is more or less completed by the time data collection is complete. This approach is used, for example, in the "constant comparative method" (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and the "analytic induction method" (Bogdan and Biklen 1982). It is commonly used by experienced fieldworkers who have a rich theoretical and substantive background. The other mode involves collecting data before doing the analysis, and is commonly used by beginning fieldworkers. This study will utilize the latter mode of analysis, though the distinction is to some extent artificial. Reflecting about what is being discovered in the course of the research is part of every qualitative study; without some ongoing analysis, the data collection has no direction and the data collected may not be substantial to accomplish analysis in the end. The key activity for the researcher is the development of a coding system to organize the collected data. The first step was a complete reading of the accumulated materials, including the questionnaire, interview summaries, diaries, and documents. The researcher searched through this data for regularities and patterns that have bearing on the specific research questions of the study. Some of these patterns may have become apparent to the researcher in the course of data collection. The researcher then selected words and phrases to represent these topics and patterns. These words and phrases became "coding categories" (i.e. analytic files). They were a means of sorting the
descriptive data that was collected so that material relevant to a certain topic could be physically separated from other data.

After preliminary coding categories were generated, the researcher read through the data again, assigning units of data to the relevant coding category in the process. These units of data may have been paragraphs in the field notes or interview summaries, or they may have been sentences or a sequence of paragraphs. This first attempt to code the material was as much a chance to test the feasibility of the coding categories and to make adjustments to them, as it was to assign all data to one or the other category. After the categories were finalized, the researcher assigned a number to each one. All of the data was then re-read and each unit of data was marked with the appropriate coding category number. For units of data that were relevant to more than one category, more than one number was assigned to them.

After the data had been categorized and marked, the researcher physically separated the materials and placed them in folders labelled with the coding numbers and the corresponding words and phrases. This process was carried out for each individual case as well as for the entire study, inclusive of all cases, with a duplicate copy. The latter file facilitated cross-case analysis. Data was analyzed to identify patterns and points of divergence between the cases. The final report of this study focuses on answering the
research questions from a multi-case perspective, but a complete profile of each individual case is included in Chapter Four of this report.

Summary

In summary, Chapter Three contained a description of the research design, setting, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, and analysis of the study. The sample was identified as a group of eight home schooling families in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia. A variety of tactics to establish the validity and reliability of the study were explained. The process of identifying and selecting the sample was described. The development of the questionnaire and the interview schedule, which was based on the review of the literature and the input of a variety of people, was also explained. The process of collecting the data was described in detail. A strategy for organizing and analyzing the data generated by a qualitative study was proposed, as well as an approach for presenting the findings and conclusions which were based upon it.
The Allen Family

The Allens are a European-American family who live in a neighborhood in northeast Atlanta. There are five children: three daughters (ages 21, 15, and 10) and two sons (ages 7 and 4). John (43) is an alternative health-care provider who works out of an office adjoining their home. Janice (45) is a full-time homemaker who takes primary responsibility for teaching the four children still living at home. John attended college but did not graduate while Janice did receive her degree. Their annual income is in the $25,000–34,000 range. Janice was the primary informant for this interview, which took place in the kitchen of their home.

The Allens have had a varied experience with home schooling stretching over several years. When they started home schooling their oldest daughter, they were selling crafts at festivals around the western United States. "We weren't in any one locale, we were moving around constantly, so we couldn't put (her) in school. We took it on ourselves. Gradually I realized how much I appreciated this approach—the fact that we could expose her to things that we felt were
more positive than what was found in schools." They taught their daughter until the age of twelve when, having moved to the Atlanta area, they enrolled her into the seventh grade of a small, private "alternative" school. She remained there through high school and graduation. The Allen's second daughter also attended this school, beginning at the age of eight. After sixth grade she transferred to a public junior-high, and then attended public high school through part of her tenth grade year. She is now home schooling, and plans to remain there. This daughter, according to Janice, "has come home before but always wanted to go back. She missed the social life of school. Now she has made the decision to return home." The Allens have kept the three younger children within the home and plan to home school them through high school.

In the years since their initial experience with home schooling - a choice that was largely influenced by a mobile lifestyle - the Allens have settled and their family has grown in size. The decision to home school is no longer situational, but stems from both ideological and academic considerations. As a result, the Allens now state their reasons for home schooling in more studied and committed terms. Religion, for example, has come to occupy a central position in their home, and Janice reports that religious beliefs were "very important" in their thinking. The Allens are Christians, and though they are not members of any one
established church or sect, they are firm believers in the importance of prayer. Janice is sharply critical of the ban on school prayer:

To me that was a sense of unity within school, that we would all pray to God for guidance. Freedom of speech in this country has gotten carried over to the wicked. They now have freedom of speech to have influence— one person doesn’t want school prayers so thousands of people can’t come together to pray for guidance. I don’t like that kind of freedom in our country.

Janice says that "in the school structure they teach non-God, non-reality that God made the universe, that everyone is evolved from monkeys, and I don’t really believe that. That has become a point for me not to put my children into the school system....I want my children to have freedom from a lot of the negative ideas found (there)."

Janice also reports that political beliefs were "somewhat important" in their decision to home school. She doesn’t "appreciate the racism and violence that is in our schools today, and I look at that as a political statement....I don’t think my children need to battle that one right now. Let them get older and have more of a basis for understanding the situation and then they can deal with it more openly, in a way they can take in and understand."

Various statements made by Janice also suggest a perception of public schools as defenders of the status quo, a role which does not allow children to look beyond the "mainstream" portrayal of reality. This theme is explored further in the later section on citizenship education.
Nor were the Allens satisfied with the quality of the academic and social experiences found in conventional school settings. With the costs of private schooling prohibitive for their family, the Allen children would have attended public schools. Yet when her second child was attending public high school, for example, Janice had to visit campus on several occasions. "It was like something out of the movies. A lot of kids were sent out of class and they were having a party in the halls. And the classrooms were somewhat rowdy. My daughter said there was always a lot of laughing and commotion in the classrooms." Janice was also critical of school practices such as labelling:

I don’t like that feeling of being separated because you are different. Because you didn’t start reading in the first grade you are automatically labelled as being behind. That kind of stigma can stay with you your whole life, in everything you do. Those particular words by people at that particular time can determine how you feel about yourself, and I want my kids to have a positive feeling about themselves. Then they can deal with the world more positively and more positive things will come their way.

In the interview Janice recalled personal experiences as a child where "the words of teachers really affected my life, sometimes really cruel words," and she had a strong sense that she didn’t want her children to face those kinds of experiences. Class size was an additional problem for her. Comparing the average classroom teacher’s task to her own, Janice noted: "It’s a lot trying to get three kids to sit down and do something. The classrooms are really too large for one teacher to handle. That’s why a one-on-one experience, even
if it doesn’t have everything (in the way of resources) a school has to offer, is superior. At least I can get a direct hit on my child with the things I am trying to teach them."

Two further concerns are of a more personal nature. Janice describes her family as very close-knit; they mostly "kind of stay with ourselves." School competed with family life, making it harder to maintain the closeness they value:

I love having my children around and watching them grow. When they were in public school they were pretty foreign to me. They would leave at 7:00 in the morning and come back at 3:00, watch TV for an hour, do homework, and that was it. So I didn’t feel they were part of my life so much. And I enjoyed watching them learn, and I knew I could teach them.

The Allens are also vegetarians, and maintain fairly strict dietary practices. Janice was very concerned about the effect of schooling on her children’s eating habits:

That’s another reason why I pulled my children out of school - kids being drawn into other kinds of influences, being rewarded for reading with things like candy and the like. I don’t like that kind of reward/gratification. If you do a good job, great. But you don’t have to be rewarded with something just because you did a good job.

Clearly the Allens see themselves as standing "outside the mainstream" of society in many aspects of their life: diet, religious beliefs, close-knit and home-based family life, political perceptions, and the like. Home schooling provides them with a means to protect their children from competing influences as well as to inculcate values consistent with their beliefs. The Allens want their children to know that it is "okay to be different" and not to be subjected to pressures to conform to societal expectations. With confidence that
they could provide a quality education to their children at home, the Allens now count themselves as committed home schoolers.

The goals which the Allens hold for their children are quite simple and straightforward. Academically they expect their children "to complete school." By this they are referring to high school equivalency. Janice does believe that "college is important for my kids, to have some further training (beyond the home)." At the same time she feels that "there are a lot of opportunities - not necessarily just college or university. Some way to make a living is what's important." Her oldest daughter, for example, attended only the first year of college. Though she made the Dean's List there, she chose not to return and instead to travel abroad. Currently she is living in Japan, working at first in a restaurant and now pursuing modelling opportunities. Janice seems very comfortable with her choices:

(She) has been able to take off in the world and feel secure in that space. I think that comes from having a secure family. She feels that she can branch off and make tremendous steps by herself - going to Italy and Japan by herself - that a lot of people would never make.

It is very important to the Allens that their children are self-directed, that they are able "to make rightful choices among a lot of pressures. And to choose what they know is right....I see developing your health and knowing who you are as a primary vehicle for getting through life." Key for the Allens is "learning to think, that's important. Figuring out
how to find information and how to solve a problem or question that you have, and to take the initiative to do it. This is a basic part of our home schooling." Janice contrasts this to what happens in a conventional school setting:

In school you are always told what to do. I tell my kids that if you want something to happen, you have to get up and make it happen. In school you are not expected to take the initiative like you have to do in home schooling. Socially Janice wants her children "to learn how to be fair in everyday life. With a strong sense of fairness, and of right and wrong, the children will have some basis to decide if others are being fair." She sums up her feelings by saying that she wants her children "to be happy, healthy, and holy. I'm just trying to create a healthy environment to cultivate my kids, diet and garden. Hopefully other things will naturally just fall into place."

The academic program found in the Allens' home school is the result of an evolutionary process. When they first began home schooling their oldest daughter, the Allens were "unstructured." Basically they trusted their varied experiences while travelling to be the 'teacher'. Janice now notes, somewhat ruefully, that "some mothers have the idea that you leave the children alone and they will just learn. But I think (our oldest daughter) got through seventh grade without knowing where the Atlantic Ocean was. I realize now that she missed some things along the way. I appreciate the (present) structure for covering our basics." The desire for a more structured approach led the Allens to enroll their
children in home schooling correspondence courses, especially as the complexities of teaching several age levels simultaneously became apparent. They have tried a few different programs, and now utilize two with which Janice reports satisfaction: the one serving the younger children is published by a group aligned with the Seventh Day Adventist Church, while the curriculum for the high schooler comes from an independent publishing house and is not religiously oriented.

School days for the three younger children in the Allen home have a definite structure. Morning hours are set aside for work on the "harder" academic subjects which require Janice's active participation: reading, social studies and science. Their curriculum also includes math, handwriting, spelling, music and Bible studies. When Janice first began using this course, she "would read everything first and take notes to prepare for the week ahead." With her youngest now four years old, "time has gotten shorter" and Janice feels that she has "done the course enough that I know what is expected of me....Now I skim over a lesson and start teaching, then skim over the next while they are working on exercises." Most of her attention during these hours is focused on the ten and the seven year old; on some materials she will work with one at a time, on others with them together. The youngest joins them at the family table for coloring, plays with blocks, or watches videotapes (often Bible stories) or public
television in an nearby room. Janice acknowledges that it is an imperfect system, juggling the needs of the three children, and she has tried a variety of approaches. At one time she even hired a babysitter to be with the children so that she could focus with each on an individual basis. At this point she is satisfied with the progress they are making: their work is "excellent" and "I realized that I just have to go with the flow and keep it happy. Then they learn better. Whatever they are doing they do better if they are not stressed out." Afternoons are reserved for playing with each other and with friends, as well as completing homework assignments.

One of the aspects Janice likes most about the program she is now using is that it is so structured. The publisher provides everything to them, including textbooks. Completed work is mailed to the publisher where it is reviewed and graded by a teacher.

So it's not like I have to put in a lot of time. There are projects I have to prepare for and I try to have things there the day before. That's why I like this course - a lot if it just tells you verbatim what to say. That takes the pressure off of me. It gives me security with the structure, knowing they are in a certified school and that they aren't going to have problems later on with records. And I don't have to rush out to the library to get books; I don't even have to think about what I am doing next.

At the same time Janice acknowledges that "curriculum is a constant debate for me. This is really the best of both worlds. I have a structure I can rely on for their basics and I have the world that I use to bring in more information to them. That's what I try to balance." She does "work with
their choices in schoolwork. Let them do what they want maybe eight out of ten times. I’ve learned from home schooling to be loose about structure, to let go and come back to it." Consistent with this view is Janice’s willingness to let the children work awhile, get up when they need a break, and then return to their work. The freedom to be self-regulating, as long as responsibilities (assignments) are fulfilled, is seen not only as practical but also as part of the educational process.

Janice brings "the world" into her home by making available to her children resources and experiences beyond the textbooks. Magazines such as National Geographic and encyclopedias are found in the Allen home; they also use the public library system. Television is freely available, and the children are allowed to "self-screen" it. They do participate in team sports and attend classes outside of the home, when family finances permit. One at a local recreation center put them into close contact with a diverse group of publicly schooled children. Janice reports that her kids integrated into the group easily. "Of course they picked up certain languages and there is a bully that picked on them, but that’s okay too because we came home and talked about it. We agreed that we don’t want to use certain words....The kids there drink Coca-Colas and race around the halls. But I guess it makes (my kids) feel more normal on some level." The Allens have also become involved on a "moderate" level with a
home schooling support group for the first time. Janice reports that she likes "the exchange of ideas and the chance for the children to play with other home schoolers." At the same time she has been "cautious" about getting too involved with groups because of the fact that "there are certain differences, like diet, and people don’t want to hear about that....So I have one foot in and one foot out." She actively participates, however, in the group field trips as a way to expose her children to more of the cultural opportunities available in the Atlanta area.

The effort to strike a balance between providing experiences within "the world" (i.e. mainstream culture) and keeping their children "separate a little bit" is ongoing in the Allen home. Protecting their children from what they perceive as negative experiences, which would include exposure to values and lifestyles which Janice and John do not approve of, is their "right". At the same time Janice acknowledges that "your child is going to be part of the world". Providing experiences in which her children feel "normal" is important to her:

I try to have my child be a part of the world and a part of other people. I don’t isolate my children. I take them out with me a lot. Besides, at school you are mostly just sitting at a desk or eating lunch or... you’re not really having this tremendous interaction other than hustling from one area to the other and then getting on the school bus. The bus is the main social scene for the children. My children get as much social time as the kids get on the bus.

Social interaction has never been of concern because I always had a few children, and lived in places where
there were woods that they could get into. Nature was their friend and I appreciated that. Having a large family helps to solve that problem, and having friends.

It would be fair to say that Janice’s approach in this area is reflective of her educational philosophy in general. In her children’s social development as well as intellectually, she values independence:

With little kids I try to have practical things around (nails, hammers, rubber bands). I don’t really emphasize toys too much. A lot more can be gained from figuring out what you can do to entertain yourself. If you spend all your time providing children with things to do, that’s all they will know how to do – things that are provided to them.

Not surprisingly then, the Allen children spend the majority of their time at home schooling in the morning, and roaming around their spacious backyard in the afternoons.

Educating a teenager, especially one who has attended school before, is a very different challenge. The Allen’s 15 year-old daughter enjoys considerably more personal freedom and choice than do the younger children. Her curriculum, as with the other one used by the Allens, is purchased as a total package – textbooks covering the core subjects, tests, and a long-distance ‘teacher’ who grades mailed materials. In her case, however, there is no formal instruction; all work is done independently. When the need arises for assistance, it is likely to be her father who works with her. In fact, Janice admits that she is "not really tuned into her schoolwork." What Janice focuses on is "pushing her to explore herself, and to develop her gifts." This encouragement to explore has
led her daughter to classes in drama, modelling, and aerobics, and to composing poetry and songs. Janice says that she "may not be a whiz at math but she is very creative."

Dating is one experience which John and Janice are in no hurry to expose her to. They have an agreement that there will be no dating until their daughter reaches sixteen, a limitation which many teens might push against. Janice believes, however, that "home schooling in a lot of ways takes pressure off that situation. Give her time to cultivate herself, know who she is. Even if you wait until you are so bored that you start reading a book because you want to, not just because somebody handed it to you. You start thinking for ways to improve yourself by yourself, which is a key to getting on in life." This is not to say that she doesn’t have an active social life, staying in touch with school friends by phone daily and spending the night with them occasionally. She babysits regularly, using the money to pay for classes and personal expenses. And like many teens, she often sleeps late, especially on days after a babysitting job: Janice is "amazed that teens can sleep so much but I guess I put in a lot of hours during those years." On the whole Janice feels "really good" about her daughter’s progress, and believes that home schooling is allowing her to grow in ways "she couldn’t do with the pressures of school."

The approach to civic education found in the Allen home has attributes which are both conventional and
unconventional. Janice believes that her "children need to know how our government is set up. Then once they know what it is, they might see something better and try to make that work with their efforts too. We are Americans - we need to know...." She reports some "sense of loyalty (to America), I suppose. At least if I had money to buy a new car I'd buy American. We need to have that kind of commitment, to provide jobs and keep people off the streets." At the same time while the Allens agreed with most of the civic values found on the questionnaire, they did not accept "patriotism" as a valid goal of education. As Janice explains:

My patriotism goes toward God rather than toward my country. And to the laws I respect in this country. But I don't respect a lot of the laws here. And I am not really patriotic or loyal to this country because I don't respect a lot of the things they do in the world or to the people here.

Janice is also highly critical of the ways schools teach civics to the young. She describes schools in terms that suggests their primary role is as sites of conditioning to a sanitized version of reality:

I am not sure things really work in this country the way schools would like to teach that it works....The way students are taught in schools, the kids don't get a sense that there are other sides to war, more than what you read in the newspaper or see on television. Schools want you to see just what the media wants you to see, just what the Establishment wants you to know. I want my children to know that is not the only way.

The implication is that the Allens want their children to be able to critically analyze and to question the "mainstream" portrayal of the American civic order.
Examination of the curricular materials used in their home, however, reveals a very conventional format and content. The primary vehicle for cultivating civic consciousness thus appears to be the practical teachings of everyday life. Janice admits that she is "not a voter: I am after good communication with my children. I am not going to try so hard to change others. I don't want to battle it out. People are going to do what they have to do. I need to deal with myself. If I get strength within myself, what I do will influence other people just by doing it. That's how I have been most influential." She is, in fact, "mistrustful and skeptical of the political system in this country, so more and more I work to make my family better. By doing that this world will hopefully be a better place."

Janice does believe in imparting a sense of social responsibility to her children, though it is reminiscent more of the "Golden Rule" than of a charge to an active citizenry. Her basic teaching to the children is "to treat other people as you want to be treated. I don't think the idea that you are going to change society in a little child is going to do them any good at all. You just try to make a comfortable living for your child, a life where they can be creative and secure and then other things will fall into place as they get older....It's learning to be fair in everyday life. Then they'll have some basis to decide if the government is being fair." In their own family, for example, they practice
"democracy" in everyday decision-making: "We'll see who wants to do something and who doesn't. We'll basically take a vote and talk about the outcome if someone isn't real happy about it. If the majority wants to do something, we'll usually do it. If the youngest opposes it, I'll usually try to work with them.... Simple ways of teaching them how to make things work better in our family teaches them how to work within our society."

This individualistic orientation does not mean that the Allens are trying to shut out the world in which they live. To a large measure the television serves as a window to the society for them, and they watch it regularly - including the news. Their children, for example, watched most of the coverage of the Persian Gulf War. Janice describes the impact as powerful for them: "Looking at (my oldest son's) drawings from that time, they were all flying ships, battleships, that's what he was feeling. And we have talked about the war since and all the changes that were supposed to happen but didn't. The older ones are naturally more aware of the world situation than the younger ones." Disagreement between John and Janice about the war was also a learning experience for the children: "They saw us talk about that and our feelings around it. So just in family life they see differences of opinion. They mimic us a lot in what we say but we just try to be honest with them and let them form their own opinions." Janice says that she is concerned to expose
her children to the diversity of ethnic/cultural groups which make up the American people, though she does not "just sit down and teach them about this way and that way. I just let them openly meet people and they usually like everyone they meet. The skin color doesn’t really seem to bother them. What I’ve noticed about children is that they use it as a description - a black girl - no connotation, just how they differentiate between different children." One thing she disliked particularly about their previous curriculum was that "it didn’t even teach where black people come from. But with the current one I find a multicultural teaching and I like that. That’s the world children are living in."

Janice believes that if more parents were taking care of "their own business," the society would function more harmoniously. In the case of racial relations, for example, although she does not think "that I have any dislike of any person because of their skin color,

I know within the school system there’s a lot of rowdiness, particularly among the black children. That’s what my kids tell me and what I’ve seen. I know that sounds racist. But there’s a tremendous lack of respect for the system, and a belief that you come to school just to have a place to go, not to learn, just to party or sell drugs or whatever.

To me the school system has almost opened up too much. I almost believe in separate but equal. Then everyone could cultivate their own fig tree. In time I think everyone would have a good feeling toward themselves and then be able to have a good feeling toward others. Forcing people to do things (i.e. desegregation) is not really the way to do it.

Ultimately she believes it is "the parents’ responsibility to
direct their children to their cultural background, not society's." And she has no faith that schools are equipped to substitute for them. In her opinion true tolerance is not found there:

You get more tolerance in school if you have the cool clothes on; if you have the cool clothes you are okay. But if you are a person who is not into what the clique or group is into, then you are basically left out....Worrying about what everyone is wearing keeps people from coming together as one, that's just not happening. People are put together to learn but there is no cooperation on values in the school system; everyone is not trying to change their values and to grow more loving to each other. They are just concerned with the shoes they are wearing and who they are going out with.

Although the Allens have turned to home schooling in order to protect their children from many of the "negative" influences they find in the society, they see this not as a defensive reaction but as the assumption of their basic responsibility as parents. Trying to raise children who have a positive self-esteem, strong values, and a willingness to be independent in thought and action - this is a task which they see as inherently both personal and social in its potential impacts.

The Allens are unambiguous in their enthusiasm for home schooling. At the time when they first began, over a decade ago, there was no home schooling 'movement' and few Americans had even begun to consider it as an option. There were times then when Janice "was afraid people would knock on my door and take (...) away. So we didn't take her out to the city much during school hours. I realize now that was all kind of
silly." With experience they are "getting more and more confident that what we are doing is the right decision for our family." They have their doubts, and are continually re-evaluating and refining their approach. As Janice says: "We are making our own way. It’s an experiment, but I see what has not been working and I don’t want that path."
The Baker Family

The Bakers are an African-American family living north of metropolitan Atlanta. There are five children: four sons (ages 13, 11, 9, and 3) and one daughter (age 4). Curtis is a computer engineer and Michele is a nurse. In addition to working the equivalent of a full-time job, Michele also takes primary responsibility for teaching their children at home. Curtis attended some college but did not finish while Michele went on to attend some graduate school. They report their income as over $50,000. Only Michele participated in this interview. (This is the only interview which did not take place in the respondents’ home. Due to Michele’s full schedule it was more convenient for her to meet at a location on the way to her job. The interviews took place in a classroom at the Atlanta International School. Time constraints meant that it was also the shortest.)

Michele’s two oldest sons attended public school in a mid-Atlantic state through the third and the fifth grades. At this time she was going through a divorce, "and the kids were experiencing a lot of the things that come with divorce; they weren’t getting along with anybody in school." A short while later Michele remarried and her new husband introduced her to a family that was home schooling. "He said kind of off-the-cuff, ‘You could be doing that.’ I didn’t take him seriously but as I became friendly with the wife and heard about all that she was doing with the kids...she’s not even a
college graduate and I had gone to graduate school...I figured that I should be able to do all that." When her husband received a job transfer to Atlanta, she began to meet more home schooling parents: "I had never seriously considered home schooling before even though I had been taught at home for about three years because my older sister was a teacher. But I never associated it with home schooling."

Michele’s attraction to home schooling grew slowly. When she first moved to Atlanta her oldest sons attended school in Cobb County where "they had pretty good teachers - grandmotherly types." Although she was not overly impressed with the quality of their education there, it was not until they had to move into Atlanta that her dissatisfaction grew. Schooling in the city system "was quite different," and experiences there were really the "straws that broke the camel’s back."

One of the children brought home a paper on anatomy. Now I am a nurse so I’ve studied anatomy at the graduate level. This teacher was telling the kids that the heart was shaped like a Valentine. And I said, ‘Wait a minute. I’m going to bring these children home and see what I can do with them.’ The principal was opposed to it. She said, ‘These teachers are highly educated.’ I replied, ‘Okay, I don’t think they can top me in education but we are talking common sense and I don’t think they can top me in that either.

When she had a chance to read a high school curriculum at a Fulton County Fair a short time later, Michele realized that "I remembered most of that stuff." A growing sense of confidence that she could provide a comparable education at home, perhaps even "upgrade the quality of education" for her
children, led Michele to turn to home schooling. Private school was not an option because of the costs nor was religious school because all "grade levels were not available." This is when they began home schooling, about three years ago, and at this point Michele indicates that she would like to continue a home-based education through the high school years.

Clearly the Bakers' decision to homeschool was the culmination of a long period of dissatisfaction. Michele fondly recalls her own days in school and draws a contrast between that time and what she sees in contemporary urban schools: "In those days school was different. We knew everybody; it was a small town and most of the teachers had gone to school with my sister. It was more like a family atmosphere. I had skipped a couple of grades myself, but I didn't see my children having the same opportunities in school that I did." The intellectual development of her children is very important to Michele, and she wants them to "complete college, and develop a career or viable business." Conventional schooling, with its high teacher/student ratio and impersonality was not providing the rigorous training she was looking for: "Memorization, for example, is not as important to me as questioning. When they get to higher levels of learning, it's not going to be a question of how much did you learn but how much critical thinking can you do. I always teach them to question."
Academic goals, however, were not the only factor. Michele cites religious beliefs as "very important" in making the decision to homeschool. In fact, in considering the question of what changes would be necessary before she would ever consider returning her children to public schooling, Michele lists not academic but strictly social/behavioral concerns: "morality returned to the system; freedom and acceptance of religion." The absence of a "family atmosphere in today's schools means that the possibility of misunderstanding and intolerance is greater in her eyes. When her children decided to fast voluntarily during the month of Ramadan one year, they were "given a hard time by some of their peers" and their parents were "accused of starving them to death," even though Michele had "cleared it" in advance with the teachers. With a home-based education Michele believes that her children have "an opportunity to be more human," to grow comfortable with their own selves without all of the competing belief systems found in the school environment. They are also able to get away from a lot of the things that are happening in the schools. I made a joke with my 13 year old the other day. When I gave him some work he complained: 'Mom, if I was in school I wouldn't be doing this.' I said, 'If you were in school you would be collecting condoms.' And he didn't know what a condom was! I haven't taught him that yet. So there's a kind of morality that can be fostered in home schooling; there's a kind of innocence that can hold onto. I see that with a lot of the home schoollers I have met. Also I think they have the opportunity to be freer thinkers.

This "freer thinking" extends beyond the pressure of the peer
group, in Michele’s view, to the very purposes of the American educational system.

As citizens of the United States we need to look back at our school system and why it was started in the first place. It was not primarily for higher or quality education; it was only for basic things like reading and writing so people could get jobs and function at a basic level. I am trying to put some quality into my children’s education and to produce more moral citizens. And to show them the different choices they can have. When they were in school they were not aware of their choices - even though I stressed them - because there were people telling them there were certain things they could not achieve in their lives.

Socially Michele wants her children "to be active in their community and to help others to improve their lives." To be effective and to function as a model for others requires, in her estimation, that her children have a sense of power to accomplish their own goals and to reach their own levels of excellence. Ultimately the Bakers decided that conventional schooling would fail them, both academically and socially, in this effort.

Balancing a fulltime job and the demands of home educating five children is a daunting task. Michele describes theirs as a "very strict schedule between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and noon; everything has to snap. After that we’re more relaxed and we can go back to work on something." Curtis works during the day and Michele at night, so she takes primary responsibility for schooling. She describes Curtis as "supportive, but he’s a very busy person. I am trying to turn the math over to him because he’s good at it. He’s working now with the nine year old one-on-one, and I’m trying to sneak
the rest of them in there." Working with a ten year age-span is another challenge, and Michele sometimes pays the older kids to help her out with the younger ones during school hours. She also uses the television: "I work with the youngest for awhile and then I have some educational videos. We use a lot of videos and public television (PBS). We try to coincide our schedule with things on PBS that are associated with what we are doing. That helps." Besides the time pressures created by two full-time working parents, Michele "figured the easiest was to do it was to have a plan and to follow it. Try to stick to a schedule. That's how we started, then we added more and more things. We have now even given the school a name, and one day I'd like it to become a formal school. We call it The Center for Academic and Ecological Concerns. One day I'd like to get some land; I've got five of my own, maybe I can get five more."

The Bakers do not use a purchased curriculum in their homeschool. Initially Michele was able to secure a copy of the Marietta (Ga.) Public Schools curriculum, and she "used it as a guideline because that's what I could get my hands on." She quickly discovered that mimicking school was not sufficient for achieving her goals or for engaging her children. "In the beginning they said, 'You're going to teach us? Do you know what you're doing?' One of the things I did was to find out what they liked. Whatever they are interested in I try to focus it around that and start there.
until they get more confidence in what they are doing." Their current list of subjects is extensive:

- spelling
- English
- math
- music history
- emergency medicine
- social studies
- history
- Spanish
- cooking
- home economics
- science
- art
- Arabic
- swimming
- karate

They also study equestrian arts; when they first moved to Atlanta they kept a horse and hope to get another one soon. Michele believes that "informally we really have school everyday because everything is a learning experience." On Saturdays the children attend karate classes and on Sundays they are in Arabic school. Other than these scheduled time periods "it is their free time; they are with their friends or whatever." In addition to their outside classes, the Baker children go on field trips; sites mentioned include the High Museum of Art and Sci Trek in Atlanta, the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, and camping. For texts Michele looks for books which cover specific topics they have decided to study; sources include her own college textbooks, library book sales, home schooling yard sales, and the public library. Last summer Michele "watched PBS and took notes" so that she could coordinate her program to the shows found there. She also "belongs to a Muslim home schooling association and gets a newsletter which points out different things upcoming - like laws, events, and PBS shows. They also identify good books
for home schoolers." The Bakers "say there's a particular activating system in the brain, and if you train your brain to look for something, you'll find it. We find whatever we need." Evaluating their curriculum Michele sees it as "not quite perfect, but every year I try to expand it."

Michele sums up her method for teaching in these words: "You try to hit as many of the senses with your particular subject as you can. See it, hear it, if I can get them to taste it I will." Hands-on activities are thus highly regarded. One project that her children particularly liked was balancing the checkbook:

So I gave them a fictitious family and told them: 'This is how much money you get paid. You have to survive from paycheck to paycheck. What are you going to do?' I gave them some of our old checkbooks. That was interesting. It said something about their personalities. One child overspent and he said, 'I don't like this. I've got to get rid of this family. They are eating up all of our money. Another child was more family-oriented. He balanced it quite well, even had something left over to save.

Two other projects have been recently started. The children have decided they want to learn sign language, and then put themselves in a situation where they can use it. The Bakers are also making plans for a Career Day:

Career Day was the kids' idea. I told them I was going to introduce them to people in different careers so they could be thinking about what they want to do. They said, 'Why don't we have a Career Day for home schoolers and have guest speakers from different vocations?'

Experiences which combine the practical and the pedagogical and highly valued in the Baker home.

Independent work is also a high priority for Michele. She
does not want her children "to be dependent on me looking over their shoulders."

I tell them the program should be geared toward their being independent because when they go to college the teacher is not going to say, 'Did you do your work?' They are going to say, 'Give me your work.' And they are not going to give you any warning; it's going to be due and that's it. So I'm kind of lenient with them; I am supervising sometimes and they don't know it. I tell them, 'It's your work and you have to do it.' I try to get them more independent.

At the same time there are definite consequences for the failure to complete work.

We've never had them openly refuse to work, only 'Oh, I can't find my book' which is the same thing. I try to explain the importance of what they're doing, and if that doesn't work we go to Step II: 'Well, you can't find your math book? I guess you won't be able to find your friends today when it's time to go outside.

One thing Michele absolutely opposes is "busy work." She criticizes the public school system for "kind of "hold(ing) kids back. Because of the teaching methods and the scheduling, some of the topics they could just be tested and move on instead of wasting time on something they already know." She has been able to counter this problem by purchasing a book she called Dr. Goober's Testing Book. She likes it because they can test out of a subject and then move on. On the whole Michele says that she is very pleased with their progress.

Of course I am the teacher and the parent, and in my estimation they could do more. Dealing with all of those personalities, it reminds me of the one-room schoolhouse which I thought was excellent. My grandmother was in one, with the McGuffey reader and all that.
Home-based education seems to have a 'stretching' effect with her children. "In this situation I found, for example, that my 11 year old can do more or less whatever the 13 year old does, so that brought him up a couple of grade levels which we didn’t even know about. We would have never tested him for that."

One area which Michele feels they could "get stronger" in is civic education. The program she describes, however, is both thoughtful and quite comprehensive. Her commitment to critical, independent thinking and practical lessons is apparent here as well. History, according to Michele, is taught "in the present tense. I don’t teach it in the past tense. We do it by watching the news. If something comes up that has some historical value, we’ll incorporate it and work from that point going back." Nor does she teach the children U.S. history as a distinct subject:

I teach them world history because to me it’s a global thing. You can’t separate the U.S. out and teach history. The U.S. is a young country and it came from somewhere else; people came from everywhere. I teach that this was happening in ‘16-something’ and that this was happening in ‘18something’ and these things are connected. They have to be brought up to date. I teach history in the sense that this is happening to us now, but let’s look back and see where this came from. We do spend a lot of time at the library trying to coordinate these things.

An example was offered which illustrates how this approach is used to combine historical inquiry with studying the structure and functions of the American government:

One interesting thing that was in the news was the check-cashing scandal in Congress. So we went back into
one of our textbooks and I explained to them how the political system is set up and the role of Congress. I took them back to England and explained how we got the system. Then I asked them 'What's happening in the news now?' They said, 'Well, these guys are bouncing checks.' I said, 'That shows you where our system needs to improve.' That's the way I teach history.

Michele is very critical of the way history is taught in conventional school settings. She worked as a research associate for seven years in the Baltimore (Md.) school system, attended public schools herself, and acknowledges that "we're all a product of the same system: History is lacking."

The only thing I can remember about studying history is a poem: 'In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue....' It wasn't taught in a way that we could remember it or respect it or associate it with people. Just dates and something that happened a long time ago. We weren't given any real explanation of what happened.

To counter this tendency Michele directs lots of questions at the children to uncover the hidden meanings of events. "The other day one of the children said that he was reading about the Boston Tea Party and how they dressed up as Indians. I asked him the question, I had never thought of it myself, why did they dress up as Indians? That was a good question because I had never questioned it before." Standard approaches, whether they be learning the names of American presidents or memorizing specific facts and dates or a field trip to the State Capital, are utilized as well. But the primary emphasis is on being able to analyze critically and to appreciate the interconnections of history.

Michele is not an enthusiast of the "Afrocentric" approach to studying history. She finds it too limiting, with
the result that many merely repeat the same mistakes they are reacting against.

A lot of people in this country have the complaint that history is viewed from the Caucasian perspective, at least as taught traditionally in schools. A lot of times African-Americans have a tendency to turn it around and say, ‘Well, let’s look at it from an African-American perspective.’ We look at it from a global perspective. We try to include everybody: the Indians, African-Americans, the Japanese, Chinese, Arabs, Europeans, whoever – what the influence was from everybody. Because nobody had a monopoly on intelligence or inventions or anything. Everybody had a contribution in some way.

This attitude extends beyond the discipline of history to building tolerance for other cultures and ways of life. As an American, Michele feels it is important to raise her children with an understanding of the nature of the society they live in, and of their rights and responsibilities within it. They are Americans, and she has no problem accepting all of the civic values on the questionnaire as valid goals of education – including patriotism. But her approach, which she describes as "humanistic", is more akin to the notion of acting on universal principles rather than out of parochial or nationalistic interests:

I incorporate the values on the checklist by teaching the children to value people, and to value differences in people. We’re in a country where the people are from everywhere. I try to encourage them – ‘Okay, we’re Muslims, we’re a minority religion here, most of the people here are Christians...there are all kinds of people here, we have met some Bahais, some Hindus’ – that you should value people’s rights and one of their rights is religion and freedom of speech. So I try to teach (these values) by our lifestyle and the way we treat people.

Michele describes herself as "kind of proud" of the ability of
her children to "handle themselves with pretty much anybody."

It is the practical lessons of everyday interactions which is their greatest teacher:

When we go different places - I encourage them to do their own shopping, for example - they meet different people. People talk to them, all kinds of people, and they have friends from all over. Friends who are Bahais, Jewish, we even had some Russians in the neighborhood at one time, from Venezuela, from all over. So they get a pretty well-rounded view. By incorporating Spanish it opened the way for them to get serious about other peoples' languages. So when they meet somebody, they ask them: 'What's your language? Teach me some of it.' They came home one day last week speaking Vietnamese.

Michele also describes the children as especially "curious" about other religions, so they study them as part of their curriculum: "So they can compare. Quite a few people in our family are Christians so the children ask them about their beliefs and practices." It is very important to Michele that her children "mix with other cultures because I believe they should consider themselves global citizens. I would like to do some travelling when we get more money, and I don't want it to be a culture shock for them. I want them to be already broken in. So when we go to different cultures and they see people doing things, there will be some recognition. And they will not harbor fear or prejudice against people because they are different."

Michele is sensitive to the fact that her children are not only of a "minority religion" as Muslims in America; they are also of a 'minority culture' as African-Americans. On the one hand this is not a major concern for her:
We came from a mixed family. We weren’t particularly interested in African-American culture or even pointed out in any way as African-Americans. It’s just a culture; thus we include it (in our studies). I stress to the children that they should know about African-Americans because there are African-Americans in your family. But you should also know about Native Americans because they are in your family too. You need to know about Irish-Americans; they are in your family. We try to bring all of that together so they have some sense of where we came from as a family. We didn’t all come from Africa— that was only one part of the family.

Other statements, however, belie at least an awareness that there are specific skills and sensibilities which must be cultivated.

One thing that I discuss, particularly with the boys, from my experience and the limited travelling I’ve done in the United States, is that I don’t see African-American men as being particularly articulate. They haven’t been given many opportunities for that. So I made a point of putting public speaking into our program so that they would feel comfortable speaking in front of a group. I emphasize it with the boys because I am interested in stepping around the pattern I see. As far as racism goes, I let them know it is there. And if you run across that kind of situation, if you are called ’nigger’ or this or that, it’s just an ignorance so don’t pay any attention to it. I think because of the way I was raised, being a girl maybe I was more sheltered, they’ll probably have more experiences with that than I had.

Michele does not anticipate that such challenges will be able to shake the strong foundations—moral, spiritual, cultural and intellectual—she is laying for her children.

Michele acknowledges that "it is a lot of pressure juggling three jobs: the home, schooling and nursing. I try to prioritize. The home and schooling come first; nursing, I try to satisfy them; and of course the things I do for myself." Recently Michele has even found herself acting as a
"consultant to other home schoolers on how to set up program."

But she reports that home schooling has proven to have benefits for her family beyond anything she foresaw when first beginning:

We are now much closer as a family. I didn’t anticipate that. I just anticipated that they were going to be in a different learning environment. Especially with my 13 year old; we are much closer than we were before. He was going into that stage of ‘Yuck, women, I don’t like them.’ Now because of our closeness he kind of likes women better, even girls.

She admits that the children "have cycles of being comfortable with home schooling....If I gave them the choice tomorrow they’d probably go back to school. But I don’t think they’d like it once they got there. They’d have the same complaints they had before. They might want to try it just because it’s something different." Though she is not a sufficient reason for Michele to choose to return them to school, she can see another: She is planning to return to graduate school herself, and is uncertain how she will be able to continue to meet the rigors of home schooling when that time comes. If necessary, "it would be a religious school or some sort of private school that I know is doing some of the things we want done with the children." What she would prefer, and this reflects the growing confidence with which she now approaches home schooling, is much different:

I had doubts at first about my ability to provide a comparable education. That’s because I was new at it. Each year it seems that I improve and they improve. Now I anticipate getting them into college at 15 or 16. I started when I was 16, though I dropped out at the time because I wasn’t mentally prepared. One of the things I
am trying to do is to mentally prepare them so they can finish.
The Franklin Family

The Franklins are a European-American family living in a subdivision of one of the commuter communities north of Atlanta. They live in what they describe as "what must be one of the most (culturally) diverse neighborhoods in Gwinnett County." They have three sons, ages 10, 8 and 3. Doris (37) is a writer who is home full-time with her children, and takes primary responsibility for teaching them at home. Her husband, Rich (38), works in video production but plays an "active and essential role" in home schooling. Rich completed some college studies while Doris finished college and began working on her master's degree, though she never completed it. Their income is in the $35,000-49,999 range. Only Doris was present for the interview in her home, though her sons showed keen interest in it and even answered a few questions.

Home schooling was not something that the Franklins knew about or wanted to do from early on in their children's lives. It was something they "discovered bit by bit, more based on a feeling or sensitivity." Doris felt a lot of social pressure to enroll her children in school: At first "I tried Mother's Day Out not because I needed one but because I felt pressure to." As her oldest neared school-age, Doris "looked for alternative schools." She was not interested in public education for specific reasons: Schooling there "was restrictive and reductive, focusing on maybe two kinds of intelligence, with no reward or recognition of creativity."
In short, Doris felt that public schools "were not conducive to learning." Religious schools were not attractive because while Doris describes her family as "very spiritual," they are not members of any organized religion. Church-based schooling would have been "restrictive both educationally and religiously." She was able to find some "good (alternative) schools. But they weren't doing anything there that I wasn't already doing at home (i.e. baking bread, gardening). It was like we would be taking him out of something and then dramatically trying to substitute for it. Which is fine, but it began to seem very artificial to me. It was a slow thing happening." The private schools were also "exorbitant" in price, which meant that Doris would have had to take a job outside of her home.

Eventually the Franklins chose a small Catholic kindergarten for their oldest, then a five year old. He attended school there from 9 a.m. until noon, but only lasted one-half of a year. She doesn't describe his experience there as "bad," though she feels there were things that were "ludicrous." What happened is that Doris "began reading about education. John Holt made a big difference." She found mention of Growing Without Schooling in one of his books and called immediately for a subscription. This was her first introduction to the idea of home schooling, and through GWS she discovered a local home schooling organization. When she went to "one of their conferences and saw so many people doing
it, I knew this was it." The Franklins have not looked back and now plan to home educate their children through high school, though "this is tentative. We often reevaluate the situation together." Admittedly "it does seem to us a radical move, but it made sense, felt logical and necessary."

Both academic and social factors can be identified as motivation for the decision to home school. Doris felt that her boys were "thriving and happy at home. We simply didn’t see why they had to be sent away into an artificial environment" to receive what they were already getting. She also "wanted them to feel that their education was their own, not something done to them." Doris herself had been successful in school, the only one of five children to go to college:

Education was held up as very important - my ticket out of a small town. But I am still unlearning lessons I had learned about being the 'good student.' It was important at the time but it hindered me in certain ways I perceive things.

Reading about the history of American schooling and observing her boys' experience led Doris to question many of the fundamental assumptions about learning. She no longer accepts, for example, "that education begins at a certain age" and she chose not to indicate any grade level for her children on the questionnaire; she believes that she has educating them at home since their birth. Besides, "one thing I enjoyed was having my children with me." Ultimately Doris "realized that school would just be a contrivance, trying to achieve what we
already had, within the social norm." And she acknowledges being somewhat of a "rebel," unwilling to accept "this idea of 'Yes, it's too bad you have to do this'."

Neither intellectual or social conformity are goals of the Franklin's home schooling program. Doris states her concerns plainly: "That's the main thing I want them to do - to question." She considers it a "probability" that they will go on to college, "but they could do other things: I try to put it in speculative terms so they won't just do it automatically." Listed as the primary academic goal for her children is "to keep learning until the day they die." Socially she desires that "they seek truth, question the status quo, use their talents for the good of the community as well as themselves, and always consider the impact their life has on the planet." The key for Doris is critical and independent thinking and action, both intellectually and socially:

Questioning is so important to me. It may be possible in school but it's not encouraged. And I don't want my boys to feel like they are deviants for questioning, that they are troublemakers. I want them to feel that questioning is right. I feel that it is a duty.

At the same time "it would be utterly revolutionary for the schools to allow unlimited questioning. The history of compulsory education in this country is a history of trying to conform and control - and (true) education is opposed to that....We're not really naming what the school is for."

Home schooling in the Franklin home reflects the
influence of Holt's notion of 'unschooling' on Doris' approach. They use no formal curriculum or workbooks, with the exception of math. There is no attempt to divide the day into subject areas or units, and Doris does little formal teaching. There is not even a prescribed schedule for "school." But there is a rhythm to a typical day. After the boys rise they make their own breakfast, take care of their hygiene and do chores around the house. In the morning they might work on art projects independently, go to a local park, and read aloud or alone. Each of the older boys has a math workbook which they can work in. Errands are often mixed into the morning activities. With the arrival of her youngest son, the rhythm took on a new flexibility and variability. Presently the period after lunch, while the youngest sleeps, is "concentrated time" when Doris can focus on working with the older boys.

The children are largely self-directed. Mainly Doris "follows their lead. A lot of time if I feel that we need to change something, if I wait a little bit, they will tell me themselves. There's a strength in that. They have a lot of control over what they do." Doris offers the example of her middle son's experiences in math:

A couple of years ago (he) just decided that he wanted to get ahead in math. He finished the entire workbook, which was comparable to an entire third grade year, in less than six weeks. It was his decision to do so. It doesn't mean he has worked at that same pace constantly since then.

Doris "hate(s) using the words used in school like 'unit' and
that sort of thing because I know you can’t go deeply into things like that." Allowing her son to follow his own interests, to pursue math vigorously for a period of time and then to put the book down, all of his own accord, reflects the essence of Doris’ approach. At the same time she understands "why it’s got to be like that (in the schools)....Some of it could be made better, but I see their necessity. There are no easy answers. In addition to math and artwork, the boys read and write frequently. These activities are also self-directed, and Doris reports a rare difficulty in keeping the boys engaged; she encourages and works with them, when necessary, but "makes no arbitrary assignments."

For resources the Franklins make extensive use of the public library, and even incorporate many of Doris’ old college texts. She does see television as "a tremendous resource" and borrows PBS documentaries from the library as well as an occasional movie. The boys have no restrictions regarding use of the television; they regulate themselves. Sometimes Doris thinks "they are watching TV too much, but then they make their own decision to turn it off. That means more to me than being the policeman. I’ve learned to trust them time and again. It’s working for me." The Franklins are not involved with a home schooling support group, though they do participate in "casual get-togethers in parks, homes, museums, etc. But not in large group activities." Doris describes herself as "more of an intra- rather than
inter-personal kind of person." Her personality thus leads
toward more time alone with her family, and she relishes the
flexibility to follow their own whims. Her experiences with
large groups on field trips, for example, are that "they get
too much into group control." Their "community' comes through
GWS, for which both Doris and the boys occasionally write, and
"smaller connections with individual families." The boys do
have regular 'pen-pals', other home schoolers around the
country with whom they have been connected through GWS. Doris
also does "lots of phone consultations with other home
schoolers" who call for advice and support. The older boys do
take classes outside of the home, such as swimming and
pottery, and are active on sports teams. Their "best friends"
are boys from the neighborhood who are conventionally
schooled. Her sons usually meet these friends at the school
bus where they exchange artwork; they talk on the phone
regularly and play together several times weekly. Doris says
that "there is sometimes a gap that develops with home
schoolers (and schooled children) but not with these boys."
One factor might be that they are older than her sons
(13,11:10,8). It really "shocks" Doris "how people think they
are so sequestered....I find they are really more far-flung -
geographically with friends, for example. I feel that the
school, with its age segregation, for example, regardless of
who actually adheres to it, is more of a monolithic set of
values."
Doris evaluates the progress of her children by using both conventional and highly personal means. Her oldest son was tested to fulfill state requirements and "did extremely well." Her middle son was "slower coming to reading" but she resisted putting pressure on him because "the content that he wanted to receive - at the time when all he could read himself was Frog and Toad - so far advanced. Dickens was his favorite author....I found great difficulty for awhile finding books that were interesting to him that he could read." Sometimes Doris evaluates them by "what other people say." This could be strangers, friends or relatives. Her in-laws, for example, were described as being "pleasantly surprised by the maturity of her children" compared to their other grandchildren. On the whole, however, Doris sees her sons as "just human beings, functioning, creative, productive human beings. On this basis I can evaluate them as just fine."

The informal approach which Doris uses in the other disciplines extends to the civic education found in her home. She finds that her sons naturally "love history, especially scientific history." She might sit down and ask, "Well, what direction would you like to go? I do ask them if it interests them." Basically they "read aloud and discuss as we read, particularly with history." As the foundation to studying American history, for example, they spent several months reading European-American history. They read aloud to each other and talked, and occasionally the boys would write about
"what struck them as interesting." They spent one summer placing the major U.S. wars in a chronology. "As we moved along we would branch out into different areas."

Doris does not really plan out the history curriculum into units or specific time-periods. "It's just kind of in my head," she says. "For example, to satisfy an interest in studying the ancient Britons we really had to study the ancient Romans and Greeks.... Sometimes I feel like I'm doing it in the dark because one thing leads to another, yet I'm trying to keep some coherence, some chronology. At one point Doris felt that she had to bring more structure and focus to their studies: "There was awhile there when we just skipped around to whatever looked good. But there was a point - probably it was American history and the birth of our nation - that I felt there was a need for a bit of comprehensiveness, so that it was not just entertainment and lost in certain subjects." Doris admits to sometimes feeling overwhelmed by it; I want to be thorough but I think it's probably better to concentrate on a time (or theme) even if you don’t cover the whole chronology, even if you don’t cover this great span. Rather than seeing how far I can get in history....For us it seems that it is more structive to concentrate and dwell even if you feel that you are moving at a snail’s pace.

For resources the Franklins rely on the public library, old college textbooks, and books purchased through mail-order publishing houses that cater directly to home schoolers. Biographies and autobiographies are read extensively. Even with texts "it is important to use a variety of sources so
that you don't get a sense of monolithic wisdom if you rely only on one source. Another source might have a very different perspective." It is important to Doris that they study a variety of themes and people as well: "When we studied the Civil War - that was inspired by the PBS series - we concentrated quite a bit on women and people of color. I didn’t read to them about Lee or Grant, but about Frederick Douglass. It isn’t in any comprehensive way, but I make an effort to pull in diverse material. When we read about Einstein I also want us to read about Margaret Mead and Gertrude Stein." Other topics that have been covered recently include a series of books on various world religions and another on world myths (i.e. Native American myths).

The Franklins "regularly watch the news, at least once a day." Stories they see there as well as personal experiences are vital components of their civic education. As an example, Doris relates how we’ll be watching the news and the question will come up in conversation, 'How does a bill become a law?' or 'The President vetoed that. What does that mean?' And we’ll talk about it. How voting works. How it was set up. We learned about those things from studying the history of the writing of the Constitution and the first elections.

The Franklins do vote and consider themselves patriotic, though not of the "flag-waving, demagogic brand." Their patriotism is "the true, quiet kind" in which questioning of the status quo, including government authorities, plays a vital role. Doris had no problem agreeing with all of the civic values contained on the questionnaire, "but you could..."
spend a lifetime defining what they mean." She admits that
she
can't trust anything a politician says....At the same
time I love my country and want (my children) to. But I
am very critical; so is their father. I want them to
question; these values are important but always with a
question."

Being a critical person, I am always very quick to say,
'But what about this?' To get them to look at both sides
(is my goal)....I try to discourage them from taking too
strong a position without at least flipping the issue
over and looking at the other side. And they do that to
me too.

A case in point is the recent Persian Gulf War. This war was
"a very rough time for us" because Doris' brother was a
combatant. Even before he shipped out the boys had made
Christmas cards and sent them to soldiers overseas, responding
on their own initiative to a request they had seen at a
restaurant. Doris "had very mixed feelings about that....I
felt that we were being manipulated into needing this war....I
find many people who question or protest against war, though
there is always some fringe element, hold (civic) values more
dear and expect more of their country. Yes, patriotism is
important but demagoguery I find absolutely obscene." Her
response was to talk with the boys about the war "constantly". They read Red Badge of Courage aloud during that time. The
book raised questions about war "that were different from
what the boys were seeing on television." They also "talked
about what we knew about that part of the world and the
stereotypes that were being raised at that time. That's the
main thing we do - we talk and talk and talk." Basically
any topic that comes up in the news can become a matter for family discussion: "We talk a lot about things like abortion when all of the protesters were out...the Ku Klux Klan, about people doing the wrong things, about Thoreau and the idea of people doing civil disobedience." The civic virtues Doris aims to inculcate in her children are at one and the same time simple and complex: "Ultimately it seems like if it's not right it's your duty (to speak out). Is there a duty to do everything for your country or is it your duty to do what you believe is right and to do what you believe your country truly stands for? I would hope that I would instill that in them. But these seem to be things you can only know once they have been greatly tested....One thing I don't want my kids to think is that things are that simple."

The open-ended questioning and critical thinking which Doris desires for her children best describes her own approach to home schooling. The Franklins are "constantly asking ourselves - is this going well?" Doris says that she doesn't "want to become so caught up in any one philosophy that it's not constantly re-evaluated. That's one of the reasons why I started home schooling, just doing what makes sense to me." She describes the impact of home schooling on her family as "great":

In the beginning my husband saw it as something I was doing and that (our children) would go to school when they were about nine, after receiving a good foundation. It has grown philosophically. There's so much tension. People are running around with their schedules yet we are able to dictate a bit more of our lives. And life is so
precious. It’s just a way of having a life worth living to me. And it’s not just that I homeschool my children. I feel that my education continues in a more dynamic way than it would otherwise. It’s great for me the person who is supposed to suffer the most burnout.

For even though as a writer Doris is hard-pressed to find the time to do all that she wants, "what I do is much better, more intelligent, more compassionate, more knowledgeable. I really do think that it has an impact on my education and on my husband’s as well. We think of it as family learning in a way, not just me schooling the boys." Doris is clear that her boys are as much her teachers as she is theirs: "You raise them to question everything and to think, to have their own opinion. Yet still it’s a jolt the first time they really act independently....Invariably when they do that I come to see the wisdom of what they did."

When asked if they wanted to continue home schooling, Doris’ older sons shouted an enthusiastic "Yes!" In particular they liked the fact that they don’t have to rush in the morning to get ready for school and that they retain the power to reject books or work they don’t want to do. As for herself, Doris notes that "as time goes on you are less willing to accept the things you just have to put up with....As I get older I am less willing to do things ‘I have to do’. I feel that the boys are light-years ahead of me because I have so much unlearning to do. And I enjoy their company. I am beginning to not like the term home schooling because it is confining too. It surprises me how arbitrarily
and literally people define it....My confidence in home schooling really means that I have absolute confidence in them. They know that learning and education are something they have primary responsibility for. I'm here as a willing participant to do whatever I can." In a sense Doris sees the home schooling of her children as a political act:

I don't feel that I am sheltering my children. I feel they are even more a part of the world.... Home schooling is a movement for social change in the sense that the personal is the political. People who are educated n that way, believing that their education is their won business, means that they are empowered to learn. You don't have to want to have something done for you. If there were enough people who could at least get that out, if that were a common perception, that could change the world. People might begin to realize how much power they really do have....If people could be made to feel a part of the world again, I think it could be revolutionary....But it is a slow process.
The Harris Family

The Harris family lives in a small town southwest of the city of Atlanta, but in Fulton County and part of the metropolitan area. They have three children: two daughters (ages 6 and 4) and a son (age 1). Ken (35) currently works at temporary jobs in sales, though he has a varied employment background including training as an auctioneer. Mary (31) is a fulltime homemaker who has primary responsibility for teaching her children at home. Both Mary and Ken attended college though neither received a degree. Ken is of African-American ancestry, while Mary’s is both African-American and American Indian. Their annual income is in the $25,000-34,999 range. This interview took place in the living room of their apartment, and both parents were full participants in it.

The Harrises are newcomers both to Atlanta and to home schooling. They lived in a western state before moving to Atlanta just over a year ago. While there Mary organized a cooperative preschool run by parents which her oldest daughter (then 4) attended. Mary "liked the impact" of being intimately involved in her child’s education, and "knew that she wanted to homeschool. But moving to a new city and not knowing anyone we decided to put her in (the local public) school" for kindergarten. The results, as Mary describes them, were less than satisfying:

I was appalled by what went on. We had a child who pretty much felt good about herself and was inquisitive. I felt
like I sent a clean slate, ready to learn and absorb. But she came home with garbage on her everyday. I had to try to get the garbage out of her and put in what should have been going into her. I became really discouraged.

To some extent this discouragement was predictable. Mary already knew that she wanted to homeschool. Examining "what children are really learning in school," she believed that "there is a better way to teach. It doesn’t have to be boring and staid....Schools usually teach only one way and I knew that I could provide a better quality education." But differences in educational philosophy don’t begin to explain Mary’s reaction to this one year of conventional schooling. The "garbage" that she speaks of stems from a much deeper concern."

My daughter felt good about being black before she went to public school last year. We’ve done all the right things—we’ve got black dolls, we read black literature, we’ve got black pictures. She’s got a lot of positive role models in her family and friends of her parents. All of these things are supposed to help her self-esteem.... But our daughter came home (from school) talking about ‘darkies’ and thinking that all black men are beating up on black women. I would say: ‘Hey, we’re black and your daddy doesn’t beat me up.’ She would get confused over the mixed messages. That ‘darkie’ stuff came right out of school. Some child there probably heard their parents say it.

Though this school had a "well integrated" student body, there was only one African-American faculty member. The Harrises did not believe that this setting was capable of maintaining the level of self-respect they had worked so hard to instill in their young daughter, so they pulled her out after one year. When they joined a church that had a "large home schooling network," they re-focused on their original
intentions. They are now into their second year, with two daughters of school age, and plan to continue educating them at home through high school.

The Harris' reasons for home schooling are varied. Dissatisfaction with the public schools, on both academic and social grounds, was certainly a factor. As stated earlier, Mary believes that she can provide a superior education at home. Ken agrees: "I think that the best classroom is the world and not to put walls in the classroom." They wanted their children to have more 'hands-on' and practical experiences than those available in a conventional school setting, and they valued the chance to give them individualized attention. Socially, as evidenced above, they "were starting to see things coming home (from school) that we didn’t want here. These early years are the most important ones." Both parents expressed strong reservations about surrendering their children to the influence of other children, to socialization. As Ken expresses it:

I believe that the worst trainer of children are other children because children need to be trained effectively themselves. They require parental direction and good sound teaching. Public school would expose them to many of the public ills that we would prefer them not to be exposed to now. We would much rather see the buffers instilled in them now at the tender age so that when the time comes when we have to let them go (because they are only ours for a season), and they have to deal with the world, the ills will not have become ingrained as much....If they were in school...well, if I'm in the company of someone who's drinking alcohol everyday, that's going to have an effect on my life. Especially when there's more of that than what I am doing.

In their year-long experience with the public schools, Ken
found that most parents were not willing to provide this strong foundation; "we found that most parents were not really interested in their child’s education, they were looking for 'babysitters,' someone to do their job for them, but no one can do that for you." Home schooling thus was seen as a way to "enable us to control more what’s fed into the (children’s) computer and to promote what we want to promote in life."

The strongest motivation for the Harrises is expressed in religious terms. The Harrises are Christians, and feel that they "received a conviction from the Lord" that home schooling their children was the best thing for them. As Ken puts it: "The Lord spoke to my wife and told her that it’s our responsibility to train up our children, it’s our responsibility. And we were convicted by that." For the Harrises, the "spiritual growth (of their children) is the priority because we are more concerned with their eternal life than we are with their temporal life." Ken shares a glimpse of his worldview in the following passage:

Our belief is that there is a system of good and bad, and Satan, the devil, is the ruler of the world. I don’t want to sound like a fanatic, but the Scriptures teach us that we are supposed to live in the world but not of the world. So we have to be careful with the choices we make. I think there is more danger in going along with the norm than in understanding why I am not going along with the norm. I’ve just got to do it, as outlandish as that may sound.

Their religious convictions thus motivated the Harrises to reject a longstanding American tradition, a "norm," despite
the risks and doubts, in order to provide their children with the strong spiritual foundation they consider a prerequisite to a true education.

An obvious question is why the Harrises did not choose to send their children to a church-related school. They did look at private schools, although financial constraints were a serious obstacle. According to Mary, however, they were no more attracted to the church schools they considered than to other school settings. Her concerns are strongly held:

This is the way I feel about it. We read the Bible and it tells you pointblank that it originated in Africa. But I look at any Bible and I see everything is blond hair and blue eyes. Wait a minute. I realize that a lot of what we learn as Christians is Europeanized.

In a lot of the Christian schools everything is so homogenous, lily-white angels, blond-haired, blue eyes, there's nothing but that. I don't have a problem with that, but the God we serve is so vast and so great. Let's really pay homage to what He has created in all of us....A lot of people have done a lot of things in the name of Christianity that are really not Christian. I believe that when Jesus comes we are not going to see him in a lily-white temple in Buckhead being pious with his hands proud. He's going to be out in the trenches, around people of color, it's not going to matter if they are black or white.

Church schools, while seen as viable centers of Christian teaching, could not impart the sense of ethnic identity which is considered critically important by the Harrises. For while they may try to not live "of the world," their children "still have to go out and deal with a world that is largely racist. I am not saying that all white people are racist; some do racist things without even realizing it." Some church schools, for example, "do not recognize cultural differences
and educate children accordingly. There is an absence...you start to talk about black history and they don’t want to hear it." Mary recounted several instances where racial tensions were apparent even within the home schooling community of the church they joined. The point is that in the Harris’ eyes, only at home could they maintain adequate control over their children’s education so as to accomplish all of their aims.

These aims are, at one and the same time, both simple and complex. Academically the Harrises hold goals for their children which are similar to many, if not most American parents: They would like to see their children earn a college degree and possibly go on to graduate study. The fact that neither Mary nor Ken finished college, and the economic stresses which they attribute to this, likely influences the importance they attach to this goal. Socially they want their children "to love the Lord and to serve Him according to the Word." In many respects this is the most important goal for the Harrises. As Ken explains:

We are really concerned about their relationship with the Lord. Not that we don’t want academically bright children, but we’d rather have the child who is not doing well academically but has a relationship with God and understands His nature, than to have a kid who is a genius, who is going to Harvard or Yale but doesn’t know God. The number one priority is to know God, and to not be so easily persuaded in your thinking by the world...that you can make up your own mind without the influence of television, radio, newspapers, even their instructors who may not have the same belief system as you do. So you can sit down and reason everything you need in life through the word of God.

I’ve seen the moral fiber of this country deteriorate in the short period of time I’ve lived. You can turn on the
television and see things nowadays that were taboo when I was a child. I want their spiritual growth to be just as important as their physical and mental growth.

Were these the only concerns of the Harrises, there would be little to distinguish them from many parents who turn to home schooling out of strong religious convictions and a sense of dissatisfaction with the state of American schooling. In this case, however, the desire to prepare their children for life as a cultural minority in what is perceived as a "racist" society is an equally important objective. Mary draws a striking contrast:

When you’re black, a lot of people say: What about socialization? What about reality in your home school? Those may be valid arguments, but I feel that being black in this world there is no way I can do the same job some white parents do to protect their children against the reality of the world. Some whites are just trying to keep their children from dealing with the realities of the world, but my child goes out with black skin. Especially my black male child. As he starts to get older, whether he’s a perpetrator or not he’s going to be seen as one.

Home schooling enables me to better prepare my child (to deal with prejudice) so that they won’t have the confusion I had. As a child I had no idea. I had to learn on my own. But I can point it out to my children - this is what it is, this is where it is at, this is it at its ugliest. And I can refer back to things we have read and talked about at home so that they can better understand prejudice.

At the same time Ken insists that he doesn’t "want them growing up with a false sense of pride either just because they are black or African-American. Pride is dangerous.... Sure we want them to have their own culture, not to get so lost that they have none of their own cultural identity, and we are seeing to that. But there’s a bigger picture that we
want to expose them to so they don’t get lost in this tunnel vision that the American educational system creates – it’s either black or white, not a combination thereof. We want to create a rainbow picture for them…a cultural environment that is diverse and widespread." The path being pursued here is self-knowledge, grounded equally in a strong Christian upbringing and cultural integrity.

As with many home schooling families, "a typical day is not typical" for the Harrises. Mary says that "a lot of times we’ll wake up with everything planned out but there’s a new circumstance - a sick child, for example, so I have to take Ken to work so I can use the car." Having only one car is seen as a major constraint by Ken and Mary. They live at a distance from Atlanta, and apartment living in itself puts more walls around their activities than they would like. Their limited finances not only prevents them from owning a second car, but they have also been unable to purchase the kinds of materials for their home school which they want to have. Ken is very candid about their economic struggles. At the time of the interview he had been unemployed for one year, and was working temporary jobs just to pay the bills.

We haven’t been able to afford all the material we need for home schooling. The only thing we have been surviving on is our Play and Talk (a phonics program). We don’t have a reading curriculum or a math curriculum…and I’m scared. Am I messing up? Sometimes I wonder if maybe I should be putting (my oldest) back in school until I can afford to home school. That’s where the doubt comes in; financial instability can put a lot of stress and strain on the family.
Ken regrets the fact that he cannot afford to enroll his daughters in the classes they would like to take: dance, swimming, karate. He believes that "if we were in a bigger place, we could have a more conducive home education environment. I would like to have a room set aside just for home schooling, better transportation, more classes. I’m sure my insecurities would diminish."

The impact of these stresses falls most heavily on Mary. Since Ken works out of the home, he "is not able to participate (in the home schooling) as much as (he) would like to." She attributes most of her stress to "having a baby under one year old and trying to make a balance. Any time you have a very young child it’s hard to include them in your day. Most of the people I know (home schooling) have older children, and they are very regimented and scheduled. I was beginning to feel like a failure – having no curriculum while those others have everything set up." She has come to appreciate the flexibility of not having a rigid set of expectations to measure up to, however, and is growing to see her plight as an opportunity to find the meaning in all types of simple activities. One day she and her daughters found a wooly caterpillar. They turned this creature into a science project, putting it into a cage in the hope that it would mature into a butterfly. They went to the public library and gathered materials about insects and their development. As a result, "we learned so much about caterpillars, moths and
butterflies...it was amazing. You can sit in the grass and just study the different trees and learn so much." Though Mary tries to maintain formal studies with the girls, in reading, math and writing/spelling, nowadays "if we see something that looks a little more interesting we'll stop. Yes, I'd like to have a curriculum but even if I did I would still do things off the cuff. Our foundation is the Lord and I believe He wants us to study everything and make ourselves knowledgeable."

For resources the Harrises draw upon the things that are available to them. As Christians, their scriptures are very important to them. The children not only spend time each day in "prayer and praise," but as part of their schooling they will often memorize and study Biblical stories. Mary is very concerned to "teach them what Christ really stood for. I don't want to give them just certain passages, like some Christian schools, but the full Gospels." She tries to bring life to these stories by, for instance, building a replica of Noah's ark out of lentil beans. They utilize the public library system extensively, and use the computer in their home when appropriate. For the most part they have "turned off their television. We watch PBS and the weather but don't traumatize ourselves with the news. For the most part it is desensitizing and negative, and we don't need that." They are particularly incensed by the media's portrayal of African-Americans: "When the media constantly portrays black people
committing crimes, what happens in the minds of a lot of miseducated or uneducated people is that they believe this is what they are supposed to do." The Harrises are making it a priority to broaden their children's horizons. They refuse to be bound by stereotypes or by their own lack of experience. As Mary puts it: "There are many things I am still limited in. I never had a love for classical music, but I am introducing my daughters to it. And to as many things as I can."

The Harrises consider themselves fortunate to be a part of a well-organized home schooling support group with which they report a "high level of involvement." They were able to waive their membership fee in exchange for Mary's production of a dramatic play involving the home schooled children at their church. The group meets once a month, offering "classroom days", field trips, curriculum advice, and lots of play. They have a home schooling coordinator who is available for support and assistance. This group, along with other church-centered activities, provides most of their children's current social life outside of the home. The majority of their daily life, however, is home-centered. Mary acknowledges that it can be difficult:

"Doing school is like a job...even if we're not sitting at a desk, even if we are just making cookies or something, it's a job. So I don't answer the phone, and I don't answer the door. It's hard, but the best thing you can do for yourself is to say, 'I am at work now.'

At the same time she values the flexibility which home schooling brings to their daily life. "All of the experiences
we have in our lives are part of home schooling. That's the advantage of not having them in school where teachers are faced with 15 to 30 other children. That's the blessing of home schooling. Sometimes when we have had a late night and get a late start and the kids are tired, we play all morning. Play is very important to young children." And with experience Mary has learned to trust her daughters initiatives as well. "Some days, to tell the truth, I don't feel like getting up and dealing with it. I don't want to be the leader. The Lord is showing me that I don't always have to be though. Sometimes I get up and say: 'Okay, you guys be the leader.' I let my girls lead because I believe leadership is something worth learning."

Finding the practical lessons in everyday activities is a characteristic of the citizenship education in the Harris home as well. The Harrises vote; Ken considers it "part of my civic responsibility" and the children see them vote. They are "concerned about things happening in the world, and when we pray we teach (the girls) to pray for the leaders of our country." Social responsibility is instilled through a charitable project at their church. As Christians "we are supposed to love the needy," and Ken has been known to "bring home people who are going through hard times - though I've had to stop doing that much (because of economics and limited space)." It is very important to the Harrises that their children
mix with other children of different cultures...Out west they were exposed to every culture of the world. We had friends from Africa, Spain, Germany, Vietnam, practically every part of the world and it really broadened our perspective. We know how to see beyond color. We usually respond more to a person's culture than their color because we want to know more about their culture, to experience it through that person. There's a richness in that...We'd like our children to understand the beauty and richness in that.

Unfortunately the Harrises now find themselves living in the south, which they feel is a much more segregated and less tolerant environment. Even the home schooling support group is "predominantly white." Ken believes that an improvement in their economic situation would enable them to provide the children with the greater variety of experiences he desires for them.

Negative experiences are also utilized for their positive educational value. Mary says that there are times when I go out with my kids and all people see is the color. You can go into a store and just stand there all day and they pretend they don't see you. But a white woman will walk in and they'll make a big fuss over her. I wonder if I am a ghost or something....Or going in to stores and have white people following me around. I feel they must be thinking, "Oh, she must be chocking her kids full of stuff (shoplifting)." That's a frustrating thing....I told my daughters that I am going to start pointing out prejudice to them so they can identify it. Yelling and screaming doesn't work, but I am going to point it out to her. 'That's what we call prejudice. How there are different ways we can deal with it. We have a choice. Do we want to spend our money here or not? Money is green no matter whose pocket it is in. That's what smart people do.' I 'm going to leave it like that.

Mary admits that "there is some militancy in me when I'm faced with nonsense. At the same time there's got to be a balance because I want my children to walk as Christ did. With Christ
you can walk amongst anyone." Upon overhearing a "clearly racist" conversation at a recent home schooling conference, for example, Mary found herself "talking to the woman and inviting her to our church. At this time in my life I’ve come to believe that the only way we can break down the walls of racism and communication is to do the work of Christ. At the same time I don’t tolerate any nonsense. But I can still relate." Intolerance of prejudice tempered by patience and understanding is the teaching Mary strives to impart to her children. Even in the literature they read, her critical eye is alert: "Reading Little House on the Prairie, a lot of that stuff is racist against Native Americans - they are all portrayed as wild men trying to scalp white women. When we read that I tell my girls, "You know that they are saying that about us. Do you feel the urge to scalp white women?" and we laugh. I tell them that is prejudice.

The type of citizenship training the Harrises offer their children is designed to motivate an informed and critical relationship with the society. Ken states plainly that he does not "trust the system," yet neither he nor Mary had any qualms about agreeing to all of the civic values in the questionnaire with the exception of "patriotism." He admits that "I would never go to war for this country. There are too many wars that need to be fought right in this land before I could go to fight someone I know nothing about. I believe in simplicity. I’ve never been able to understand how we could
go off to fight wars when we’ve got people starving here, or how they could justify spending billions of dollars to go into space when there are millions of sick and starving people here....It’s a joke." The Harrises make no pretense of being satisfied with the state of American society, particularly as regards the treatment of racial/ethnic minorities and the poor. But the critique goes much deeper than that. As Ken elaborates in a strongly worded indictment:

In this country, I believe, in many ways we are living a big lie. We’ve been taught that this was a country established on Judeo-Christian principles but my understanding of these traditions leads me to conclude that they are nothing of the sort this country was founded on. There have been too many things that have been swept under the carpet....I think that a lot of things in this country are repeated over and over again simply because people say "That’s behind us." People don’t want to acknowledge mistakes.

Our schools want to teach our children that Columbus discovered America. He didn’t discover America. The American Indian has been totally trampled on in this country, their culture exploited and thrown away.

When this country was first established, we as African-Americans did not even qualify under the Constitution as whole people. That’s why I have a problem with some of what Martin Luther King fought for. He said he was fighting for civil rights. That means he wanted rights within a civilization that, when it was established, because of your color you were not a whole human being. I don’t want rights of that sort. What I want is basic human rights.

I want to be able to teach my children a fair share of every historical event from every walk of life, as evenly and as balanced a perspective as I can....Our educational system has sugar-coated many things and said it’s okay. To prove that it’s not, look at our present condition. Look at what we have produced, look at the harvest of the seeds we are planting....

Ken insists that they want to "teach our children that all
people are created equal, but we don’t want them to miss the education that comes from their culture because it has its purpose in their life....We want them to be citizens, but African-American citizens. To understand their heritage and their culture." Ken does not believe it should be "the responsibility of a public institution to instill loyalty in our children. I think it should be those who took the responsibility for bringing them into this world." And the loyalty Mary and Ken are trying to instill is a loyalty to truth and righteousness rather than to a country. Ken puts his aims simply: "We want them to be able to make decisions on their own, but we also want them to understand there are consequences for every choice you make." Mary speaks not only of a critical consciousness, but of empowerment:

The things my husband and I do, we do because we want our children to realize that no matter what your circumstances are, you can play a part in changing them. You don’t have to wait for the government to change things, and if you do you’ll probably die first. You don’t have to wait for you neighbor. You don’t even have to be so concerned with what racists are doing. You have the power to change things.

And she has a message for any parents who are trying to use home schooling as a way to "protect their children" from mixing with other cultures: "European-Americans who are trying to step back in time through home schooling, who don’t want to teach their children about this and that...they are doing a big disservice to their children because we are not going back in time. We are going forward....We’re not whistling Dixie anymore; those days are over. If parents want their children
to enjoy the fullness of this world, they owe it to their children to expand beyond their perceptions."

The Harrises are relative beginners at home schooling, and like many others they occasionally face doubts about the efficacy of their approach. Ken says he does not "know exactly what I should see. I don’t have a good gauge. There are no other children close enough with whom we can gauge their progress....I haven’t had the opportunity of interacting with anyone who has gone through this process from point A to point B, who has finished home schooling. It’s a lot like what Magellan or Balboa or Columbus experienced: are we going to fall off the Earth? It’s new. So there are a lot of fears and natural insecurities. I am travelling what are for me unchartered waters, breaking new ground." There are days when he feels frustrated about not "having my wife like I would like in certain areas of my life. But I make this sacrifice willingly...I don’t regret the decision one bit. It’s the greatest thing we could have done." There is a sense with the Harrises that they are engaged in something even larger than the education of their children. Ken goes so far as to describe home schooling as "a movement for social change....There’s starting to be a wave, a social consciousness that’s taking place where people realize something has got to be done....The media focuses so much on the government, everything external, no real focus on the internal. I think the key is the family." In their family
We pulled our children out of public school because we didn’t want them shortchanged, exposed to an improper education, miseducated by the system. But in doing that we have a responsibility also to make sure that we instill in them something that will allow them to absorb the shock of reality, to be able to offer an answer for the questions that life poses them about racism or other social ills. Those problems will not be resolved externally; they have to be resolved internally. The reason I believe that is because the very first institution known to man is the family—before there was a school, a church, or a government. Everything we know as an institution stems from the institution of the family. If we repair the family, ultimately we will repair the church, community, government, even the educational system. But you have to start at the head and work down...I think this is a viable opportunity, a tool which God has provided for people to use.
The Palmer Family

The Palmers are a European-American family living in a neighborhood in northeast Atlanta. They have two daughters, ages 12 and 8. Meredith (42) is a fulltime homemaker who takes primary responsibility for teaching her children while Doug (42) is a restauranteur. They both attended college but did not complete their degree programs. They report their income as over $50,000 annually. Only Meredith participated in this interview which took place in their home.

Though Meredith says that she has "always" been educating her daughters at home, it was not until her oldest had completed the third grade at a private school in Atlanta that she began home schooling. Public school was "never an option" in her mind:

It is overly concerned with testing, quiet classrooms, memorizing details, submitting unquestioningly to authority and putting kids into convenient categories. It is not concerned enough with retaining the joy of learning with which children are born, facilitating creative thinking and creative problem-solving, teaching each child in a manner that is best suited to him/her. It does not teach kids the kinds of real life data and skills that an adult needs to function in our culture.

Her basic perception of public schooling is that teachers there are preoccupied with crowd control: "not dealing with kids as individuals as opposed to dealing with this class you want to stay quiet and calm...a 'don't rock the boat' mentality." Meredith recalled an experience from her own school days when, as a sixth grader, she asked to be excused from prayer. The ridicule she received was symptomatic of a
pressure to conform that she did not want to expose her children to: "A single incident like that can so impact a child’s life that I wasn’t going to even put myself in the position of having to deal with it as a parent...." The competitiveness and comparison with other children found there leads her to wonder if there is "less danger in letting kids be home, not technically being taught anything, than being in school and being taught things that are destructive to their future capability."

On the whole Meredith was quite satisfied with her older daughter’s experiences in what she describes as an "alternative school"; it was fun, challenging and self-paced. When she applied to enroll her younger daughter, however, a conflict with the administration over admissions policy led her to seek other options. Looking at other K-12 private schools in the area, Meredith concluded that they "use a more traditional approach...and therefore would not provide the kind of educational experience that we wanted our children to have." At these schools "the kids seem to be doing well but they’re not thinking; they figure out what they can do for the teacher to make a good grade. They slide through school that way." In addition, cost was a factor: "The continually rising tuition for two children would mean I would have to work fulltime, family life would be non-existent, and still our lifestyle would have to be cut to the bare bones." Church-related schooling was not considered because "our
spiritual beliefs are not remotely reflected in any church or religion I know of and I don’t want my kids under the influence of a limiting belief system."

Seeing "no reasonable choice" in the public or private sector, the Palmers turned to home schooling. Meredith read about it, contacted the statewide organization and gathered information. At the outset she was not committed to the idea philosophically: "I didn’t really know what I was getting into. It just seemed like a good idea." Doug was "resistant", concerned that they would be unable to give the children what school gives them; in Meredith’s words, "Will it teach them enough to function in the real world?" Many things about home schooling were, however, attractive:

The lure of increased family time was great. Full-day school and our restaurants’ hours had combined to effectively curtail our ability to do things together as a family. Since desire for family life was a primary reason for our decision to have children in the first place, the loss of much of the fun of family life while increasing the workload (i.e. carpooling, making brownbag lunches, the insane morning rush to make it to school on time, etc.) was an unpleasant surprise. Home schooling offered a solution.

Home schooling began to excite Meredith for academic reasons as well: "Having the freedom to allow the children to be interested in something and really being able to pursue it...You can’t allow a child in school to do that." Lastly, Meredith describes herself as "by nature a teacher if not by training. I was excited by the prospect of being able to continue teaching my kids beyond helping them with simple skills such as walking, talking, toilet training, pre-reading
and pre-math." Neither political nor religious factors were important motivators for the Palmers. Their concerns were primarily personal (preserving the integrity of their family life), and secondarily academic (a non-traditional approach to education). "Once the reality of home schooling was really there, it was an easy choice to see where we would go with it." Presently, after three full years of home schooling, they plan to "probably" continue through the high school years.

Meredith states straightforward academic and social goals for her daughters. Academically she wants them to have "research skills; be creative problem solvers; creative thinkers; read for enjoyment and comprehension; and to write creatively and to communicate." Socially she aspires for "environmental consciousness; acceptance of different races, religions and cultures; respect for all life forms; be responsible, caring human beings." Though not stated explicitly in relation to goals, there are others which appear to be important goals for Meredith: academically, for her daughters to be critical, independent thinkers about their experiences in the world and to be self-motivated in regard to learning; and socially, to be willing to question the status quo and to act independently of pressure to conform from either figures of authority or peers. In relation to academics, for example, Meredith is very critical of teaching which emphasizes memorization: where "there's a lot of time
spent pushing data bits in there... not teaching kids how to really think. As a result, by the later years of high school students have gotten used to not thinking. ('If I just do what they tell me to do.') I think our country and the world are losing out with that type of mentality...that we are squashing the whole creative side of people." Meredith has fond memories of one of her own English teachers who used "bizarre" methods but who "forced people to think." About socialization Meredith is equally skeptical:

When people talk about how your kids are going to miss out on socialization in the schools, the kind of socialization that takes place there has more to do with fitting your kids into the culture so that they’ll be good citizens based on (others’) definition. That’s a kind of socialization I am not interested in; the mixed messages of 'Yes, the democratic process but I’m bigger than you so you’re going to do what I say. I’m the authority so you’re going to do what I say. Those are not the kinds of messages kids need to learn. Even the kind of socialization that takes place in the peer group is not always such a positive experience either. When you get so many kids together with minimal adult supervision, the kinds of cruel things that sometimes go on.... That’s not something that I mind my kids missing.

Clearly the Palmers see home schooling both as a way to protect their children from what they perceive as negative, even harmful, experiences as well as to positively encourage the development of ways of being and thinking in the world which are more in harmony with theirs.

Meredith describes the first year of home schooling as "transitional, pointing out the pitfalls" of taking full responsibility for educating your children at home. Meredith had been working part-time, so she arranged to complete all
work obligations early enough to plan for the upcoming year. But her job ended late and she had no time to prepare before the summer ended. Then Meredith was sick in bed for the first three weeks. The passing of her father at this time made a challenging situation even more challenging. That year forced Meredith to ask the question: "If I can’t be directly involved with them, how do I still provide them with something to do?" One of the first things she had to establish with her daughters was: "There’s mom as mom and mom as teacher." Meredith describes "a lot of resistance during that first year," though less with her older daughter who had already been to school. It was the younger daughter, who had only attended a playgroup before beginning to homeschool, who resisted mom’s authority as a teacher. During this year, however, Meredith played the role of teacher and, once her health was reestablished, acted to direct her daughters’ studies through the main subject areas.

Her experiences that year and her own thinking and reading about the processes of schooling and learning (John Holt was particularly influential) led Meredith to continue looking for ways to encourage self-directed learning. The question she kept asking herself was: "What did I learn (in school) that was really useful?" Midway through the second year she devised a system which she still uses and with which she feels very comfortable. Meredith has established a "checklist" for each of her daughters which contains "a list
of the basics to be accomplished weekly." The checklist consists of items like writing in a journal daily, doing a number of math problems, reading a number of pages in a book of your choice, doing a craft, playing a computer game, reading in science, and others. Each item must be checked a specified number of times each week. Most of the work is designed to be completed independently, though Meredith is available to help when necessary. If her daughters come to her and ask 'what should I do?', Meredith merely directs them to "go look at your checklist." She uses no standard curriculum, preferring to fill her home with a variety of resources such as books, art supplies, computers and educational software. Meredith says that "a lot of what I am now doing (in my home) is based on my perceptions of what I really learned in high school:"

The idea of scheduling your own time and accomplishing the work you have to get done is an important skill to now as an adult....It's real life."

I really feel that it's not so much the data that they learn as learning to think things through, to problem-solve, to schedule their own time...beyond the basic skills and subjects.

In Meredith's view the checklist is structured enough to ensure that her daughters will touch on each of these "basic skills and subjects" several times a week, yet flexible enough to allow them to choose their own focus and schedule. Flexibility is the key - that's what attracted Meredith to home schooling in the first place - and though completion of the checklist is "tied somewhat" to things the girls want to
do socially, the last thing Meredith is interested in is policing her daughters.

There is "NO" typical day in the Palmer's home. The children are allowed to float in and out of their "formal" studies, and given ample opportunity to "obsess" in one area for awhile if they choose. Meredith is "inclined" toward the "John Holt concept of complete un-school where I just let them do what they want to do." But she feels that "neither of them is sufficiently motivated" for her to follow this idea through; in her view, "they require my coaxing, especially the younger one." Meredith also describes Doug as more "goal-oriented" and he wants to ensure that they remain at a comparable academic grade-level. The checklist represents a compromise which seems to work for all of them. Meredith says that Doug still "has his doubts, but now he defends home schooling to others."

The Palmer girls have an active life outside of their home both socially and educationally. They have attended a wide range of classes during their first three years of home schooling, including drama, ballet, and "circus arts". The younger daughter is a member of a local Brownie scout troop as well. Visits to the public library are frequent; there Meredith works on developing their research skills. Each is studying another language, one French and the other German, and together Meredith and her daughters took classes in American Sign Language. In addition, they take regular field
trips and meet at a park weekly with a group of other home schooling children. Meredith says that her family has a "high level of involvement" with this group. In fact, Meredith was instrumental in forming the group in the first place, motivated in part by a feeling of "exclusion" by the Christian home schoolers she met in her first years. The impetus for organizing what she describes as "an alternative educational network" was to provide more social interaction for her daughters with home schooled children and support for herself by exchanging stories and resources with other parents. The group also grew out of a desire to "contribute to social change and the building of community:"

The impetus came partly from a sense that we are living in a time period when a number of things must change for the planet to sustain human life and that of other species, and a realization that because Georgia’s laws are so liberal we could really start a network that would provide some sort of community of people who could connect with each other and meet whatever educational needs they had....I view it as an initial model of what another type of educational system can be apart from kids going to separate buildings apart from their families.

In addition to all of these activities, Meredith reports that they have made a real effort to keep friends gained from her daughters’ early schooling. Thus they play regularly with both home schooled and conventionally schooled children.

Evaluation of her daughters’ progress is not something that Meredith is overly concerned about. Her oldest is due to be tested soon, in accordance with state law, but the results will only be used "as feedback to guide their curriculum." It is the highly personal, informal feedback that Meredith
receives as a home schooling mother which guides her evaluation of her children. This, she argues, is far more important than standardized testing: "You know what your kids problems areas are, the kinds of difficulties they have, where their strong points are from the beginning....You are going to know specifically what your children need." Her main feedback about their social development comes also from observation as well as from comments by parents whose homes they visit.

Meredith strongly states her belief that "the kind of civic education that can take place within the home is more meaningful and ultimately will produce better citizens, better human beings." As in the other disciplines, a formal curriculum is not used in studying history. Accumulating information is again deemphasized in relation to the skills of thinking:

As opposed to learning dates, names, and places, we try to learn how the people were living at that time. How were the Chinese living at the time of a certain dynasty; what was happening in Europe, in Africa....that would be the only way the dates would be important to me. The dates are part of a relationship, not that the date is important in itself and you should memorize it.

One approach that has worked well for them is to create a time line along the hallway of their home. On it they place the variety of world cultures at different points in time, "placing them in context" for comparison. They always try to tie their study of history into their own "personal (family) history" as well.

Meredith says that her approach is "not Eurocentric."
"When you’re talking about a culture such as ours," she says, "which is such a melting pot, to not provide some idea of differences, of tolerance of differences, that needs to be part of the background." In their adventures through the city, as well as through their formal studies, Meredith tries to introduce her daughters to people from varied cultural backgrounds. Though she believes world travel is probably the best way to accomplish this, for now Meredith has to settle for the local ethnic festivals they regularly attend, stories (such as fairy tales) of different cultures, and television. Regarding the latter she referred to a particularly moving show her daughters watched about a teenage girl from Central America and the hardships of her life; she also mentioned Star Trek where "even aliens are accepted." She would like personal relationships to "be more a part of the girls’ experiences" but pointed out limitations of the neighborhood in which they live. Meredith described it as "somewhat frustrating to provide concrete experiences" in this area. At the same time discussions about racial and cultural tolerance are not uncommon in the Palmer’s homeschool: "If we hear a statement that is really intolerant we talk about it...that a lot of that comes from fear. And the fact that everyone is a little different; just a matter of degree and we respect those differences." Meredith believes that important lessons about tolerance have been gleaned from a close relationship she and the girls have developed with a deaf family in
Atlanta, lessons about the isolation of the "differently able and of the difficulties and frustrations" they experience.

It is clear that Meredith sees concrete, practical experiences as the most potent pedagogical tool. Though she has no problem agreeing readily with most of the civic values listed in the questionnaire, Meredith insists that "most important values are taught by the people around us," by the ways they conduct their lives. She argues that schools fail students in the ways they teach democracy, for example:

For the most part democracy is not taught in the public schools. It is very much a hierarchical organization. There's very much a sense that the teachers are the boss and you're a kid who doesn't really have many rights. And what the teachers tell you you have to do. If you say something about it you become a troublemaker. I think that may be part of the reason people don't vote. There is a sense of 'why bother'; you just have this sense of powerlessness. I just don't go for automatic acceptance of authority. That does not teach the principles of equality at all.

(Thus) all of these values may be given lip-service in schools and taught in terms of American history, yet the daily practice of school doesn't encourage those behaviors.

Only rules are taught, she argues, rather than the practice of true democracy. And what kinds of mixed messages are sent, she asks, when "teachers show a lack of tolerance for their students?"

Though "patriotism" and "respect for and acceptance of authority" are two civic values which Meredith rejects as valid goals of education, this does not mean that she is uninterested in developing her daughters' sense of civic responsibility. In their home the Palmers teach civic values
"primarily by example:"

We always vote and they always go with us; they always come into the booth with us. We talk about things like who we voted for and why... Another way (of teaching democracy) is when we decide on something for the family, it is discussed within the family. It's not completely democratic or governing by consensus - we are still the parents - but we want their input as part of the decision-making process. And the kids are not allowed to say 'This is just what I want without thinking about it; the kids must think. It's not presented as something you just get to do. You have responsibility if you are going to (participate). This is just part of our everyday life.

They choose not to watch the news regularly. Meredith says that she "grew up in a family where the news was on all of the time and she knew all of the Cabinet members by the time she was eight...." But she finds that "if I pay attention to what's going on in the news it's very anxiety-producing (because) there's no simple solution I can do anything about." They do "try to keep generally apprised of what's going on."

Meredith always tries to bring the lessons home in a personal way. During the Persian Gulf War, for example, she responded to a fight between her daughters by noting:

Do you guys realize that what you are doing is the same thing that's happening over there but it's on a larger scale? If you as children cannot learn how to work out your differences, how do you expect adults to do it? This is part of growing up - you need to learn compromise, making treaties and keeping them, and appreciating the differences. Otherwise you're going to be a grown-up who goes to war because that seems to be the only solution.

One concept she has been trying to get across is "how different the rest of the world can be, how different lifestyles for a lot of the children on the planet are...and the appreciation of and awareness of the benefits (of ours)."
That this is not necessarily the norm for a lot of people on the planet." She believes that consciousness ought to be there. Not as a matter of guilt. More that these inequities exist and encouraging them to think about what we can do to make a world where that is not going to be as much of a problem.

(Looking at a picture in a magazine showing a baby in Ethiopia dying in her sister’s lap and saying): 'Put yourself in that position. That’s her sister. She feels the same way about her sister that you feel about yours. But she has to live that way; we don’t.' I try not to be overbearing about it, only that there’s a consciousness that outside of this culture it is very, very different. That’s part of being tolerant too.

Her primary concern in relation to civics is to teach her children "empowerment: That you can do something even if it doesn’t seem direct. That if you live your life that way it does impact and if everybody were to live their lives that way there would be no more war. And maybe by living your life that way as an example, other people will see that it’s possible...and it may spread."

Meredith reports that there has been a "wonderful" impact on their family life as a result of home schooling. They "have family life again:" We had waited ten years to have kids and when (our oldest) entered school, we had no family life. All of a sudden we were on that schedule. There’s very little time to be together to share family values, stories, whatever. What you get stuck with is only the nitty-gritty, the racing around. Those are your interactions with your kids, yelling and screaming to 'Hurry up. We’re late.' All of that pressure is now gone. We can enjoy being a family again. To do spur of the moment things. That’s one of the best parts about home schooling.

Meredith feels that "families nowadays tend to be people who
are living in the same house but all living on different schedules. You don’t have a sense of connection that is really necessary for kids to learn who they are." She has gotten "more confident" as she has gained experience, and feels very comfortable working without a curriculum now - "unwilling to relinquish control even to a long-distance teacher." She notes that her younger daughter did not read when she reached eight years, then two months after she stated that she wanted to learn to read, she was reading chapter books. What Meredith has learned is to "go on faith that my intuition is correct." And she is certain that her daughters will be "a lot better prepared" for adult life than many of their peers:

We see a lot of Emory (University) students (in our restaurant) and listening to other merchants and our employees talking about Emory students. Like going to a laundromat and having a student ask ‘Will you tell me how to do laundry?’ Academically she did well enough to get into university but is incapable of washing her own clothes....This is pure functional stuff people need to know to function as adults. Their parents didn’t do it but there’s very little real-life training going on in schools either.

And she believes that her efforts as a home schooling mother are a vehicle for addressing the future needs of our society and world for change:

I think it is much harder within a structured environment to make changes. To make changes in a structured school, a major bureaucratic environment, it’s going to be a lot harder....Take your kids out of school and teach them on your own. And those kids will be the adults in the future who will make decisions.... I think ultimately I’ll effect more change by not allowing them to be put in the (school) mold. As adults, whatever they become will not be impacted by what goes on in schools.
On the surface our lifestyle may look very conventional but our beliefs are very different (from the norm) in many ways and I feel very strongly about them. I'll just live my life this way and I'll pass these ideas on to my kids and that's how I effect change. It's not a matter of going out and saying 'Everyone has to home school.' Everyone has to be themselves. Hopefully if they can become more conscious of what that means, it will make it easier for the planet to survive.
The Robinson Family

The Robinsons are an African-American family living in Atlanta’s West End. There are four children: three daughters (ages 10, 7, and 6) and a son (age 2). Roger (37) is a fireman with a local department and Natalie (36) is a fulltime homemaker who takes primary responsibility for teaching the children. Roger’s staggered work schedule (home for two days after working for three), however, enables him to play an active role in their home schooling program. Both parents participated in the interview which took place in their home.

The Robinson’s oldest daughter attended a nearby public school through the second grade. Roger and Natalie had considered home schooling before even having children, but it was not until they grew dissatisfied with their daughter’s school experience that they chose to try it. They have now been home schooling for two years, and none of their other children have attended school outside of their home.

Both academic and social factors played a role in their decision to home school. Natalie describes herself as a "gung-ho mother" who was teaching her daughter to read at an early age: "She could read three letter words just fine when she went to kindergarten." Yet the approach used by the school ("Right to Read") caused her to abandon "everything (Natalie) had taught her already about spelling and reading." Students were told to spell words by the way they sound - "not even true phonetics" - and the parents were warned not to
correct spelling errors on work that was brought home. Moreover, because the first grade class was unable to complete all required reading assignments, their daughter, whom they describe as a "natural reader," entered second grade labelled as "reading below grade level." This greatly disturbed Roger because "once you get labelled in a public school system, it's very difficult to ever get rid of the label." Explanations offered to the Robinsons seemed like "lame excuses. It seemed like the system was just designed to fail so the second grade teacher would have to catch up...and they could never really get back on schedule." Natalie was also disturbed by the materials her daughter brought home: "I'd look at it and see there was no logic to it at all. The examples they would use, the thought processes that would be involved, weren't logical. I reached the point where I thought that if (school) is going to be like this, I can do a better job."

Concern about the type of social learning taking place at school and a desire to play an affirmative role in passing on values to their children further motivated the Robinsons to turn to home schooling. "People are always talking about socialization," says Natalie, "but they aren't seeing that socialization is not always positive." Discipline was uneven and inadequate. Turning to a teacher for help when a playground incident bothered her brought this response to their daughter: "Don't bring it to me." In Natalie's words:

Now she's out on the playground in a situation where there's no authority, no rules, no order, just a loose
kind of environment. I didn’t like that. I felt that eventually she would have a problem with respecting authority and we want to instill that respect in (our children).

Yet when the teacher faced a disciplinary problem whose solution eluded her, "she would punish all of the children. She would take a ruler and whack everybody’s hands or pull everybody’s ears. She said that the good had to suffer with the bad, and I just didn’t agree with that." In addition, the children were not allowed to talk in class or at lunch, and in the first grade if they failed to get their class work done they couldn’t go outside. The Robinsons saw their daughter coming home with headaches, "probably from the stress. And things would have happened in school that she felt frustrated about....I just didn’t think it was the healthiest environment."

Natalie came to believe that her daughter "was spending a lot of time in an environment which was contrary to what I believed. She would eventually adopt certain values that were not in line with our values; eventually she would begin to adopt the values of her peers and we would have to go back...." The key point for the Robinsons is that they "are Christians and we want them to be raised with Christian values. And we don’t want their beliefs to be attacked or ridiculed. When God allowed me to conceive and bear this child, He gave me the responsibility to raise her and nurture her. I feel like I am equipped for it; He equips us for what He calls us to do." What He called them to do was to home
school. According to Roger, they had already "made the conscious choice that (Natalie) would be at home with the children. That's a Biblically correct order for things to be....It couldn't (have become) more apparent; it would be real bizarre to send your children away for their education when you are physically there and able to do it. It would be a contradiction and would be going against what is your God-ordained responsibility." Though Natalie took the lead role in gathering information about home schooling, the decision was made jointly and was fully supported by both parents.

The Robinsons state their academic goals in simple terms: "to strive for excellence in all endeavors." At this point they do plan on educating their children at home through high schools. But they do not equate success in this project with entrance into college. Their oldest daughter, for instance, is interested in becoming a chef which does not require traditional college. Roger and Natalie "just want them to be equipped to be able to do well in whatever they decide to do. Not just to do a mediocre job or to be on the fringes." What Natalie tries to do is to "see what their abilities and talents are now, and to draw them out. When I can really lock onto that, it will give me a solid, clear vision of which way to take them, how to focus their education." Emphasis is placed on critical thinking because memorization is not really that important to me. Reasoning is always what is most important. If you can teach a person how to think, then they
can take care of most everything else. That’s my underlying concept."

Though Natalie tries to tailor schooling to her children’s interests, she does rely upon a purchased curriculum as the structure from which to branch out. "The Weavers" is a Biblically-based curriculum which incorporates the conventional subject areas (reading, writing, math, social studies and science) and spiritual teaching. It can be used with various ages simultaneously by providing activities appropriate for each grade-level. All work is checked at home; no material is sent to a third party for review; there are no deadlines to meet. Thus Natalie can set work for each child so they are engaged at their own pace while she works one-on-one with another. In addition, the public library is frequented as a source of supplementary materials.

How does Natalie evaluate her children’s academic progress? For support she purchased a "grade-level skills evaluation" for home schoolers. She uses it as a general guide, especially in what she regards as critical areas like language arts and math. She relies a lot on "feedback" as well: "I can tell if they understand something because we are constantly interacting. When you have a classroom with many different students, the teacher probably needs a test. But I can tell by the interaction." It is clear, however, that what is really important to Natalie are skills - especially research skills: "It’s not that I know everything because I
don't. We study together; I study ahead. If there's something I don’t know, we look it up together or I explain to them how to research and look things up. I tell them there's nothing wrong or shameful about not knowing something, but as long as you know how to research, you can go out and find it."

A typical day, according to the Robinsons, is rarely typical. But they do have a basic schedule. After cleaning the house and taking care of personal needs, the family meets at 9 a.m. for prayer and devotion. Schooling then takes place for approximately three hours, followed by lunch. Two afternoons per week are scheduled for swim team practice and piano lessons; on the other days the children have free time during which the oldest usually reads and the younger play together. After dinner the family may watch television together for an hour. The Robinsons acknowledge a struggle with their children to accept limitations on television, "to understand that it is an entertainment tool plus it’s a learning tool." But the children are expected to complete their school work: "I try not to pressure them or ridicule them or put too much stress on them. But we have class; certain things they must know." As Roger notes: "It goes back to giving the children the basic concept of authority. There are certain things you have to do. It’s your responsibility. You must accept that responsibility. That is something I think they understand.

The Robinsons acknowledge that some of their friends and
relatives have tried to discourage them from home schooling. But "the quality of education is rarely the first thing (critics) challenge. It’s always socialization. I think that’s because they know there’s a problem with the education in the school system." For Roger "socialization is a good excuse word. When people say this word to you, they assume there’s this great positive thing that happens from the interaction of children. That’s not really true." The Robinsons believe strongly that

Ultimately the best socialization a child can get is between the child and his parents, or child and his or her siblings. If they are firm in their value systems, then that exchange is going to be a good foundation for them to interact with the rest of society. They see the negative socialization taking place in schools as "largely a reflection of the moral climate of the society."

Roger explains:

One of the bases of American culture is to try to be absent of definitive values; that is, you cannot say that this is right or wrong, only that this is different from me so I must accept it. That’s not the way you build and maintain a society. Somewhere there’s got to be a right and a wrong; there’s got to be a line...there have to be some folkways and mores that are definitive. That kind of thing comes from the family. The schools can’t teach it. Unfortunately we’ve taken this posture that the schools are going to give our children values, but the school is the wrong place. Socialization is just a myth; schools don’t really provide you with valid socialization.

Thus the Robinsons have turned to their own family, emphasizing their responsibility as parents, to transmit to their children values which are consistent with their own. And it is home schooling which enables them to pursue this
goal: "It goes back to what we said about the family having to give those basic moral values, which this method of teaching enables you to do."

Natalie states three simple social goals for their children: "to understand that people have difference in beliefs and customs; to be open-minded enough to listen and understand yet hold fast to what you believe is right; and to live always in submission to God’s will." This notion of tolerance based upon a strong self-knowledge was echoed throughout the interview: "In this diverse society, even though you see so many different cultures and ideologies, that doesn’t mean (the children) have to necessarily adopt all of these things or accept them all. They have been given the groundwork they need to know where they stand....If they don’t receive that instruction, they can be deceived into thinking it’s all okay and that’s just not what we believe."

The Robinsons lay this "groundwork" in a myriad of ways. The most important thing for them is Scriptural teaching. Roger states it simply: "There’s a statement, for instance, in the Bible: Do good to all men, especially the household of the believers, but do good to all men. It’s very important that the children have this understanding." Equally important is teaching by example: "A lot of the teaching in home schooling is not done with ‘teaching’. Because children observe and learn by observation, seeing what you do, the interactions that we have." They also describe themselves as "moderately
involved" with a home schooling support group. This group is just organizing formally but will be expanding to bimonthly meetings. Many of these home schooled children participate in group activities such as a swim team, puppeteering and field trips. The group enables the parents to share information and the children to perform and report in front of others as well as to play together. The Robinson children play most often with each other, but their main playmates outside of home are conventionally schooled children and one other home schooled girl in the neighborhood.

Civic education is one area in which academic and social concerns intersect, and the Robinsons speak confidently of providing their children with a foundation that includes both cognitive and affective components. Both parents consider themselves patriotic and they had no problem accepting the list of civic values contained in the questionnaire. But they strongly qualify their patriotism on the basis of their experience as African-Americans. Roger explains at length:

I consider myself to be more of an American than most folks who wave the flag, and I consider my children to be very patriotic. I understand what American principles are, and I understand the hidden agendas which are operating in the foundations of this country. I also know what the history is from my perspective as well as from the Eurocentric perspective. And I want to make sure my children understand that. It’s almost like, as an African-American we have to see American history and the way America functions with two sets of glasses. Actually three: from our view we have to see it from the European-American view, the way it really is, and the way God is going to look at it. I want my children to understand that you’ve really got to be able to look at it from all those points of view. In doing that, you have to act upon it in the best interest of the
environment you are in because this is where you live. That’s the bottom line. And you have to be blindly loyal. That to me is part of the problem with folks who wave the flag, including the home schoolers who are doing that, because it’s really dangerous.

Natalie concurs:

A lot of people, when they talk about patriotism, give a blanket endorsement of whatever happens. They sugar coat everything. They change history; they don’t present history in a factual light....I am against that; it is just not a true presentation of history. I see people doing it all the time. And they wave the flag. Everything is just stars and stripes. I don’t go for that. I even see lots of home schoolers who do that....Children come up with a false notion of what’s really going on. And you can fall victim to the same mistakes which happened in the past. I think that it is just dishonest.

The Robinsons "don’t make any apologies about being Afrocentric." This perspective infuses their home schooling program. At the same time they draw upon their "strong spiritual base" to ensure that their children "function as citizens in the society...We don’t become bitter or rebellious because (by aiming) to please and to submit to God, we become good citizens. Our focus is on God and not on reacting to man."

Roger plays an active role in the teaching of civics. For example, he teaches most of the history, a large part of which is taught through reading. His "Afrocentric" perspective led him to return a history textbook to the publishers of "The Weavers" because the statements contained in it "were just so bizarre from an African point of view:"

We sent it back because history serves a functional purpose in society. A lot of what’s wrong with American society right now is that this functional purpose has
nothing to do with what really goes on in America. Consequently when we read a text we have to supplement it with what we know has occurred. And the children have become very astute about this.

The example he offers is the controversy surrounding Columbus' arrival in the Americas, a trip motivated by "dollars and cents, not so much God" in his opinion:

> We need to be real about that. I think this gives (the children) a fresher understanding, a more pragmatic view of history. It also gives them an understanding of the process of writing history which I think is most important....To me it's important that everyone has a critical eye, whatever they do. As a person once said, 'Paper submits to anything.' If you don't red it with a critical eye, you'll find yourself accepting all kinds of things which just aren't true.

Roger thus draws upon his cultural identity - "The way you look at history...depends a lot on what you see, on what your cultural experiences are in that society" - to provide his children with a sense of the dynamics of history.

Practical experiences are an equally important part of the civics education in this home. Roger says that the children love field trips, so he tries to take them on trips "that are fun but allow them to learn things." Trips range from Underground Atlanta to see the antique trains and explore the architecture to a local farm to the Georgia State Capital where they observed a session of the legislature. (His six year old daughter's first statement was: "Daddy, they're not paying attention!") Roger strives to make the children aware of governmental processes, but "an awareness that is on their level." A recent trip to the Mayor's People's Day is a case in point. At this town meeting his oldest daughter publicly
voiced her concerns about the poor maintenance at a local park: "She's real proud because they actually did some serious clean-up work afterwards." They talk openly as a family about current events: "Because we are Christians and we hold to the Bible as our guide, we tie a lot of those things into the Bible - the whole Middle East situation, for example." The majority of their socializing is within the African-American community though they would prefer that the children had more interaction with other cultures. They describe the West End as "multicultural," but acknowledge that "it's in the nature of our society" for different cultures to remain within their own neighborhoods.

The Robinsons are not interested in putting their children "in a vacuum." Theirs is not a defensive or a radical posture. Roger actually describes his values as conservative: "A lot of people would think home schooling is a very radical thing to do, but it's actually an ultimate expression of conservatism. I want to conserve certain values and a certain standard, and I want to pass those on. This is one of the best ways of doing it." Natalie agrees: "We are not dissenters. Not at all. I don't see anyone taking that position with people who send their children to private schools....Some people say that home schoolers are taking their children out of the system. But what system are you talking about? The American idea is that all people are free to pursue the channel which they feel is the best for them to
take. Really we are full participants in the system." The Robinsons expect their children to become active and responsible citizens. Social responsibility is a key value for them:

a basic Biblical principle, the second greatest commandment. I don’t think we really teach that; it happens, it is pervasive because of our spiritual foundation. It’s something that is just an overflow. Social responsibility, stewardship - that means you take care of what has been entrusted to you. Taking care of my children is good stewardship. So is taking care of my house. Taking care of whatever has been entrusted to you - my city, my country, whatever.

At the same time they do not want their children to become "so Americanized" that they "just abide by what the government says. There is room for civil disobedience but it has to be done within the context of what God allows. That’s very crucial." As African-Americans they have experienced racism, and for their daughters they "recognize and acknowledge (it) when it’s obvious. We don’t try to sugar coat it." But Natalie always tries to remind them that "when you see injustices, take the emotion that it is a natural result of it and channel it in ways that can bring about change."

The Robinsons believe that home schooling is particularly well-suited to produce a "cadre" of active citizens. According to Roger:

One of the things I find real interesting about the home schoolers I have talked to so far, especially the older ones, is that they have no problem speaking. They are very communicative. If that is really a valid observation, that will have a real impact....Since you have this cadre of home schoolers who tend to be very self-assured and directed toward what they want to do, they can’t help but to orchestrate changes in this
society - whether conscious or unconscious. It's just the nature of their upbringing.

He contrasts this "cadre" to a society "consisting of people who are basically not participating. They let circumstances dictate to them. Literally for the past sixty years Americans have let circumstances dictate their responses; they have been reactors rather than initiators. And I don't think the home schooled children are that type of breed."

There is no doubt in the Robinsons' mind about the impact of home schooling on their family. Though the girls were "unsure of home schooling at first...I've never had a problem with them wanting to go back into the schools. They like it." Natalie especially appreciates the fact that "our children relate to a larger age-span than schooled children who can only relate at peer (grade) level...When my oldest was in school she would come home and didn't really want to play with the younger ones...Now they relate fine." She believes "we probably have a more intimate relationship" within their family. The flexibility of this method means "we can go on a trip whenever we want and take our books if we need to. I think it has been real good for the family." Roger attributes to home schooling the chance to rebuild what was "a strained relationship with his youngest daughter. I have a sneaking suspicion that had she gone off to school, we would never have bonded like we are now."

In terms of teaching, both Natalie and Roger report a growing confidence in their ability to provide their children
with an excellent education at home. Describing themselves as moving from the structured more toward the unstructured approach, Roger notes that "it has been interesting to watch the evolution of my wife's lesson plans. Her initial plans were real detailed, even overkill, a classic first year teacher's thing... As she has gotten further into the program, there is a world of difference. It's better for all of us. There is structure though; she does have objectives." Natalie now has no doubts about providing them with an adequate education. That's not to say that I am an expert or that it's impossible that I would fall short. But I know that I can always go out and get a tutor; I can always (adjust) the curriculum. I believe that God provides. He will always put us in contact with whoever we need to provide what it is ordained for me to do. So I don't have that pressure on me.

She now wants to "explore the idea of 'unschooling' a little more. I am thinking about moving towards letting them explore their own interest....I don't want to impose on them something they may be totally uninterested in. It may not be their ability, their gift, their talent at all. I want to see if I can lock in on that a little more. Once I find it I can then direct them on that path better."

As Roger insists: "We would have to become ill or experience some sort of drastic, life-changing thing before we would return our children to school. Even if something happened to my wife I would still home school them. I would have to work something out so that they were cared for when I was on duty. But I would still want them to be home.
schooled."
The Shabazz Family

The Shabazz’ are an African-American family living in a neighborhood in southeast Atlanta. There are six children: four boys (ages 12, 10, 10 and 8) and two girls (ages 14 and 13). Adrian (38) is a fulltime mother whose experience home schooling her own children led to her opening a school in her home based on the home schooling approach. Adrian now works fulltime as the Director of this school. Nasar (35), her husband, is the co-owner of a meat business. They both attended college, though Nasar did not finish his degree; Adrian graduated from college and attended some graduate school. They report their income as being in the $20,000-24,999 range. This interview took place in their home. Nasar was present only for the beginning, so Adrian was the principal respondent.

Before moving to Atlanta about five years ago, the six Shabazz children attended a private Islamic school in a city of the northeastern United States. Adrian was a fulltime teacher at this school, working across the curriculum with a wide variety of age-groups. Public education was not considered because she "wanted (her) children to have an uncompromised, solid religious foundation; home schooling was not an option because I was satisfied with the education they were receiving at that time." After moving to Atlanta, Adrian enrolled them again in a private Islamic school, but she grew dissatisfied with the educational approaches used there.
Specifically she wanted more "hands-on" methods of teaching; "the other school was a more 'hands-on' type of experience and I appreciated that method." Some of her children were doing well at the Atlanta school, but "when you have six and you are concerned about one or two....Since I am a teacher and I was spending so much time at the school, which I didn't necessarily want to do, I decided that if I am going to have to do this, then I can do this on my own - be in a school environment by choice, in my own home." A friend had been sending Adrian information about home schooling for years, but she never thought it would be an option for her. "I just prayed on it and thought on it. I have always thought that you have to do what is best for your children. I considered my options and I made the decision. It was not a joint decision made with the children; I made the decision....I knew what direction I wanted them to go in. So I took them out after a couple of months." She has now been schooling her children at home for four years.

It required a great deal of personal conviction for Adrian to turn to home schooling. Her husband was supportive from the outset, though his work schedule is both demanding and unpredictable; they knew his role would remain limited. Her oldest child, a teenaged daughter, was not happy about leaving a school when she had just begun to make friends, though Adrian reports the others were "thrilled." Moreover, Adrian could feel that people in her relatively tight-knit
Islamic) community were not overly supportive: "People were looking for me to fail. I heard the little comments others were making. 'Oh, she's taking her children out of school. They'll be back.' I knew mine wouldn't be back. This was for the long-haul, through high school." Adrian is a woman of impressive confidence, certain of her ability to home school from the outset:

I had already taught from grades one to twelve in my years of experience. I knew I had been exposed to enough resources. Where I lacked in an area, I could always get it. Home schooling has become big business. There's nothing in any area nowadays that a home schooler cannot get access to. And being the outgoing person that I am, I knew that the physical resources I needed could be gotten. So I came into it with strong convictions that I was not going to fail.

Perhaps it was this confidence that attracted other parents, because two years after beginning to home school, Adrian began to receive calls inquiring about the possibility of her home-educating other children. Adrian attributes this development to her own children: "My children are very articulate. And when people heard them they asked, 'Where do you go to school?' Of course the response was 'My mother teaches me at home.' As a result, people began to call me to ask if I would consider teaching their children." Initially Adrian was not interested - it was enough to teach her own - but the calls did not stop. "I prayed on it and asked for guidance from the Creator, as I usually do. When the requests intensified, I accepted this as the Creator's will."

Adrian's home school has now been open to other children
for two years. The average enrollment is fifteen, which includes her own six. There is a high turnover; forty students have attended at one time or another over the two years. Adrian attributes the turnover to the fact that many parents are not comfortable with the casual atmosphere at the school:

We are nervous people. People can say they want home education, but when they are exposed to it they are nervous....What happens is we want it but we don't understand it. And we are still looking for authentication, for someone to say it's okay....I had to choose between being a private school with all of the state regulations or just a home school that is open to people who desire that concept. I was real comfortable with that; it gave me more options. I could get up in the middle of the day and say, 'Come children, we're going on a field trip' without worrying that a parent might say, 'How could you just change your curriculum in the middle of class?' In home schooling spontaneity is almost taken for granted. It gives you options and alternatives which even private schools could not do.

It's fortunate because I don't look for authentication (from the society). The Creator has given me this right. I don't need others' approval, and that gives me a spirit of independent thinking which I find most people around me don't have.

The point is that the school which operates out of Adrian's home is an extension of her home school. The motivations which led her to home school, the goals she holds for her own children, the way she runs the school are relevant to all children who come to her; they are inseparable. When Adrian first opened her home to other children, "it brought more structure to the school and opened me to criticism. I went through a lot of stress trying to please parents...there was too much paperwork, parents wanted plenty of tests. I tried
to accommodate them but I had to stop. At one point I closed up altogether and only reopened because of parents’ pleas. I had to decide what my vision was and to stop listening to everyone’s demands. People can either buy into it or they can leave. That’s why I am so confident now; I’m going to do what I see based on what I read in the Qur’an and my environment. It is working...."

The vision Adrian decided on is revealed by examining her motivations and goals. Adrian states that her religious beliefs were "very important" in the decision to educate her children at home. She believes that "children can learn based on scripture and that is the best method of teaching children, whatever their faith. I believe that the book I follow, the Qu’ran, is that universal source, and that you can take the book and apply it to every single situation which comes up....The Qu’ran and the life of Prophet Muhammed permeate my school - it is the perimeter and everything else is the center core." Academically Adrian wanted more than just Qu’ranic education though; she wanted a more experiential, "hands-on" learning environment for her children.

Hands-on is more than just the physical knowledge; it is the implicit understanding of that physical knowledge which I try to impart to them on an everyday basis. If I’m teaching about money matters then I want the children actually handling money. I want them going to the grocery store and spending the money. I want them to know how to budget it. When I’m talking about 25 percent off of something, then we go to the store and look at the label and calculate the discounted price. I want actual, everyday life experiences to be a reality for them not when they become adults but while they are growing up.
Everything is connected in the educational process. It’s not where you get the theory and don’t know how to apply it. Theory is not always applicable. So I am trying to find the balance.

She also wanted her children to become more independent, taking personal responsibility for their own learning. "As I see it, the teaching methods we use in our schools makes our children teacher-dependent. I want them to see that I have a duty to myself. Man attains no more than he strives for."

Adrian also reports that her political beliefs were "somewhat important" in her decision to homeschool. What this appears to mean is that she does not want her children to be mere followers. She is very concerned about developing mind’s that are cognizant, who analyze things, but who are thinkers and who are independent thinkers. Who simply do not see the need to fit into someone else’s mold. That they fit into the mold of the universal mind, the universal way of doing things. How nature has laid out situations and interactions, and how the Creator has already given a plan (to guide our lives).

As Adrian sees it, she is contributing to the development of "an African-American intelligentsia that know’s what’s going on when they see it. To point it out and to be able to assess it." For those who desire to continue beyond high school, to pursue college or a technical school, she will "guide them in those areas." But whatever vocation they choose, Adrian is determined that her children as well as those she teaches will be critical, independent thinkers; grounded in the Islamic faith; conscious of their cultural heritage as African-Americans; and "good example of citizens in America."
Adrian pursues these goals by establishing a learning environment that allows children to pursue individual interests within the structure of the conventional subject areas. Working with a maximum of fifteen children at any one time, Adrian divides them up into "interest groups," corresponding roughly to 3rd, 6th, 9th, and 12th grade levels. Most of her students fall into the middle age ranges. Adrian has found that the younger students require too much input from her; the older ones, "if they have had years of traditional education...are not acclimated (to working independently). You really have to pull them out of the pattern of waiting for the teacher to tell them what to do." The ability to work independently is crucial in this school because each day is sectioned into subject areas. During the time allotted for a certain subject, each student goes to what Adrian calls a "resource center." Each center, arranged in different corners of the main room, is devoted to a specific subject (i.e. science, math, reading, spelling, religion, etc.). There the student will find materials in that subject which are appropriate for their level. Adrian ensures that she has resources for every age level by "talking to educators about what is age-appropriate and using a World Book guide to what children should know at different grade levels." Though most of the work takes place individually or in small groups, Adrian is available to help out when needed. In addition, younger students are paired with an older student to whom they
can turn for assistance. The older ones are especially encouraged to be self-motivated. Adrian says that "what I try to do is to help them become more independent. I let them know what they should be about, provide the resources, they are then obligated to do it. I don’t stand over them. I don’t want them teacher-dependent or even book-dependent."

One constant across the age-levels is the centrality of Qu’ranic teaching. Each school day, which begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m., is opened with prayers. On Fridays Nasar leads the school in the Islamic "sabbath" service. If Adrian is going to teach a subject formally to the entire group, she will study the Qu’ran first to find a verse which relates to the teaching. As she explains: "Everything I do starts with the Qu’ran. It’s called Qu’ranic education….There’s nothing I have found that is not premised from the Holy Book and how the Prophet lived his life." Though parents of any faith are welcome to send their children to Adrian’s school, virtually all students are Muslims.

Educational resources fill the rooms of the Shabazz home. Magazines such as Weekly Readers and Current Sciences, games such as African Bingo and Innervisions, cusineirre rods for math, records and tapes, and books, books, books. Adrian says that she "infuses anything that I think is good and use it." She insists that her way of educating the children is not "textbook-oriented at all. Though we have many texts that are available to them, that’s not the premise." The premise seems
to be that texts should be reference materials to help in understanding real life experiences:

If we’re talking about a bird then I want them to see a bird’s nest. We experienced this when a bird built a nest in a vase on the porch. We studied how many times the male and female would fly off, what length of intervals they would stay off; we then made a graph of these intervals - we had to figure these things out for ourselves. Then we went to an ornithologist and asked whether our assessments were correct. An ornithologist became real to them. It’s no longer just a word they learned out of a book.

As often as possible Adrian brings into the classroom people engaged in a variety of occupations. And she provides tools to the children. Her oldest daughter, for example, is interested in becoming a doctor. "Thus she has access to lots of medical books. I am also a midwife’s assistant so I take her with me to deliveries. I am in the process of looking at medical equipment - like a stethoscope - and she’ll have access to these."

Adrian makes efforts to ensure that home schooling is not confined to the four walls of her home. When she first started schooling her own children, Adrian provided "the social outlet" by involving them in activities such as soccer, swim team and scouting. These activities have grown less important now that other children have been brought into their home. Field trips are regular and varied: Zoo Atlanta, the State Capitol, museums (especially the local museum of African-American history), the public library, camping trips. Many of the children have a chance to travel with Nasar as he conducts his business, observing everything from the (Islamic)
ritual slaughter of animals to the delivery of meat to customers. Heat for the winter is provided by a wood stove, so children often accompany Nasar to learn how to gather and to cut it. Recently he built a deck onto the back of the house and he employed the boys in the process, enabling them to gain carpentry skills. Television is also used as a resource in this home school. Adrian has "every video you can think of." During the course of a day the children can view educational channels, but only at certain times. About television Adrian says:

I believe in the good and the bad of a thing. Fire serves good and bad; everything has its good and bad. TV is a tremendous problem in American society - my TV is controlled, though not even as much as I want it to be....But I always believe we are the result of two factors: genetics and environment. I can't do anything about your genetics but I can do something to provide you with a rich environment.

After school hours Adrian’s children are not allowed to use the television without permission. Each week she reviews the scheduled programming and checks off the shows they can look at.

Adrian admits that "it’s not always easy" juggling so many age-levels within her own home. "Because you are home and you’re comfortable, there are moments when you may not do as much (as in a formal school environment). ‘Oh, I’m relaxed. It’s not required.’ I have to regularly assess our progress to ensure that I am comfortable with what’s being accomplished.' For the most part this assessment is informal and ongoing. Grades are not used because Adrian does not want
the children exposed to "that kind of competition." But she
does give many "word confirmations" to students about their
work, and about four times per year she gives parents a
progress report in the different subject areas. "I have
students who make the transition into public schools and they
need some sort of record." If Adrian encounters problems with
students unwilling to work, she disciplines them through the
force of her personality, through the exercise of natural
authority: "My students know I mean business. One thing I say
to them is,

There are too many of my (African-American) people over
there in the Atlantic Ocean, at the bottom. I don't have
time to play. Look at the koala bear. He sleeps 18-20
hours a day. Why? Because the food he eats is low in
protein. Don't you know they call the pages of a
book its leaves? Don't you know if you don't eat the
proper knowledge you're going to be just like that koala?
You may be cute and cuddly, but you're of no benefit and
your mind is asleep 18-20 hours a day. I'm not having
it.

Adrian insists that this appeal works; "I get more respect
than a lot of their parents get." Adrian is not reluctant
about working with children who have been diagnosed as
learning disabled either. "If there are reading problems I
still say, 'You are going to read. And do the best you
possibly can.' Do they boo-hoo? Yes, even the big ones cry.
I see their stress, but I know in the end some other problem
is going to come up and they're going to figure out what to
do."

Adrian believes that this firmness is a necessity for
working with African-American children. Though she never
refers explicitly to her school as "Afrocentric," it is clear that knowledge of the African-American cultural heritage is central to her educational approach. Adrian believes that African-Americans are at a critical point in their experience in this country. Concerned about the plight of African-American boys in particular, Adrian has chosen to "concentrate with this group - not only because I have four of them, but because I see the raw deal they get. I see them in the mentally retarded classes when they don't deserve to be." She deliberately reduces the number of girls in her school in order to bring in more boys. And with all of the children she emphasizes this message:

Until man first knows himself, he cannot know anyone else. One beautiful thing about European people is they know themselves. And it is that knowledge which they have of themselves which enables them to overcome and to do other things. Unfortunately the African-American doesn't know himself; he is still too busy trying to identify with other people. He wants to be European, he wants to be Arabic, he wants to be Asian, he wants to be African - he does not set for himself his own cultural identity. He is everything but himself. Once he has set his own cultural patterns, he can achieve anything.

When you become comfortable with your own image, that makes you multi-ethnic. Because you begin to appreciate everybody's contribution....You don't have a need for people to watch what they say around you or to watch what you say around others. Share who you individually are. The point I want to reach is that if a European child were to go to this school, they would fit right in. The door is open...but the curriculum would not change to accommodate them. Other cultures need to know the history of African-American peoples.

Adrian insists that "first and foremost I really give the children a universal education: for any ethnic group to be able to come into my educational environment and achieve.
That is why I say the Qu’ran is the guide, because I believe it to be a universal book and I believe whatever is taught in this environment would benefit any child."

At the same time Adrian believes "there are concerns that exist in the American society, if I was home schooling in another country these are issues I wouldn’t even have to address because the environment is totally different, but we live in a society where we reduce things to race issues. Then we have to teach certain things." As a result, teaching African-American kids has to be a conscious, conscious, conscious effort. I see many things in this country which are damaging psychologically to African-American kids....We live in a society that unfortunately perpetuates certain racial concepts in everything - in food, clothes, religion. We have a European Jesus sitting over everybody. Here you have an African-American child who has had to look at this for two hundred years....That’s psychologically damaging. Take Greenland. Maps show Greenland overdrawn. If we give you a visual lie to make you think that the majority of everything is European, the majority of accomplishments are European, that’s psychologically damaging. So you see a people who are not able to push themselves out of the rocks, leaves and debris that have been piled on top of them. It’s not that they aren’t strong and viable....Well, I’ve seen through this.

This does not mean that Adrian believes all "Europeans" are racist. Likewise, although there are some "African-Americans who don’t like Europeans, that doesn’t mean all African-Americans are racist" either. What Adrian asserts is the existence of racism in this country. "And the children have to acknowledge the existence of it because they encounter these experiences in their lives. You cannot avoid talking about it."
Adrian rejects any notion that her emphasis on cultivating racial pride is based on separatism or hatred. She considers herself very patriotic; she proudly wears a lapel pin embossed with the American flag even while dressing in traditional African cloth. Though she had no problem agreeing with the list of civic values on the questionnaire, she reserves the right to "disagree with something America does; that's the American way. America is an experimental society."

And citizenship training is a very important part of her homeschooling program:

In terms of citizenship the children are taught the basic things any other American citizen is taught. You have the right to vote; it's a responsibility. You should obey the laws; it's a responsibility. You have the Bill of Rights and you must know them. Ignorance of the law is ignorance; you must know the law....Citizenship definitely goes beyond the home into the community and then into the city and the state, to the country and so on - citizens of the world, citizens of the universe.

Her charge to her students is to "take up you citizenship. You are American citizens. You have earned these rights. Enjoy them."

At the same time citizenship is taught in terms of the "realities (African-Americans) have to live within in the social structure. If we go somewhere I say, 'You must conduct yourself in a certain way. People think certain things of African-American people. You don't want to sell that lie. You have to be conscious of every move you make so that misconception is not perpetuated by you." Adrian's insistence on the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship,
though taught within a framework of cultural awareness, sometimes meets with opposition from parents:

The opposition is that America has done no good for African-American people. We don’t have to have a respect for her flag or her anthem, we don’t have to stand for them. But if my students go somewhere and it’s played, they’re standing. Now I tell them we don’t have to do this, but we’re going to stand and show respect for the flag. That’s our responsibility as citizens. Parents might say that civil rights didn’t really do anything for African-American people. I tell my students that civil rights were not developed, in my opinion, for that purpose. I think it was just a farce that allowed others to benefit, and we were the ones who had to be set out front. That doesn’t mean I don’t have the rights others enjoy. I have to make sure you give me my rights by my responsibility, my work ethics, my moral ethics, my character; these will cause people to treat me a certain way.

Though a member of an ethnic and religious minority in this country, and highly critical of much of the nation’s policies and practices, both past and present, Adrian is resolved to exercise the rights and to fulfill the responsibilities of citizenship. And she is determined that her children and students “not be illiterate” of how the American system works and of their power within it.

As a result, Adrian is committed to ensuring that her students understand citizenship both in its real as well as in its testing application. Reading resources such as a Weekly Reader series on the 1992 elections and field trips to the State House are used to impart knowledge of the structure of government. Current events, including U.S. foreign policy and “what is happening on the international scene” are examined within the school. Television is a prime medium for this
information, and watching the news is a regular feature for many of the students.

If it’s out there we’re talking about it. If it comes through the news the kids will usually want to talk about it.

They watched virtually all of the Persian Gulf War and the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings (to the U.S. Supreme Court). Adrian believes it important that even the youngest are aware of these matters: "They have to know the language, and the younger they are the better it’s going to be." Because the children in her home school now come from different homes, and "we have people who have different schools of thought," many of the students have very different perceptions of these events. Adrian encourages open debate among them, though she reserves the right to take her own position and to explain it to the children.

The children are given the chance to be independent thinkers. They know that ours is a Qu’ranic position but there are issues where they may choose to differ. We try to lay all of the facts on the table and let them make a judgement. Especially on domestic political issues. We don’t ever inhibit the children from expressing in a respectful manner, opposing views. And the children can and have changed my views. That’s because when you are dealing with an independent mind, you don’t want to harness it. You want them to have respect for authority but you don’t want them to be zombies and to spit out whatever you say without any thought processes having gone into it. Knowledge without understanding - if you are not firm about the way you think, other people are easily going to able to sway you into all kinds of stuff. We say that when you argue, argue with the best of arguments. Not just from the standpoint of emotionalism, but bring in as much information as you can from different resources to present an intelligent view of your position.

Conscious, critical awareness and the skills to communicate
effectively what they see—these are tasks of the "African-American intelligentsia" Adrian is cultivating in the Shabazz home school. Her vision is for the youth to fully assume the rights and responsibilities of their citizenship, working from a solid intellectual and moral foundation to uplift not only the African-American community but the nation as a whole.

The impact of home schooling on the Shabazz family, according to Adrian, has been very positive. Adrian had "no anxiety" when she first started; drawing on her years of teaching experience gave her great confidence. She does report having "some difficulty with a lack of structure and the children were not learning as much as (she) wanted them to." After four years she is "very comfortable with what is going on in this school.

I am very comfortable because when I see things that need to be improved upon, I simply improve upon them. If you see a situation and you need to make a transition, make it in midstream. That's the benefit of home schooling.

When she began to feel "stressed out" from the demands made by parents of children in her home school, she merely closed down and re-evaluated the situation, opening to other students only when she felt ready. Now she reports little stress, with the exception of the standardized tests the students took last year: "That stressed me because again I allowed someone to be in a position of judging me." With experience she reports a growing ability to stay relaxed and to draw strength from the "conscious choice" she has made to educate her own (and other)
The benefits attributed to home schooling by Adrian are many. She reports a much closer family life and insists that she "would not give this up for anything in the world.

Some of the adversity which my children would have been exposed to, even in a private school, they are not exposed to. Some of the problems I see that I am not satisfied with, my children are still better off than others. Some of the exposure we have had, trips we have made, we would have never made them. It's absolutely phenomenal....

Teaching my children is hard work, but I benefit because I don't want to fail. I am reading more. You have to learn how to become a better communicator. How to budget your money better. Every aspect of human life has to be refined. Simply because you know it's on you. I am now a better artist, a better designer and speaker, better organized, as a result of simply teaching my children at home. Contrary to what people may think of home education - 'oh, you can do what you want' - you cannot. There's an obligation on you. Our health is better because you come into knowledge you wouldn't have if the children were in a public school. Looking at conservation issues, we wouldn't have been recycling anything, but now we recycle, we have a compost pile, so many different experiences for the children. You learn so much it is phenomenal. I have even become a better Muslim because of home education. Because if I say I use the Qu'ran as the premise, I have to study it.

Adrian says that her children are very happy to be at home, even the reluctant older daughter. Now that she knows a lot of home schoolers, she feels that "it's not so bad, so odd, so abnormal to be educated at home. That's the teenager's social confirmation. As a result of the activities she knows she could never have participated in within a traditional setting, there's a sense of gratitude."

Adrian believes that home schooling has a lot to offer African-American parents. She does not, however, expect or
advocate that the majority pull their children out of the traditional school setting. She recognizes the constraints that many parents face. What she does advocate is that parents see "home education as a viable alternative and as a part of the American way of doing things."

What I don't want people to see is that it is on the outside of the American way. It is the American way! Because this is where most schools, most religions, everything started - in the home. So we have moved away from what was always natural....

What I do advocate is that one be open to it and see what you might be able to do. If you are not able to do it, then be conscientious of how the world manipulates and controls your mind. If you can't teach your children everyday at home, at least be able to give them some insight into how they are being manipulated through the television, through subliminal seduction, through magazines, advertisements, conversations - become conscious.

Adrian has adopted as a personal goal "to get respect for home education. We're not hippies, not a group of dissidents, not a group that wants to be separate from the mainstream. We're just a group of people, in more cases than not, who think we can do a better job. Or at least as good a job. We just want to teach our own children." And she has a piece of advice for other home schoolers:

My advice to other home schoolers is to go out of your home. Use the city, use the state, the world as your school grounds. Home education is merely saying that the home is the foundation. The resources are in the universe, and you have to take advantage of them. You have to put yourself in positions to do this. It's very fruitful; man gets no more than what he strives for.
The Young Family

The Youngs are a European-American family living in a rural-suburban setting in metropolitan Atlanta. They have four sons, ages 19, 17, 14, and 8. Dan (46) is a Christian minister and Mary (43) is a full-time homemaker. While Dan describes himself as the "overseer" of the home schooling, it is Mary who handles most of the daily details. Both parents graduated from college but Dan has recently returned to graduate school seeking a Master's degree. They chose not to indicate their annual income. Both parents provided answers to the questionnaire, but only Dan participated in the interview which took place in his office.

The three older Young boys attended a private Christian school in their early years, one that Dan and Mary felt was the "best" in the Atlanta area. Dan's reasons for choosing a Christian school over public or other private schooling are clear: "to avoid delegating our children to others to indoctrinate them with humanistic values or to be socialized by their peers, and to give them a better education." Over time they grew dissatisfied with the educational experience there:

We were losing (them) to peers. They wanted to be around their peers more than around us. They respected their peers basically more than they respected us....That's basically why we pulled them out. We didn't know what we were doing, we were scared, but we knew we had to do something....We really believed that to keep family together, to build family, the family that we wanted and that the Bible speaks of, we brought them into home education.
According to Dan the boys "were doing great academically: the problem wasn't education in terms of subject areas but maintaining the respect and obedience of our children." Church schools are not immune from "worldly values." Dan points out that some of the children sent there have been rejected by the public school system; they often bring disturbance or discipline problems with them. "Obviously all of the children there are not going to be Christian kids. So you are going to be socializing your children even in a Christian school with some kids who bring in worldly values. Our children were picking up these values."

Concerns about the type of socialization his sons will be exposed to recurred as a theme throughout this interview. For example, "there are humanistic values taught in the Christian system that they cannot even guard against. The only difference between the public and the private Christian system is the curriculum. And you have Christian teachers who try to overcome that factor but it still seeps through." At the Christian school, "you could see that my children wanted to dress, talk, act like their peers, do things they did, things we didn't want our children doing or saying." In the end the Youngs' move to home schooling came "strictly based on Scripture. God has not given children to strangers or other Christians to raise. That child is born into the family. And it's unique (with humans) because with most animals, within a short period of time, take a deer for instance, within 24-48
hours that deer is already running. Whereas a child needs nurturing at least seven or eight years before he can fend for himself. And even then it's questionable....Child training is the parent’s responsibility." The bottom line is that "parents have a God-ordained responsibility to educate their children. They are commanded to do so by Scripture."

The Youngs thus list three factors as the motivation for their choice of home education over church-related schooling: "accept Biblical parenting responsibility, provide better socialization and education." Clearly it is the first two which were of strongest influence. Their view of home schooling as offering a "better education" came through experience with it. They are particularly attracted by the chance to work one-on-one academically with each child and by the belief that at home they could better cultivate their sons' self-discipline and motivation for learning. But it was the desire to "be obedient to God’s word and to have more influence on the values of (their) children" which were the primary motivating forces:

It was a matter of socialization. How do you socialize your children? Do you do it within the context of family, to prepare them for the socialization of the world, or do you socialize them with others? Someone is going to instill moral values in those children. Our concept is that children from birth to 6 years are wet concrete, and you can put just about any kind of form around them that you want to. From age 7 to about 15 years that concrete is setting up. You can take the forms off but it's not wise because it might crack the corners and the ends, so you leave the forms on--but you can still take a nail or put your hand in it. At about age 15 or so you begin to take the forms off carefully and the child moves into socialization at that time.
Knowing that course of human development we turned to home education. We wanted to be the ones who put the footprint or handprint in each of our children’s lives, to etch in there what the Bible commands parents.

It is not surprising that the Youngs list their religious beliefs as "very important" in the decision to homeschool.

The primacy of ideological factors in this family is reflected in the goals the Youngs hold for their children. Academically Dan expects his sons to complete their high school education but "I don’t care if they go to college. I think college is a waste of time for a lot of kids. If the kid says ‘I just love bulldozers and that’s what I’d like to do for the rest of my life,’ I’ll say go for it.... Just marry a woman who is content with your salary." He is not at all concerned about grade-levels or any such means of comparison: "I’ve told each one never to compare yourself to anyone else. You can’t glorify God if you compare one to another. God has given you a mind and an intelligence that He’s given no one else. If you start saying you’re an A, you’re a B, you’re a C, you’re an D, then...it’s counterproductive to maximizing your efforts." What is important is that each one will have a "vocation" and do it well:

I don’t care if it’s plumbing, driving heavy equipment, a salesperson, or whatever. We’re going to train them. And if they get out of high school and don’t know what their vocation is, then we want to send them for two years to a Bible school. At least we’ll know they will have a strong theological foundation. Once they get out of Bible school, if they still don’t know what they want to do, we’ll choose a vocation for him. When a child discerns that God is calling him for a particular vocation, then he can go.
The key to education in Dan's eyes is "building character. What character will do is to motivate the child to educate himself and that never stops....We want them to continue to enjoy learning in their field of study for the rest of their lives. If they have character, they don't need anyone else except the Lord. They can figure out how to get any information they need." So far their children have done well academically. The oldest son was home schooled for the seventh and eighth grades years, then returned to a private non-sectarian high school from which he graduated. He now attends college where he is majoring in chemistry with hopes of becoming a "medical missionary." The second son was educated at home for the fifth through ninth grades when he enrolled in the same high school. He hopes to become an engineer and plans to attend college. They are now in the process of deciding whether to send their third son, home schooled now for eight years, to a private school. He has expressed interest in becoming a lawyer, and the Youngs believe "they can do a lot more at home (with that vocation) than school can. We may go that route with him."

The signs looked for by the Youngs to determine when to return their children to a conventional school setting provide clear evidence of their motivations and goals. Academic factors are secondary because they have no doubt about being able to provide a comparable or superior education at home. What the Youngs look for is "when the child shows he is
grounded in his faith" (approximate age - 15 years):

Children are mission fields until they become missionaries. When my child shows an interest in his prayers, in his behavior, in his conversation that he is interested in leading other people to Christ...I believe he is becoming a missionary. Once I have trained my child as a missionary then he can go into the secular system and stand for Christ without being deceived by a secular curriculum or taking the values of his peers. Once he is set in his beliefs it’s going to take a sledgehammer to change his values."

Of equal concern is for their children to know "how to submit to...(and) to exercise authority. Once (they) exercise authority like the Bible says, like we’ve taught them, they are free to expand their realm of freedom and responsibility."

The third son, for example, "has shown excellent responsibility, very good submission to authority, has handled authority well, is concerned about sharing Jesus with others and has taken the initiative to do so, so he’s ready to be put out within a limited area, go out during the day, come in and talk over living in the midst of the world’s system." Dan is not saying that this is the way for everybody: "There are those who do not have the same conviction, or feel inadequate as their children’s primary trainers." In his words "men are made for war, that’s the way I’m training my sons, for war."

The goal is to "conform to the image of Jesus Christ" in a "secular system (that) is satanically designed for their soul’s destruction."

How do the Youngs structure their home schooling program in pursuit of these goals? Academically they "started with one main curriculum but now we just use it as a backup. My
wife tries to piecemeal different curriculums to fit each child’s personality." Basic texts are purchased from several of the Christian publishers who cater to home schooling families. These are supplemented by weekly trips to the public library. Mary draws up all of the lesson plans and takes care of all record-keeping. Dan serves mainly as physical education instructor and disciplinarian: "And they don’t like to come to the principal’s office." With only two sons now schooling at home, the task of operating the school has been eased. But the family maintains a daily schedule to get everyone to their proper place. Dan rises about 4:30 a.m. for his "quiet time with the Lord." The alarm goes off at 6:00 a.m. and Mary wakens her two older sons. After prayer and breakfast there is a time set aside for the teaching of Scriptures. At this point the older son leaves for school and the 14 year old returns to his room, "usually to finish a quiet time of devotions." The youngest is a "late sleeper" and rises when Dan comes in to teach him a proverb. At 8:00 a.m. Dan goes to work in his office and Mary takes over. She has the lesson plans for the day laid out already, and the older son works independently through most of what would be considered a "regular" school day. This independence is very important to the Youngs: "Our goal is to teach our sons to teach themselves. Once they reach (a certain) age, they should be teaching themselves and generating their own information." Mary is available to provide assistance when
needed. The youngest child is usually finished with his schoolwork by noon, at which point he will either go over and help his father or remain in the home to help his mother. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. and this is their "main social time as a family. That's when we catch up and share how the day went."

The Youngs describe themselves as "moderately involved" in a home schooling support group. With this group the boys receive art and choral instruction, and participate in field trips and "share nights", among others. Mary meets with other mothers for support. Dan reports that the mothers in the group often "swap out" things like tutoring in subjects they are deficient in. For example, "If one mother is deficient in math, she'd call and ask Mary if she'd help her and her son work through this together. With two other children coming behind him they'd have to go through this same thing. So Mary works with the mother and child to teach the mother how to teach the child. This lady can help us by taking our son to music lessons....In the areas we feel deficient it is perfectly alright to get a tutor, but we seldom need to." Dan reports that they haven't had much difficulty getting their sons to complete schoolwork:

There's a lot of things that we don't like to do. We would like to eat as much ice cream as we want. The key is we have to discipline ourselves. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is control of self. Even though self doesn't like it, we have to tell self what to do. We don't want self to tell us what to do. So far it's been effective with all of them.
At the same time they are determined not to let their children "slip past education." With one son, for example, they had to say: "We are going to stay on these grammar rules if it takes us two years. You will know these rules. Don’t memorize them; you have to learn them and own them for yourself....Even if we have to do them over and over for two years, we will do it." Now Dan says "he knows his grammar rules and he has become one of the best writers in our family."

The all-important social goals are pursued primarily through the parents’ role as teachers/models of the Scriptures and by careful selection of social interactions. The boys do participate in county youth sports, but "not so much for the sports as to lead non-Christians to Christ." Their primary socialization outside of the family is the church, but the Youngs do not put their boys in Sunday School for the most part because it "can become the same thing as a youth group and we don’t need that for our family. It’s the father’s responsibility to teach his children God’s word. It’s how you socialize and who you socialize with. Scripture is very clear about running with people who don’t hold your conviction. So that’s what we try to do. Our children are around families with like-minded goals and discipline." The children are also given the opportunity to exercise their authority: "We don’t have any adolescents in our family. You are either a child or an adult....If you do irresponsible
things, you're a child and we're going to treat you like a child. If you do responsible things, you're an adult and we'll treat you like an adult. At the same time we give the child the freedom to be a child." The older children, for example, are left in charge of babysitting the younger ones when Dan and Mary go out. If there is a conflict between them, upon his return Dan will convene a "court case" where he is the "judge and the jury." Because "he knows their personalities," he can usually determine if it is a problem in the exercise of or submission to authority. "This has been a good way for us to test and train our children in the use of and submission to authority."

Christian values and teaching infuse the civic education no less than the other components of this home schooling program. Dan had no problem accepting the list of civic values contained in the questionnaire, but with extensive comment and qualification. His main contention seems to be that the government should operate under Biblical law and that values such as loyalty, tolerance and justice should be interpreted in such a way that "Biblical authority is maintained." His personal view is that "the best government is a theocracy...." But

the children need to know how to function under authority and within authority. The Bible is our basic textbook. God says that you honor and don't talk evil of your leaders. The principles based upon the Bible are what we try to teach our children. At the same time in our society we do have a system of government, a republic with legislative, judicial, and executive branches, and we have curriculums based upon that which are our basic
textbooks. But I supplement those.

Dan wants his children to recognize the "civil government is a God-ordained ministry." They must be knowledgeable about its functioning because "as Christians, it is our God-given responsibility to steward the civil government He has entrusted to America."

Dan believes that civic responsibilities and duties are "very important," and that "in any society in which you live you must still understand the civil structure." Dan does not see himself as "a dissenter. In home schooling my children I am being a creative American. Americans have always been innovators....Almost all of the Founding Fathers (of this country) were home educated. I am going back to the roots rather than being a dissenter or starting something new." In fact, Dan has been active politically in the defense of home schooling rights, among other issues. But "I do indoctrinate my children in a way into my perspective. As they grow older they have the opportunity more to express their own opinions. And they can always ask questions which helps them to formulate their opinions." He believes that every parent is going to indoctrinate their children; it's just a matter of how they do it. To be free thinkers? Hopefully I’ve trained my children to be thinkers after Scriptures. That way they are not left to their own mental faculties or just their own ideas on a subject. I believe the Bible has the answers to every question. It’s just a matter of digging it out. (My children) are free thinkers according to the Bible, but according to the world they are not that open-minded. In fact, for my boys who are going to school, they might be told, 'Well, you are closed-minded on that issue.' And I say, 'Great! Abortion is not something you can be
open-minded about.

Accusations of being "narrow-minded" are not of concern to Dan. For "the way is narrow; it’s small. For the world the gate is wide, it’s broad. And the world has a whole collective group of opinions so as to keep everyone happy. But in home education, when you enter that narrow door, whenever you do what the Bible says, you are narrow-minded. In the things that are important, I am narrow-minded."

Indoctrination, however, does not mean that Dan is the kind of parent who "locks his children in a closet and doesn’t let them experience the world." Dan insists that home schoolers who do this are "the exception and not the rule. Parents love their children and want the best for them." History, for example, "should be related honestly and openly. Call a spade a spade." History is taught using textbooks which incorporate religion and history, teaching history from a Christian perspective. Movies are also used, such as Glory, a film about African-Americans fighting in the Civil War:

It’s a beautiful movie. I sat the boys down and let them watch that. I said, 'Children, this is how the whites treated the blacks.' Even the northerners, when the blacks wanted to fight for the north, the whites treated them like trash. Racial prejudice is a sin. We should love our neighbors as ourselves. I expose and teach my children things like that.

The boys can watch television on a regular basis, though "if we catch them watching television when they are not supposed to and if the show they are watching doesn’t help them to become more like Jesus, then they can’t choose the
consequences." And the children are free to "form their own opinion" on historical events. "Take Christopher Columbus. If they want to believe that he came over as a Christian with Christian goals, that's fine. If they want to believe that he was an alcoholic seeking his own treasure, that's fine with me. That's not an issue of value within our family....I'm open-minded about that. But when it comes to what is best for my children, I'm very narrow-minded."

Dan also believes that "the cultures of the world are very important. We live in a world. Jesus said that the Gospels should be spread from Samaria to Jerusalem to the outermost parts of the earth. If you are a Christian you have to be aware of world cultures, of ministries of people." His children accompany Dan on his extensive travels as part of the family ministry. "We go out so much that my boys are exposed more than the average to all kinds of people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I'd say we are an average family in that aspect." Dan shared some of his personal growth in this area:

I used to have racial prejudice myself. I grew up with 'Whites Only' on the water fountains. I grew up when black people couldn't use the white restroom. They had to go behind the service station to the outhouse. I never could figure it out but I never did anything about it. Then as I got older I just kind of agreed with it. When I became a Christian, God dealt with my sin of racial prejudice. So now I am trying to undo the racial prejudices I promoted by speaking out against it.

In fact, Dan reports that a well-known African-American organization publicly honored him one year because "everywhere
I go I say that you can have all of the integration programs you want to, but until the heart is dealt with, racial prejudice will be here. So we expose our children to these matters." Community service may be the Young’s "weakest area," according to Dan, because his service is through the ministry and it is a very active one. "But that’s not the kind of community service they really need....There’s only so many things you can do, and we’re just trying to hold ourselves together. I think community service will come as they get older."

Dan describes home schooling as "difficult but just fantastic" for his family. He says that "I never knew my children before we started to homeschool." By knowing his "children’s personalities, I know how to discipline (them). Parents make a lot of mistakes disciplining their children. If you don’t know your children, you can damage them for a lifetime by wrong discipline." What Dan says about his youngest son is telling:

Each child’s personality is different. If our nine year old was in a public or a private system, they’d probably label him hyperactive and drug him with Ritalin. Because it’s hard for him to sit still. He wants to be outdoors, building sand castles and driving trucks and playing army. He reminds me a lot of myself. What home education does for him is that he’ll get up and move around, sit down and work a little bit, move around again. We have to be sensitive to that. He’s just a child; it’s a matter of maturing.

Speaking for Mary, he says: "What my wife is receiving you can’t place a value on. She’s fulfilling her role as a mother. And the hand that rocks the cradle will rule the world."
(Mary) is developing a bonding relationship with her children so that their relationship ties will be with her until she dies." Dan insists that his children are enthusiastic about their home schooling experiences. When the two older boys entered private high school, they had to fill out an application. When asked "what was the most influential part of their lives, they wrote 'home schooling'." On a recent visit home from his Christian college, Dan’s oldest son told how his peers made fun of him because "I don’t know the latest sex lingo. Do you know when and where they picked it up? In junior high. Dad, they make fun of me because I am just naive. And I want you to know I am so thankful that I am naive in that area."

Dan challenges people to decide what’s more important, "material things or relationships to your children? Yet I only know of two fathers who reduced their level of accumulation or job status just to be able to spend more time with their families." Speaking in terms of the society as a whole, Dan believes that home education has a valuable role to play in re-establishing the primacy of the family:

I am counting on mothers to realize that it is more important to have a child who can think for himself, who has moral values, who loves to be with family more than peers, who is not hooked on drugs, that is not rebellious toward them. I am counting on mothers to see that it doesn’t matter if they make $40,000 a year in the work-force if they can get their son or daughter to respect and obey them. If you can do that it’s worth more than $40,000 in today’s culture. I am counting on the mothering instinct for that to occur in our society. When that instinct shifts gears, there’s going to be a big jump in home education, because private education is
too expensive for most and the public schools are failing miserably. When it does, home education will become socially acceptable and you'll have thousands of people coming into it.

In the meantime Dan hopes that "I am laying a foundation with my family, taking the ridicule, in order to be on the cutting edge of the future."
CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction
The objective of this study was to describe the process of socialization found in homeschooling families, with particular reference to the manner in which they transmit civic culture. Case studies of eight homeschooling families in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia were conducted. Extensive descriptions of these families were generated based upon multiple sources of evidence. Detailed descriptions of each family and the nature of their programs were presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Five attempts to answer the eight research questions of this study from a multi-case perspective. The first question was answered by summarizing the responses from the survey questionnaires. The other questions were answered by compiling data from the questionnaires, interview transcripts, field notes, and on-site examination of homeschooling materials.

Research Questions: Presentation of the Data
This section presents the data relevant to answering
the eight research questions of the study.

What are the backgrounds and current life circumstances of these home schooling families?

Responses to the questionnaire yielded much data that is useful in drawing a composite picture of the demographic characteristics of the eight participating families. All families had two parents at the head. Parents' ages ranged from 31 to 46 years, with 37.5 years as the median age. All parents completed high school and attended at least some college. Five of the mothers received college degrees; three went on to attend some graduate school. One father completed college studies and is currently enrolled in a graduate program. Annual family income for the seven families who were willing to report it showed a wide range: only one family reported income in the $20,000 to $24,999 range, two selected a range from $25,000 to $34,999, another two selected the $35,000 to $49,999 category, and two reported income annually over $50,000.

Four of the families (two European-American and two African-American) identify themselves as Christians. The other two African-American families are Muslims, while the other two European-American families describe themselves as having "spiritual" beliefs but no religious affiliation. Four of the families live in small residential areas in one of Atlanta’s
intown neighborhoods, while the other four live in suburban neighborhoods - two north and two south of the city. All except one family live in houses with private yards; the other lives in an apartment complex.

In all of these families the mother is described as the person who takes primary responsibility for the daily tasks associated with home-based education. Thus it is not surprising that five of the mothers describe their occupation as fulltime homemakers. Only one mother works at a job outside of the home; she works a night-shift as a nurse in order to be available fulltime for her children during the day. The other two mothers work in their homes: one directs a "home school" for other children which her own attend, while the other describes herself as a writer/homemaker. Fathers are engaged in varied occupations: minister, health care provider, fireman, video technician, restauranteur, computer engineer, salesman, and small businessman. Two of the fathers work out of offices adjoining their homes; a total of five have jobs which offer them enough flexibility to participate in home schooling activities.

The numbers of children in these families range from two to six, with four children as both the average and the median. Their ages range from twenty-one years down to one year, with nine and one-half years as the median. Only three are of high school age (fourteen years or older); fifty-three percent are between the ages of six and twelve years old, and seventy-five
percent are twelve years old or younger. They are fairly equally divided between boys (n=19) and girls (n=14).

The level of experience in home education among these families is indicated by a median of three years, with a range of experience from one to eight years. (The median excludes two families who responded that they have "always" been educating their children at home.) Only one family was in their first year of home schooling, and only two in their second year; the other five families have three or more years of experience. All of these families had participated in some kind of conventional school setting before turning to home education. The common pattern was for older children to attend a private or public school in the primary years before being withdrawn by their parents; younger siblings usually by-passed the school experience altogether. The only exceptions to this pattern are indicated by an asterisk in the summary which follows:

Baker: Oldest two children attended public school for three and five years. Younger three always home schooled.

Franklin: Oldest child attended one-half year of kindergarten. Youngest child always home schooled.

Harris: Oldest child attended public kindergarten.
Younger children just entering school age.

Palmer: Oldest child attended private school for three years. Younger child only attended preschool.

Robinson: Oldest child attended public school through second grade. Younger two children always home schooled.

Shabazz: Oldest four children attended Islamic school for one to five years. Younger two children always schooled at home.

** Allen: First three children home schooled in primary years, then oldest attended private school through high school. Next child went from private to public high school and has now returned home. Younger two children always home schooled.

** Young: Oldest three children attended Christian school for seven, five and two years, then home schooled. Older two returned to private high school through graduation. Youngest always home schooled.

At this point parents in five of the families believe that they will continue home schooling through the high school years, and another two see it as probable. In the Young
family it is likely that the younger children will follow older siblings to a private high school at the age of fifteen.

What are these parents' motivations for home schooling their children?

Religious beliefs played a significant role in the decision to homeschool for the majority of these parents, with six of eight - including all four of the African-American families - describing them as "very important." One family indicated that religious beliefs were "not too important," while the other described them as "not important at all." Parents spoke of receiving "a conviction from the Lord" (Harris); of a "Biblically correct order for things to be" (Robinson); and of "parents having a God-ordained responsibility to educate their children" (Young). One Muslim parent felt that there was not "freedom and acceptance of religion" in most schools (Baker). A Christian parent did not want her children's "beliefs to be attacked or ridiculed" (Robinson).

Three families objected to what they believe is being taught in public and private schools. In two families these concerns are essentially religiously based. The Youngs did not want their sons to be "indoctrinated with humanistic values;" their experience led them to conclude that not even
"church schools are immune from worldly values." The Allens rejected the teaching of evolution in the schools, the "non-reality that God made the universe," and the ban on school prayer. The Harrises reported that their daughter "felt good about being black before she went to public school" for a year, "but she came home talking about 'darkies' and thinking that all black men are beating up on black women." This schooling took place among a "well integrated student body," though there was only one African-American faculty member.

A related motive is concern about the quality of socialization found in the conventional school setting. Seven families questioned the type of social learning and interaction their children experienced when enrolled in schools. The four Christian families were particularly concerned that their children were being influenced more by the values and behaviors of their peers there than by what they were being taught at home. One family even withdrew from a Christian school where their children were "doing well academically" because "they were losing them to peers" (Young). There was a desire to "control more what's being fed into the children's computer and to promote what we want to promote in life" (Harris); "to be the ones who put the footprint or handprint in each of our children's lives" (Young); and to protect their children from the "ills" of contemporary society (Allen and Harris). One Muslim mother
wanted to give her children a chance to "get away from a lot of the things that are happening in the schools" (Baker). These religiously-oriented families share a belief that the poor socialization found in schools is "largely a reflection of the moral climate of the society" (Robinson) and that "there's a kind of morality that can be fostered in home schooling...a kind of innocence that can be held onto" (Baker). The one family for whom religion was "not important at all" described peer groups as capable of "cruel things....That's not something that I mind my kids missing" (Palmer).

Academic considerations were universally relevant to this sample. Every family was vocal in their insistence that home-based education is at least equal to if not superior to that found in schools, though the importance of this belief in the decision to homeschool varied somewhat. For the two families who were least influenced by religious beliefs, pedagogy was paramount. Both initially approached the question of their children's education by looking for alternatives: Traditional schools are "overly concerned with testing, quiet classrooms, memorizing details, submitting unquestioningly to authority and putting kids into convenient categories" (Palmer). They are "restrictive and reductive, focusing on maybe two kinds of intelligence, with no reward or recognition of creativity" (Franklin). Even alternative schools seemed limiting to the individual creativity and
initiative they wanted to foster: "Having the freedom to allow the children to be interested in something and really able to pursue it...you can’t allow a child in school to do that" (Palmer): "I wanted them to feel that their education was their own, not something done to them" (Franklin).

All four of the African-American families, all religiously-oriented, were dissatisfied with their children’s academic experiences in school. For them this was a major motivation in the decision to bring the children home. Two of them spoke of sending a child to school who "pretty much felt good about herself and was inquisitive" (Harris) or who was "a natural reader" (Robinson), yet who returned home "stressed" and with a weakened self-esteem. Parents questioned the "logic" and "common sense" of the pedagogical approaches they encountered (Robinson and Baker). They wanted their children exposed to more "hands-on" and experiential methods of teaching: "I want actual, everyday life experiences to be a reality for them not when they become adults but while they are growing up" (Shabazz): "I think that the best classroom is the world and not to put walls in the classroom" (Harris). Other advantages of home schooling cited were flexibility, individualized attention, and the chance to help their children avoid becoming "teacher-dependent." Experiences with schools led these families to believe that they could "upgrade the quality of education" for their children (Baker): "I knew that I could provide a better

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quality education" (Harris). Another "reached the point where I thought that if school was going to be like this, I can do a better job" (Robinson).

Though religious beliefs were the primary motivation for the other two families, as they gained experience in home schooling they also came to believe that they could provide a superior education. They spoke of the "flexibility" which home schooling affords for working with children's different learning styles (Allen), as well as the opportunity for "one-on-one" instruction (Allen and Young) and cultivating self-discipline and motivation for learning (Young).

Political beliefs were cited as "somewhat important" in making the decision to home educate by five of the eight families. Though it was not possible to identify any unifying political perspective amongst this cadre, each expressed reservations about sending their children to school merely to conform to societal expectations. One parent believes "there is more danger in going along with the norm (by sending my children to school) more than in understanding why I am not going along with the norm" (Harris). Another "realized that school would just be a contrivance, trying to achieve what we already had, within the social norm" (Franklin). Yet another wanted their children to grow up knowing that it is "okay to be different" (Allen).

A desire to protect the integrity of their family life was cited as an important motivation in the decision to home
school by three of these families. Although all of the respondents expressed strong feelings that home-based education had brought their families closer together, these three families shared a perception that schooling outside of their home had a detrimental effect upon family life. When her children were in school, one mother "didn't feel they were part of my life so much" (Allen). In another family, "full-day school and our (work) hours had combined to effectively curtail our ability to do things together as a family....Home schooling offered a solution" (Palmer). Watching family life diminish while their children attended school, one family came to believe "that to keep family together, to build family, the family we wanted and that the Bible speaks of, we brought them into home education" (Young).

What goals do these parents hold for their children?

Conventional measures of academic success were not mentioned frequently by these parents as goals. Only three families cited college attendance as a definite goal for their children. The others referred to it in various ways, such as "probable," "if they choose," "maybe," or "not necessarily." Of greater concern is that their children have a vocation, that they are trained for a career and do well whatever they choose to do: "Not just to do a mediocre job or to be on the
fringes" (Robinson).

What was mentioned most often by the parents is that they wanted their children to be independent thinkers. In seven of these families maintaining their children’s desire to "question" is a major goal. Schools were described as sites where "there’s a lot of time spent pushing data bits in there...not teaching kids how to really think" (Palmer). For these parents memorization is not as important as questioning: "Questioning is so important to me.... And I don’t want my boys to feel like they are deviants for questioning, that they are troublemakers" (Franklin). To the contrary, the ability to ask questions, to analyze, and to think critically were portrayed as essential skills in today’s world: "Reasoning is always what is most important. If you can teach a person how to think, then they can take care of most everything else" (Robinson): "When they get to higher levels of learning, it’s not going to be a question of how much did you learn but how much critical thinking can you do. I always teach them to question" (Baker). The Harrises want their children to be able to "make up your own mind without the influence of television, radio, newspapers, even other instructors who may not have the same belief system as you do." The task for one mother is to develop "mind’s that are cognizant, who analyze things, but who are thinkers and who are independent thinkers. Who simply do not see the need to fit into someone else’s mold" (Shabazz).
A related goal mentioned by five families is that their children develop a love for learning which is lifelong: "to keep learning until the day they die" (Franklin). Parents want their children to be self-directed and to have effective research skills. The teaching methods used in schools were portrayed as making "our children teacher-dependent" (Shabazz): "In school you are not expected to take the initiative like you have to do in home schooling" (Allen). The aim is to "continue to enjoy learning in their field of study for the rest of their lives" (Young).

All six of the religiously-oriented families, whether Christian or Muslim, mentioned the cultivation of a religious foundation as an important goal in the social development of their children. Statements made by several parents suggest the primacy of moral development over academic achievement. As one parent put it: "It's not that we don't want academically bright children, but we'd rather have the child who is not doing well academically but has a relationship with God and understands His nature, than to have a child who is a genius, who is going to Harvard or Yale but doesn't know God" (Harris). Others spoke in terms of "living in submission to God's will" (Robinson), being "interested in leading other people to Christ" (Young), and having "the Qu’ran and the Prophet Muhammed permeate my school" (Shabazz).

The development of tolerance and respect for other races, cultures and religions was cited as a social goal by five
families. Parents spoke variously of "acceptance" (Palmer), "understanding" (Robinson), and "not harboring fear or prejudice" (Baker). One father wants to "create a cultural environment (for his children) that is diverse and widespread" (Harris).

Three other goals were mentioned by three or less families. Service to others was a social goal for three families. "Helping others to improve their lives" (Baker) and using "their talents for the good of the community" (Franklin) are examples. The two non-religious families spoke of cultivating "environmental consciousness" (Palmer) and being aware of "the impact their life has on the planet" (Franklin) as important goals. One Muslim mother is concerned that her children live "as examples of good citizens in America" (Shabazz).

All four of the African-American families mentioned goals which are specifically related to their experience as African-Americans. Adrian Shabazz aims for her children to gain a secure "cultural identity" and sees herself as contributing to the development of an "African-American intelligentsia that know’s what’s going on when they see it." The Bakers want their children "to be aware of their choices...because (in school) there were people telling them there were certain things they could not achieve in their lives." They are especially concerned that their sons are capable public speakers because "I am interested in stepping
around the pattern I see" of "African-American men (not) being particularly articulate." For the Robinsons it is important that their children see "the way America functions" with "three sets of glasses: from our view we have to see it from the European-American view, the way it really is, and the way God is going to look at it." The Harrises want their children to "better understand prejudice" and believe that "home schooling enables me to better prepare my child so that they won't have the confusion I had."

How are these goals pursued in these home schooling programs?

The case studies reveal that each family tailors their educational program to meet their own particular motivations and goals. Most of their approaches are eclectic, drawing elements from various sources, and defy any simple typology. At the same time there are definite trends which can serve as the basis for comparison.

Only three (Allen, Young, and Robinson) of the eight families rely upon a purchased curriculum, although a fourth (Harris) suggested that it was economic constraints which prevented them from using one. All three of these families are Christian, and their curricula have been purchased through publishing houses specializing in Christian home schooling materials. One family actually utilizes several curricula, purchased over the course of their eight years of home
schooling, to develop a program geared to each child's needs (Young).

The other five families piece together their curricula in different ways. The two Muslim families look to educational authorities for their model: one gained access to a public school curriculum at the outset of home schooling (Baker) and the other consults "educators about what is age-appropriate" (Shabazz). The Palmers use a "checklist" based upon their perception of "what is really useful" to their children, while the Franklins have no formal curriculum, preferring instead to base their approach on whatever their children are interested in at the time. The only area in which the latter two families use conventional educational materials is in mathematics where they use workbooks similar to those used in school settings.

The programs in all eight of these homes are structured in the sense that basic skills and subjects (such as math, reading, writing, science, social studies, and the like) are included. The degree to which they are structured, however, varies on a number of accounts. The school day in the six religiously-oriented families, for example, is fairly well defined. Most run during the morning hours, last about three to four hours, and are finished by lunchtime. Afternoons are generally reserved for activities outside of the home and free play. At the same time there is no rule that says that 'this subject has to be studied at this time every day.' Flexibility
is highly valued. This comment was typical: "If we see something that looks a little more interesting we’ll stop (what we are doing)" (Harris). Only in the Shabazz home, where a school for other children runs simultaneously with the homeschool, does the school day resemble that found in a normal school setting: it runs from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and each day is scheduled by subject. In the Franklin and Palmer homes, there is no formal schedule, just a rhythm to the day, and the children are encouraged to learn to schedule their own time.

All of the families made statements which evidence some attempt to personalize their educational program, even if they are using a ready-made curriculum. In the case of the Youngs, for example, they "piecemeal different curriculums to fit each child’s personality; the Robinsons try to "see what their abilities and talents are now, and to draw them out." Even the Allens, the only family using a correspondence course and thus reporting to an external authority, "work with their choices in schoolwork....I’ve learned from homeschooling to be loose about structure." Related examples are found in the Shabazz’ "resource centers" and the Bakers’ decision to focus studies around "whatever they are interested in." The Franklins told a story of a time when their son "just decided he wanted to get ahead in math." He then proceeded to finish the entire workbook, comparable to third grade year, in six weeks. Most of the parents spoke of these choices as an
integral part of their pedagogy; that choices promoted "self-motivation" and "independence." As the Harrises put it, they let their daughters lead because "leadership is something worth learning."

The degree to which parents assume a formal role as teacher and deliver instruction varies a great deal in these homes as well. The age of the children involved and whether a purchased curriculum is being used appear to be the main variables. In all of these homes, the younger the children the more the mother is directly involved in working with them. This involvement ranges from the simple act of reading aloud to actually teaching a lesson on a specific subject. Older siblings (in the case of the Shabazz' school, older students) are commonly enlisted to help out. In the four homes where teenagers are schooled (Young, Shabazz, Allen, Baker), independent work is a high priority; parents are generally only consulted about school-work when a child needs specific assistance.

The three families using a purchased curriculum rely upon prepared lesson plans, although even here they "branch out" (Robinson). This is a necessity because parents may be working with children of different ages at the same time and it is desirable in order to personalize their program. Dependence upon the curriculum was most pronounced in the Allen home: "It's not like I have to put in a lot of time....That's why I like this course - a lot of it just tells
you verbatim what to say. That takes the pressure off of me."
In the Harris home the children are so young that formal
lessons appear secondary to exploration and structured play.

In the other four homes, the mother functions more as a
facilitator of learning than as a teacher. She is available to
help when needed, but the emphasis is on self-motivated,
independent learning and "hands-on" activities. The project
in the Baker home where the children budgeted a salary and
balanced a checkbook for a fictional family is an example of
the latter; the study of the incubation of an egg and shopping
trips in the Shabazz home school is another.

A related area is the question of evaluation. All of
these families are registered with school authorities, and all
of those with children old enough to meet testing requirements
have done so. These parents report being satisfied with
results attained thus far. Only the Allen family is involved
in a formal correspondence course where completed work is
submitted to an external 'teacher' for grading and report
cards are issued to track progress. Although the other
parents review completed work, they rely primarily on informal
means of evaluation to monitor the progress of their children.
As one mother put it: "I can tell if they understand something
because we are constantly interacting" (Robinson). Many
express intolerance for the "busywork" (Baker) and "arbitrary
assignments" (Franklin) they believe are found in schools.
What is important to them is understanding, not memorization;
that a child "learn...and own (it) yourself" (Young). When parents are sufficiently impressed that a child has this understanding, they move on.

The fact that most of the children are not graded in a conventional sense does not mean that the completion of their assignments is voluntary. Only in the Franklin and Harris homes does there appear to be no compulsion; the former because they subscribe to the "unschooling" philosophy of John Holt and the latter because of the age of the children involved. In the other six homes parents rely upon a variety of approaches to impress upon their children the need to take their studies seriously. Most draw upon their personal authority as parents to accomplish this. As one father noted: "It goes back to giving the children the basic concept of authority. There are certain things you have to do. It's your responsibility" (Robinson). Adrian Shabazz insisted: "My students know I mean business. One thing I say to them is that there are too many of my (African-American) people over there in the Atlantic Ocean, at the bottom. I don't have time to play." She believes such firmness is especially important in working with African-American youth. Most parents reported that they have "never had them openly refuse to work" (Baker). If necessary, however, parents are not reluctant to tie the completion of assignments to participation in social activities.

These families utilize a wide range of resources in their
home schooling. The three families using a purchased curriculum turn there for their primary materials, including textbooks. In the Allen home the self-contained nature of the curriculum 'package' was an important consideration in their decision to buy one: "I don't have to rush out to the library to get books; I don't even have to think about what I am doing next." Their almost total dependence on this curriculum is evidenced by the fact that this was the only case where the public library was not mentioned as a major source of educational materials. In all of the other homes frequent and regular trips to the library are complemented by texts purchased from a variety of sources: yard sales, bookstores, other home schooling families, library sales, and mail-order businesses specializing in home schooling materials were all cited as examples. One parent believes that "if you train your brain to look for something, you'll find it. We find whatever we need" (Baker).

Television is employed as an educational tool in all of these homes, although to different degrees. Videotapes were mentioned as a valuable tool by six of the eight families. Tapes are both purchased and borrowed from the public; library; one family (Shabazz) has assembled an impressive collection, claiming to have "every video you can think of." Public educational television is watched in every home; in the Shabazz and Baker homes the schedule is previewed in detail so that the home schooling can be coordinated with programming.
Five families monitor and control the shows their children may watch, though some describe that as a struggle. Criticism ranged from the media’s portrayal of African-Americans to the frequency of violence and immoral behavior. The Youngs, for example, want their sons to only watch shows that will "help them become more like Jesus." The Harrises believe that the "media’s portrayal of African-Americans" is dangerous to their self-esteem: "What happens in the mind of a lot of miseducated or uneducated people is that they believe this (crime) is what you are supposed to do." There are few or no restrictions on the amount and content of television viewing in three homes (Allen, Franklin, and Palmer). Surprisingly, the use of computers in the home schooling program was reported by only two families (Palmer and Harris). Two families (Baker and Franklin) reported that they use college-level textbooks successfully in their homes.

Religious beliefs are reflected in the choice of materials by the six religiously-oriented families. The most obvious examples are the three families using purchased curricula which are Biblically-based. Videotapes and textbooks purchased by these families serve as supplementary materials and are often Christian in orientation as well. All six families, both Christian and Muslim, also regularly use their respective scriptures and prayer as part of their program. This may take the form of studying Psalms or Bible
stories in the Christian homes, or reading the Qu’ran and the
life of Prophet Mohammed in the Muslim homes. When she is
going to teach a formal lesson, for example, Adrian Shabazz
will consult the Qu’ran first to find a verse which relates to
the subject. This is what she calls "Qu’ranic education:" she
believes that teaching based on scriptural texts is a superior
approach to education, whatever one’s faith.

All of the families, except one, report that they take
field trips and participate in classes and other organize
activities outside of the home. Classes include everything
from martial arts, ceramics, foreign language classes, and
gymnastics to American Sign Language. Participation in
organized sports and scouting was also frequently reported by
parents. Field trips include visits to sites which are
commonly visited by schools, such as the zoo, science and art
museums, the State Capital, and dramatic productions. The
only exception to this pattern is the Harris family, where
economics limit both their mobility and their enrollment in
classes.

Networking with other home schooling families takes place
in all of these homes, though the degree of involvement varies
somewhat. Two families (Palmer and Harris) report a "high
level of involvement" with a local support group. Four
families (Young, Allen, Robinson, Baker) report a "moderate
level of involvement" with a local group. One family
(Franklin) is not involved with a local support group, but
does network with a national association of home schoolers. The presence of home schoolers from other families in the Shabazz home serves as a built-in network. In addition to providing playmates for their children, these parents look to their support groups for a range of services: exchange of tutoring, field trips, information about curricula and textbooks, and gatherings where the children can make formal presentations.

Two African-American families recounted instances where they experienced a lack of racial understanding or tolerance in interactions with other homeschoolers. For Mary Harris this occurred both at meetings of a statewide home schooling association as well as within the support group - "predominantly white" - she belongs to. As one of the few African-Americans attending a workshop with a nationally-recognized figure in the home schooling movement, Natalie Robinson found herself "very uncomfortable" at some of the statements made there.

None of these families expressed any concern about providing opportunities for social interaction to their children. Classes, sports teams, and support groups put their children into contact with groups of both conventionally schooled and home schooled children. The church plays a central role in the social life of three of the Christian families (Harris, Young, Robinson) This provides an opportunity for parents to ensure that "our children are
around families with like-minded goals and discipline" (Young). As with most children, neighborhood friends are a common source of playmates in four families (Robinson, Baker, Palmer, Franklin). Consistent with the centrality which family life plays in these homes, children spend a significant amount of time in play with their siblings.

How are the civic education programs in these homes structured and why?

All of these families consider civic education to be an important part of their home schooling program. As with the other questions considered in this study, there are both similarities and differences in terms of their goals and the means they employ to realize these.

All eight families accepted most of the civic values listed in the questionnaire as valid goals of education. Three accepted them in their entirety; three did not accept "patriotism" as a valid goal; one questioned both "patriotism" and "respect for and acceptance of authority"; and one family disagreed with "democracy" and "conservation." Most noted that they had "qualifications" about these values or "could spend a lifetime defining what they mean" (Franklin). In the interview process it became clear that the differences of opinion could be misleading, and that, in fact, there was agreement about the need to clarify exactly what these values
This trend was particularly evident in relation to "patriotism." The four families, for example, who objected also described themselves variously as "loyal" (Allen), active voters (Harris and Palmer), or proudly displayed an American flag lapel-pin worn daily (Shabazz). Similarly all of the four families who accepted "patriotism" had reservations: either their patriotism is not of the "flag-waving kind" (Franklin and Robinson), their affiliation is first to a "universal citizenship" (Baker), or they believe that "theocracy" is the best government (Young).

The common ground is that all of these families, however critical they may be of specific aspects of the American system, value the importance of preparing their children to be participants in its civic life. Thus each family spoke of the necessity of understanding the basic history and structure of the American governmental system. As one father put it: "In any society in which you live you must still understand the civil structure" (Young). Or as one mother noted: "Ignorance of the law is ignorance" (Shabazz). Six families reported that they attempt to keep their children apprised of current events, both domestic and international.

In many respects, however, these parents do not place nearly as much importance on the cognitive domain in civic education as they do on the affective domain. They invested considerably more effort speaking about civics in terms of
values: what it means to be a citizen and to what ends one’s civic actions should be directed. All participating parents reported a desire for their children to cultivate critical, analytical minds: they don’t want them to be citizens who are zombies“ (Shabazz), "blindly loyal" (Robinson), or "demagogic" (Franklin). Adrian Shabazz tries "to give them some insight into how they are being manipulated through the television, through subliminal seduction, through magazines, advertisements, conversations - become conscious."

Five families actually expressed mistrust of the political system and its operatives. Statements such as "I don’t trust anything a politician says" (Franklin), "I don’t trust the system" (Harris), or "I don’t want them to just abide by what the government says" (Robinson) were typical. Four families portrayed social institutions such as schools as sites of indoctrination, with a "hidden agenda" (Robinson), where history is taught as "a big lie" (Harris), and where the "daily practices" are intolerant and anti-democratic - "mixed messages" that discourage the practice of the values they are claiming to teach (Palmer). One mother expressed this sentiment: "Schools want you to see just what the media...what the Establishment wants you to know" (Allen).

The families were unanimous in their desire to promote understanding and respect for different cultures among their offspring. Several spoke of America as a "melting pot" where tolerance of differences is a necessity. One father spoke of
wanting his children to "respond to a person's culture more than their color because we want to know more about their culture...there's a richness in that" (Harris). Another referred to "racial prejudice as a sin" (Young). A Muslim mother does not want her children to "harbor fear or prejudice against people because they are different" (Baker).

Six families see an additional task in helping their children to develop an appreciation of their own ethnic or family history. Three of the four African-American families, for example, describe their overall approach to education as "Afrocentric." Their view can be summarized as "Until man first know's himself, he cannot know anyone else" (Shabazz). They want to "teach our children that all people are created equal, but we don't want them to miss the education that comes from their culture...We want them to be citizens, but African-American citizens" (Harris). In a similar vein one European-American mother believes that it is "the parents' responsibility to direct their children to their cultural background, not society's" (Allen).

Though the American system is secular, with strict separation of church and state in the public school system, the religious orientation of the four Christian families influences their teaching of civic education. The Youngs, for example, insist that "Biblical authority (must be) maintained" in the teaching of civic values" and that "the Bible has the answers to every question." In the Harris home they "pray for
the leaders of our country." For the Allens "loyalty goes
toward God rather than toward (the) country." The Robinsons
believe that by aiming "to please and submit to God, we become
good citizens." A similar perspective is found in the
Shabazz and Baker homes, where Qu’ranic teachings infuse the
homeschooling program. The Bakers, for example, use their
position as members of a minority religion in America to
cultivate the valuing of "people’s rights and freedom of
religion." Both the Bakers and the Shabazzes made explicit
reference to their desire for "global" or "universal"
citizenship, implying that moral principles are superior to
nationalistic beliefs.

There is unanimity among these parents that civic
education must involve the cultivation of a sense of social
responsibility in their children. As Christians they "are
supposed to love the needy" (Harris). The Youngs believe that
"as Christians, it is our God-given responsibility to steward
the civil government He has entrusted to America." For the
Robinsons social responsibility is "a basic Biblical
principle." Beyond her Islamic beliefs, Adrian Shabazz draws
also on the conventional wisdom that citizenship brings with
it "responsibilities" and "rights" as well as a commitment to
promoting the exercise of them by African-Americans.
Statements made by the Franklins and Palmers refer to "duty"
and "responsibility;" those by the Bakers to being "active in
the community and help(ing) others improve their lives."
Five families list the building of a sense of social empowerment—belief in the ability and knowledge of how to make change—as a related goal. While the Palmers see schools as imparting a "sense of powerlessness" to students, they want their daughters to believe "that you can do something...have an impact...and it may spread." The Allens hope that their children "might see something better and try to make that work with their efforts." Adrian Shabazz charges her students to "take up your citizenship. You are American citizens. You have earned these rights." The Harrises want their children to realize that "no matter what your circumstances are, you can play a part in changing them....You have the power to change things, and if you have a belief in God, all things are possible." One father believes that because most of the home schoolers he has met are "very self-assured and directed toward what they want to do, they can’t help but to orchestrate changes in this society—whether conscious or unconscious. It’s just the nature of their upbringing" (Robinson).

The means used to accomplish the aforementioned goals naturally vary from family to family. Social studies (history/geography) is found in every home, and is valued as one of the most important parts of their curriculum in most. Whether the priority is to bring a Christian (Young), an Afrocentric (Robinson, Shabazz, Harris), or a global perspective to the subject (Franklin, Baker, Palmer), parents
carefully select materials to meet their needs. This is true for two of the three families using a purchased curriculum as well as for those who are least structured. The only exception is the Allen family; curiously, they do not supplement their curriculum despite a stated desire to resist the tendency toward indoctrination they see in the society.

Janice Allen did remark, however, that she disliked a previous curriculum they used because "it didn’t even teach where black people come from." The Robinsons went so far as to return a history text to the publisher of their curriculum because it was "just so bizarre from an African point of view." The Franklins use a "variety of sources so that you don’t get a sense of monolithic wisdom." The Harrises select materials carefully "to teach (our) children a fair share of every historical event from every walk of life, as balanced a perspective as I can." In several homes (Baker, Palmer, Franklin, Robinson, Harris, Shabazz), this means selecting materials that are inclusive in terms of gender, race and ethnicity.

As in other areas of the home schooling program, for many parents the emphasis in social studies is placed more on the ability to critically analyze than on rote memorization of information. Though conventional means may be used, as in the use of "time lines" in the Franklin and Palmer homes, parents want their children to search for "real explanations of what happened" (Baker), "relationships" (Palmer), and to "question
the status quo" (Franklin). Adrian Shabazz uses a traditional map projection, showing Europe at the center of the world, to illustrate to her children the need to know their African culture and history. The Robinsons try to communicate a sense of the "functional purpose" history plays in society so that their children "understand the process of writing history which...is most important." Using as an example the conventional teaching of why Columbus "discovered" the Americas, an example used also by the Harrises, Roger insists that "if you don’t read (history) with a critical eye, you’ll find yourself accepting all kinds of things which just aren’t true." Even the Youngs, a European-American family that is mostly concerned with bringing a Christian perspective to their studies, insist that history "should be related honestly and openly. Call a spade a spade."

Television was cited as an extremely important tool in this regard. News and programming which involve the coverage of current events are followed closely in five homes (Baker, Franklin, Robinson, Allen, Shabazz). Several families spoke, for example, of watching virtually all of the 1992 Persian Gulf War and the hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the United States Supreme Court. These events give parents an opportunity to apply information gleaned from books. As an example, the Franklins related how "we’ll be watching the news and the question will come up in conversation, ‘How does a bill become a law?’...And we’ll talk about it." Current
events can provide the stimulus for further historical inquiry: A check-cashing scandal in Congress led the Bakers "back into one of our textbooks and I explained to them how the political system is set up and the role of Congress." News is also followed for its intrinsic relevance: "If it's out there we're talking about it. If it comes through the news the kids will usually want to talk about it" (Shabazz). Historical movies such as Glory (Youngs), documentaries such as a series on the Civil War (Franklin), and even regular network programming (Palmer) were all described as useful to the civic education in these homes.

These parents try to incorporate concrete, practical experiences as much as possible in their civic education programs. Field trips to sites of historical and cultural interest are taken by all families: visits to the State Capital, Underground Atlanta, Stone Mountain, local farms, and the APEX (African-American history) Museum were cited as examples. Local ethnic festivals were described by several families as one way to expose their children to the cultures of the world. Roger Robinson described taking his daughter to a town meeting with Atlanta's mayor where she complained publically about inattention to conditions at a local park. Dan Young takes his sons along on the travels of his ministry: "We go out so much that my boys are exposed more than the average to all kinds of people of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds." Several families complained about the
frustrations of providing concrete multicultural experiences. As the Robinsons put it, "It's in the nature of our society" for people to live in neighborhoods which are often culturally segregated. But these families were unanimous in their desire to overcome such barriers.

Parents in all of these homes reported that they discuss racism with their children as a part of civic education. For the African-American families, however, racism is an experience. Although negative, these parents utilize them for their positive educational value. Mary Harris points out subtle instances of "prejudice" to her children "so they can identify it." Then she helps them to "look at the different ways we can deal with it." As Adrian Shabazz put it: "The children have to acknowledge the existence of it because they encounter these experiences in their lives. You cannot avoid talking about it." Michele Baker "lets them know (racism) is there" and advises them to not "pay any attention to it." She believes, however, that her sons will "probably have more experiences with it than I had." All four African-American families expressed special concern for preparing their sons to deal effectively with racism. In Adrian Shabazz' words, "teaching African-American kids has to be a conscious, conscious, conscious effort."

Without exception these families would endorse the idea that the "most important values are taught by the people around us (Palmer)," by the ways they conduct their lives.
Numerous examples of how parents apply this idea in civic education are found in the interviews. The Allens, for example, hold family councils and try to practice "democracy" in everyday decision-making: "Simple ways of teaching them how to make things work better in our family teaches them how to work within our society." Five families identified themselves as regular voters (Palmer, Robinson, Young, Harris, Shabazz, Franklin). The Palmers not only "always vote (but the children) always go with us; they always come into the booth with us. We talk about things like who we voted for and why." The Harrises are actively involved in a charitable project through their church, and Ken has been known to "bring home people who are going through hard times." The Robinsons teach their children social responsibility by acting as "stewards: Taking care of my children is good stewardship. So is taking care of my house. Taking care of whatever has been entrusted to you - my city, my country, whatever." Adrian Shabazz insists that "I have to make sure you give me my rights by my responsibility, my work ethics, my character." The Bakers "incorporate the (civic) values on the checklist by teaching the children to value people, and to value differences in people...by our lifestyle and how we treat people." Dan Young has been active in the legal defense of home schooling rights and is "working to undo the racial prejudice I promoted (in my youth) by speaking out against it." On the whole, these parents try to bring home the lessons of civics in a personal way, by modelling valued behaviors, believing it
to be a superior method of teaching. They believe that the
daily practice of their lives is the best way to ensure the
daily practice of civic virtue.

In six of the eight families parents spoke directly to
the question of the extent to which their children have the
opportunity to form and express their own perceptions and
opinions. In five cases parents accepted free expression as
an ideal, and insisted that they practiced it as well. In the
Shabazz home, for example, "we don't ever inhibit the children
from expressing in a respectful manner, opposing views. And
the children can and have changed my mind. That's because
when you are dealing with an independent mind, you don't want
to harness it." The Harrises want their children "to be able
to make decisions on their own, but we also want them to
understand there are consequences for every choice you make."

The Allen children witnessed their parents disagreement
about the Persian Gulf War: "They saw us talk about that and
our feelings around it. So just in family life they see
differences of opinion. They mimic us a lot in what we say
but we just try to be honest with them and let them form their
own opinions." The Franklins encourage their sons to
"question. I try to discourage them from taking too strong a
position without at least flipping the issue over and looking
at the other side. And they do that to me too." The emphasis
appears to be more on the children's ability to "argue with
the best of arguments," as Adrian Shabazz said, rather than
"spitting out whatever (parents) say without any thought processes having gone into it." The two families who were silent on the subject both emphasize "critical thinking" (Baker) and a "critical eye" (Robinson) for their children, and by implication would likely agree with the five families cited above.

The lone voice of dissent came from the Young family. Dan insisted that "every parent is going to indoctrinate their children; it’s just a matter of how they do it." Thus he acknowledged that "I do indoctrinate my children in a way into my perspective." This perspective is based on the Bible, and Dan was not defensive about the question of his "narrow-mindedness." He insisted that moral training is the responsibility of parents, that his children can "always ask questions which help them to formulate their own opinion, and that as they grow older they have the opportunity "more to express their own opinions."

How does the home schooling experience impact on these families and their programs?

All of the parents in the sample reported that home schooling has had a positive impact on their families. The most common response was that educating their children at home gives their family more time together and thus promotes closer relationships. The biggest relief for the Palmers is the
release from the hectic demands of a school-based schedule: "All of that pressure is now gone. We can enjoy being a family again. To do spur of the moment things. That's one of the best parts about home schooling." Freedom from schedules gives the Franklins the ability to "dictate a bit more of our lives...it's just a way of having a life worth living." Spontaneity is also important to the Robinsons because now "we can go on a trip whenever we want and take our books if we need to." Without home schooling, reported the Shabazz family, "some of the exposure we have had, trips we have made, we would have never made them." The Allens are a close-knit family that like to "kind of stay with ourselves;" home schooling provides them with the means to do so.

Several parents believe that increasing their time together builds closer relationships within their families. The Bakers described themselves as being "much closer as a family. I didn't anticipate that. I just anticipated that they were going to be in a different learning environment." Dan Young said that he "never knew my children before we started to home school....If you don't know your children, you can damage them for a lifetime by wrong discipline." He used the example of his youngest son, who Dan believes would be diagnosed as hyperactive in a formal school setting, to illustrate how important this insight is; at home, in an environment that can be tailored to his needs, the child is "maturing" without intervention. His wife is developing a
"bonding relationship with her children so that their relationship ties will be with her until she dies." Roger Robinson is grateful to home schooling for the chance to rebuild what was a "strained relationship with my youngest daughter. I have a sneaking suspicion that had she gone off to school, we would never have bonded like we are now." His wife reported that "when my oldest was in school she would come home and didn't really want to play with the younger ones...now they relate fine."

Four families responded that home schooling has created a learning environment in their homes from which all members, including parents, benefit. Doris Franklin believes that "my education continues in a more dynamic way than it would otherwise...what I do (as a writer) is better, more intelligent, more compassionate, more knowledgeable." They think of home schooling as "family learning." In the Robinson home, "we study together; I study ahead. If there's something I don't know, we look it up together or I explain to them how to research and look things up." Adrian Shabazz said that she is "reading more. You have to learn how to be a better communicator. How to budget your money better. Every aspect of human life has to be refined....I am now a better artist, a better designer and speaker, better organized, as a result of simply teaching my children at home....You learn so much it is phenomenal. I have even become a better Muslim because of home education." Her experiences with her own
children led Adrian Shabazz to start a school in her home based on a home schooling philosophy. Michele Baker has also been inspired to consider opening a school.

Without exception the parents in the sample reported that they want to continue home schooling. The Shabazz family "would not give this up for anything in the world." The Robinsons "would have to become ill or experience some sort of drastic, life-changing thing before we would return our children to school." The Allens are "getting more and more confident that what we are doing is the right decision for our family." The Harrises described home schooling as "the greatest thing we could have done." Each family likewise described their children as "enthusiastic" or "grateful" about home schooling, certain about their desire to continue even if they had wondered initially. The only exception was the Baker family where if the children had "the choice tomorrow they’d probably go back to school." Michele, however, does not believe that "they’d like it once they got there....They might want to try it just because it’s something different."

This is not to say that these families never experience doubts or stresses. Relevant responses included the following: "it’s a lot of pressure juggling three jobs" (Baker), "it’s difficult but just fantastic" (Young), feeling "stressed out" (Shabazz), feeling "pressured" (Robinson), and feeling the need to "constantly re-evaluate" (Franklin and Allen). One source of stress reported by several families
concerned the challenge of having various age-levels at home simultaneously. A common strategy used in this situation, having older children tutor younger children, served also to promote closer relationships between siblings. Home schooling groups were identified by several mothers as an important means of support; understanding and supportive fathers, including those who work outside of the home fulltime, were described as "essential" as well.

The only family that reported serious doubts about the effectiveness of their efforts was the Harrises. As a newcomer to home schooling, Ken does not "know exactly what I should see....It’s new. So there are a lot of fears and natural insecurities. I am travelling what are for me uncharted waters, breaking new ground." He believes, however, that these doubts are aggravated by economic pressures, not being able to afford desired materials and a "more conducive home education environment." He noted that "Sometimes I wonder if maybe I should be putting (my oldest) back in school until I can afford to homeschool."

The growing confidence in their ability to educate their own children has also had a pedagogical impact. Three families described themselves as moving in the direction of less formally structured studies. The Allens have "learned from home schooling to be loose about structure, to let go and come back to it." Meredith Palmer has learned to "go on faith that my intuition is correct" and finds herself "inclined" toward
the "concept of complete un-school where I just let them do what they want to do." Roger Robinson laughed at "the evolution of my wife's lesson plans. Her initial plans were real detailed, even overkill, a classic first year teacher's thing." With "no doubts (now) about providing them with an adequate education," his wife wants to "explore the idea of unschooling a little more. I am thinking about moving towards letting them explore their own interests." Two other families reporting growing confidence; the Shabazz and Franklin families, already have programs which grant considerable choice to their children in terms of studies. A sixth family, the Bakers, had "doubts at first about (their) ability to provide a comparable education....(but) each year it seems that I improve and they improve. Now I anticipate them getting into college at 15 or 16." The Youngs, with the most experience in home schooling of any other family in the sample, are confident that they are providing "a better education" for their children at home. They remain quite structured in their approach, however, although they now "piecemeal" their curriculum to fit "each child's personality" and emphasize more "independent" work.

Is there a hidden curriculum operating in these home schools which affects the nature of the civic education found there?

The respondents were not asked to respond directly to
this question. Data relevant to answering this question has been presented, however, in previous sections of this chapter. Issues to be considered in determining whether an implicit curriculum influences these home schooling programs are several. Statements of parents’ goals for their children reflect the desired outcomes of their efforts. The structure and content of their instructional programs (i.e. degree of standardization, student decision-making, existence of climate for expression of opinions, nature of authority relationships, and content of instruction) are evidence of the underlying ethos of the homeschool. Planned outcomes for citizenship and the means of achieving these (i.e. individualistic or community orientation, parents’ modelling of desired behaviors, degree of social efficacy sought) are especially relevant to this analysis.

The extent to which parents see themselves as outside the mainstream of American society was also explored in this study. Seven of the eight families reported that they talk to friends, neighbors or relatives about educating their children at home. Five families reported that these talks had no effect on their beliefs regarding home education; one family (Young) said that these talks "strengthened our convictions to home school" and another (Shabazz) was directed to resource materials by these talks. Only the Allens responded in the negative to this question.

When asked how many of their relatives, friends and
neighbors they feel close to educate their own children at home, the replies varied. Two families (Young and Robinson) said "about half of them;" four (Baker, Palmer, Harris, and Shabazz) said "less than half of them;" and two families (Franklin and Allen) said "none." Six families reported that friends, relatives or neighbors had tried to discourage them from home schooling. Concerns about socialization and the quality of academic preparation were mentioned most frequently as the basis for disagreement. Two families (Franklin and Shabazz) responded in the negative to this question.

Two families sought assistance from their local public school. The Robinsons inquired about the use of textbooks and computers; the Youngs wanted their children to be able to participate in sports activities. Both requests were denied.

Only two families, the Youngs and the Allens, reported having experienced any anxiety about possible clashes with governmental authorities over home schooling. These two families have been home schooling longer than any other families in the sample and began at a time when few families were exercising this option. As a result, they faced a much more uncertain climate. Before actually making the decision to home school, for example, the Youngs warned a child that he had to go to school else "the police are going to come and put your mommy and daddy in jail. That was terrible to have to say to a young child." When the Allens first started home schooling their oldest child, Janice "was afraid people would
knock on my door and take her away. So we didn’t take her out much to the city during school hours. I realize now that was all kind of silly.”

Three families made statements which reflect fundamentalist religious doctrine and which are relevant to this research question. The Youngs and the Allens were sharply critical of the teaching of evolution - that "everyone is evolved from monkeys" -and did not want their children exposed to this idea. Janice Allen was also angry about the ban on school prayer, commenting that "Freedom of speech in this country has gotten carried over to the wicked." Attributing the ban on prayer to "one person," she complained that "I don’t like that kind of freedom in our country." Although she denies having "any dislike of any person because of their skin color," Janice blamed "black children" for "a lot of the rowdiness" in the school system, and shared that "I almost believe in separate but equal." Regarding goals for his children, Dan Young noted that he is "training my sons for war...in a secular system (that) is satanically designed for their soul’s destruction." Asserting the priority he places on his children’s "spiritual growth," Ken Harris shared his belief that "there is a system of good and bad, and Satan, the devil, is the ruler of the world. I don’t want to sound like a fanatic, but...we are supposed to live in the world but not of the world."

Five families were outspoken in rejecting the notion that
they are dissidents. On the contrary, they presented their
decision to home school as the active exercise of their rights
as citizens. As one father put it: "Almost all of the
Founding Fathers (of this country) were home educated. I am
going back to the roots rather than being a dissident or
starting something new" (Young). One father described home
schooling as "an ultimate expression of conservatism. I want
to conserve certain values and a certain standard....This is
one of the best ways of doing it" (Robinson). Adrian Shabazz
sees home education "as a part of the American way of doing
things. What I don’t want people to see is that it is on the
outside of the American way. It is the American way!"

These parents were insistent that they are not putting
their children "in a vacuum" (Robinson) or the kind of person
who "locks his children in a closet and doesn’t let them
experience the world" (Young). Doris Franklin does not "feel
that I am sheltering my children. I feel they are even more
a part of the world." Natalie Robinson reacted to critics who
claim that "home schoolers are taking their children out of
the system" by pointing out that "the American idea is that
all people are free to pursue the channel which they feel is
best for them to take. Really we are full participants in the
system." By exercising their rights, these parents believe
that they can "produce more moral citizens" in their children
(Baker). They see home schooling "as a movement for social
change" (Franklin), producing "initiators" rather than
"reactors" (Robinson), and living "on the cutting edge of the future" (Young).

This is not to say that the other three families (Harris, Palmer, Allen) view themselves as dissidents and their home schooling programs as an expression of their disaffection. Although they did not reject the label, they were unwilling to openly accept it either. And they would join the other families in a perception of home schooling as a means to bringing about positive change in American society. "On the surface," for example, the Palmer's "lifestyle may look very conventional, but our beliefs are very different (from the norm) in many ways and I feel very strongly about them. I'll just live my life this way and I'll pass these ideas on to my kids and that's how I effect change." The Allens are "not going to try so hard to change others....So more and more we work to make (our) family better. By doing that this world will hopefully be a better place." The Harrises believe that "if we repair the family, ultimately we will repair the church, community, government, even the educational system. But you have to start at the head (the family) and work down....(Home schooling) is a viable opportunity, a tool which God has provided for people to use."

Is there a set of issues which differentiates European-American and African-American home schooling families?
Respondents were not asked to respond directly to this question. Rather, patterns in the case studies of the four African-American home schooling families must be compared to patterns among the European-Americans. Because the data and analysis relevant to this task is inclusive of all other research questions, the identification and discussion of significant differences in these patterns are explored in a later section of this chapter.

**Research Questions: Analysis of the Data**

The same format is used in presenting the analysis of the data as was used in the previous section.

What are the backgrounds and current life circumstances of these home schooling families?

The demographic data collected about these eight families agrees with most of the major characteristics of home schooling families found in Ray's (1988, 1989) review of the literature, as well as with O'Neill's (1988) and Groover's (1989) sample of Georgia home schoolers. All of these families have two parents at the head. Although both of the parents are involved in the home school, the mother serves as the main teacher. All of the parents have attended college, and five mothers completed degree programs there. A wide variety of occupations are represented among the fathers,
while seven of the mothers identify themselves as homemakers or have their work centered in the home. Total household income is modest, with most families reporting earnings in the $20,000 to $49,999 range. Six of the eight families have a clear religious affiliation, and five regularly attend religious services. Although the average number of children in these families is four, slightly higher than what Ray found, there is a fairly equal number of boys and girls and the majority of them (75%) are under the age of twelve. In addition, only one of these families (Allen) deviated from the common practice in this country of sending their children to public or private schools upon reaching school-age. For the remainder the decision to withdraw their children from a conventional school setting, and to by-pass school altogether with younger children, came only after direct experience with it. These findings lend support to Ray’s (1988) conclusion that “home school parents and families are not drastically different from mainstream America.”

The single noteworthy divergence is the willingness of these parents’ to accept the responsibility of educating their children at home. The level of commitment represented by this decision is highlighted by the fact that although more of these mothers have college degrees than do fathers, only one works out of the home. Foregoing a second income is no simple matter in a society where two-income families have become commonplace. The modest incomes reported by these families
and the modest lifestyles evidenced during the home-visits suggest that the maintenance of a home-centered family life is of such importance that they are willing to run counter to a cultural trend despite the costs, economic or otherwise.

The demographic characteristics of the African-American families in this sample are not distinguishable from the European-American families in any obvious way. The only point of contrast is that two of the African-American families are Muslims, while none of the European-American families are. Likely this is consistent with the make-up of the American Muslim community in general.

What are these parents' motivations for homeschooling their children?

The motivations expressed by the parents in this sample are not dissimilar from the findings of much previous research into homeschooling. The numerical dominance of the homeschooling movement by religiously-oriented families, documented by many researchers (Linden 1983; Greene 1984; Rose 1985; Van Galen 1987; Wartes 1988; Mayberry 1988), is reflected in this study. Six of the eight families cited their religious beliefs as "very important" in the decision to home educate their children. The desire to instill particular religious beliefs and values is clearly important to both the Christian and Muslim parents.
A simple division of the sample into those motivated by fundamentalist religious doctrine and those who are not, however, does not begin to do justice to the variety of concerns expressed by these parents. The results of this study suggest that attempts to understand the home schooling movement merely as a religious movement are unfounded. All of the case studies, for example, reflect an adherence to certain ideologies - be they religious or pedagogical. All of these parents want to instill strongly-held beliefs in their children. As a result, they all want to exercise some measure of control over outside influences that compete with or negate their attempts to instill these beliefs. Limiting access to conventional schooling is one means of doing so.

Though the evidence for the religiously-oriented families is perhaps more obvious than for the two exceptions, the Franklins and the Palmers share a belief in the ideology of alternative education. That is, they assert the primacy of individual creativity and initiative, the existence of multiple types of intelligence and ways of learning, and the importance of questioning the status quo. They choose to disassociate themselves from conventional schooling which they view as stifling of creativity and destructive of individual freedoms. They do not want their children to be labelled "deviants for questioning" or to get "used to not thinking." At the same time, academic concerns were the primary motivation for three of the religiously-oriented
families as well. Neither the Robinson, Baker, nor Shabazz family would have much difficulty accepting most of these same tenets, although they might not refer to themselves as "alternative educators." Roger Robinson, in fact, referred to home schooling as "an ultimate expression of (his) conservatism."

Any attempt to fit the respondents into a neat typology thus raises the danger of obscuring rather than clarifying parental motivations for choosing home schooling. Most of the families in the sample would fit into more than one category in the typologies suggested by Pitman (1987) and Mayberry (1988). Even the categories identified by the most useful of these - Van Galen's (1988b) Ideologues and Pedagogues - are limiting.

Based upon Van Galen's definitions, and upon the specific and unique circumstances expressed by each family to explain their decision to home school, the following assignments can be made:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ideologues</th>
<th>Pedagogues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Young Shabazz</td>
<td>Baker Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen --Harris--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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300
For the Youngs and the Allens, motivated primarily by a desire to insulate their children from the teaching of evolution and other "worldly influences", the fit may appear to be obvious. Yet the Youngs withdrew from Christian schooling not because of the content of the curriculum or the values taught there; it was fear of "losing" their children to peers that motivated them. Similarly, the Allens first turned to home schooling before adopting strong religious beliefs.

In the case of the Harrises, the catalyst was not their religious orientation but the threat posed by an environment they perceived as degrading to their daughter’s self-esteem as an African-American. Nor were Christian schools an option: most do not "recognize cultural differences and educate children accordingly." While their "number one priority is to know God," they were also motivated by a belief that "schools usually only teach one way" and that "there is a better way to teach."

The same problem arises with the Pedagogues, many of whom express concerns entirely compatible with the Ideologues. Although their belief that the pedagogy of formal schools is harmful academically and emotionally led to the decision to withdraw from schooling, four of five families criticized the "negative" socialization found there. Concerns centered
around a fear that their children would be swayed by others, whether peers or teachers, before they were mature enough to resist such pressures. Just as with the Ideologues, these parents wanted to play the most significant role in forming their children's early attitudes and values - whether stemming from a religious ideology, a pedagogical philosophy, or a combination of the two.

The evidence suggests that the reasons why parents in this sample have chosen home schooling for their children are complex. They include both affective and cognitive concerns: peer socialization as well as the standards of discipline and morality perceived in schools, a desire to promote family unity and to provide for the spiritual needs of their children, a belief in the superiority of alternative teaching methodologies emphasizing experiential learning, and a wish to maintain independent, inquisitive minds in their children. The data suggests that multiple concerns motivate each of these families. What unites them is their belief that home schooling provides a superior environment for achieving their individual family objectives. The tremendous variation within this sample likely reflects the tremendous variation within the movement as a whole.

Identification of political beliefs as important in the decision to home school by five families raises questions which have direct bearing on the topic of this study. It is clear from the interviews that this cadre, encompassing both
Ideologues (Harris and Allen) and Pedagogues (Robinson, Shabazz, and Franklin), and inclusive of three of the four African-American families, see their break with traditional schooling as more than an educational choice. While all of the families are resisting the acculturating mission of the school and redefining the role of the family relative to other social institutions in the raising of their children, these parents express their unwillingness to conform to societal expectations in explicitly political terms. In effect their pedagogy is a political act or, as one mother put it, "the personal is the political." The goals to which this act is directed are the focus of the following section.

What goals do these parents hold for their children?

Other researchers, such as Van Galen (1988b:56) note that "many home schooling parents have decidedly parted company with those who define the goals of education in strictly economic terms." In other words, for these parents training for the workplace is secondary to developing their children's character; ethical, moral and spiritual development is central. Van Galen attributes this goal to the Ideologues, consistent with their orthodox religious orientation.

In contrast, the data gathered here suggests that home schooling parents across the spectrum of motivations - whether they are Pedagogues or Ideologues - are concerned
more with "building character" than with the attainment of externally-derived measures of what defines a successful education. Obviously the nature of this enterprise varies considerably among the families. The goal of a solid religious foundation, for example, while important to the Christian and Muslim parents, is not significant to all. When the Palmers and the Franklins, however, speak of wanting their children to be "responsible, caring human beings" and to "seek truth, question the status quo, and use their talents for the good of the community," they are naming character development as a central goal of their home schooling efforts. In the sample as a whole, only three families - two Ideologues and one Pedagogue - even mentioned college attendance as a preferred goal for their children. This is not to say that the others oppose the idea; most mentioned college as a possible outcome but with a wide variety of qualifications, opting instead to focus on achieving "excellence," "happiness," or "maximizing your efforts."

Without the ability to simply categorize these parents as religious or not, Ideologue or Pedagogue, what is most interesting in looking at their goals are the common threads running through the case study materials. Once again it appears that the similarities amongst this sample are of more import than their obvious differences.

One goal that is valued by all of the parents, across the categories, is the development of children who are independent
thinkers. What this means varies from family to family but the common thread has both affective and cognitive dimensions: an unwillingness to "see the need to fit into someone else's mold," as one mother put, as well as the skills of critical analysis that make independent thought possible. The goal, as another mother expressed it, is "to be open-minded enough to listen and understand (others) yet hold fast to what you believe is right."

An obvious question is from what this independence is desired, and herein lies a contrast. At one extreme it means being prepared for a "war...in a secular system that is satanically designed for their soul's destruction," as one father expressed it. The independence asserted in this family is from "the world" which has "a whole collective group of opinions so as to keep everyone happy," and the goal is to "conform to the image of Jesus Christ." Paradoxically this same father is comfortable with his "narrow-mindedness;" his concern is that his children "know how to submit to authority," primarily that of the Bible and secondarily that of their parents. For the majority, including the five "politically" motivated parents, independence means the ability to resist "fitting your kid's into the culture so that they'll be good citizens based on (other's) definition." In all cases it involves a perception that schools act as agents of indoctrination, unable to fulfill both social and personal objectives, and an assertion of the personal over the social.
Thus schools are "the wrong place" to teach "definitive values," an essential aspect of "knowing who you are." This is the task of the home schooling family, and the cultivation of confident children "who can figure out how to get any information they need" is the challenge. Hence in all of these homes the stated goals de-emphasize memorization in favor of "reasoning," "questioning," and "learning to think." The objective, for both Pedagogues and Ideologues, is to "not be so easily persuaded" by others and to be able to "make up your own mind."

Independent thinking has a culturally-specific connotation in the homes of the African-American home schoolers in this sample. While all of the families related the desire for their children to be tolerant and respectful of other races, cultures and religions, the African-American parents alone spoke of wanting to give their children a secure "cultural identity." Independent thinking for them is viewed as independence from the negative influences which, as one mother expressed it, are "damaging psychologically" to the self-esteem of African-American youth. Implicit is a critique that schools, no less than other social institutions, serve to perpetuate racial stereotypes and communicate a limited understanding of the black experience in America: "Our educational system has sugar-coated many things and said it's okay." In their zeal to promote social cohesion and to downplay controversy, "too many things (are) swept under the
carpet." As a result, one mother believes that "children come up with a false notion of what's really going on." The ultimate goal, as defined by these parents, is not racially-based but humanistic: to preserve the individual integrity of each child which, "in a society where we reduce things to race issues," must incorporate a strong cultural perspective. The development of independent minds is therefore undertaken with cognizance of one's experience - past, present and projected - as an African-American.

In summary, in all of these families the cultivation of strong character traits is viewed as the central goal of the home schooling effort. As used here, character does not refer only to religious or moral traits, but to mental abilities - independence of mind - that serve to preserve the distinctive qualities of each individual child. Schools are rejected as the referent for this process, viewed as being more a force for conformity to social norms than as a protector of individual integrity. They are replaced by the family which assumes the central role as the primary socializing agent for these children. In several homes a family's highly personal decision to educate their children at home becomes, in time, a full-blown critique of the American educational system. As one mother put it: "It would be utterly revolutionary for the schools to allow unlimited questioning....The history of compulsory education in this country is a history of trying to conform and control - and
(true) education is opposed to that....We are not naming what the school is for." Similar sentiments were expressed by another: "As citizens of the United States we need to look back at our school system and why it was started in the first place. It was not primarily for higher or quality education; it was only for basic things like reading and writing so people could get jobs and function at a basic level. I am trying to put some quality into my children's education, and to produce more moral citizens."

How are these goals pursued in these home schooling programs?

An obvious question is the extent to which the programs in these homes are designed to cultivate independent thinking. The case studies reveal that each family tailors their educational program to meet their own particular motivations and goals. Many of their approaches are eclectic, drawing on elements from diverse sources, and defy any simple typology. At the same time there are definite trends which can serve as the basis for comparison.

All of these programs are structured in the sense that every mother-teacher tries to incorporate the basic subject and skill areas found in the conventional school curriculum. There appears to be a consensus regarding what the cognitive components of a well-rounded education are, and in most respects it does not diverge from traditional notions of
education. At the same time there is no home where a formal classroom has been established, furnished with desks, a chalkboard, or any of the paraphernalia commonly associated with the typical school environment. Lessons take place wherever it is convenient and appropriate, whether a dining table, the floor, a bedroom, or outdoors. Thus, contrary to many of the sensational portrayals of home schooling in the media, none of these families feel the need to create a replica of the conventional schoolroom in order to conduct their schooling.

In her typology of parental motivations Van Galen (1988b) found a connection between motivation and pedagogy. Because Ideologues are not concerned with promoting analytical and divergent thinking in their children - they are preoccupied with teaching specific knowledge and values (i.e. "creationism") - they rely upon purchased curricula from Christian publishers to do their teaching for them. In effect, she argues, they closely mimic traditional schooling in their methods of teaching, while the Pedagogues experiment with alternatives. The data here confirms Van Galen's findings in large measure. The Ideologues in this sample tend to structure learning around textbooks and workbooks purchased as a package from a curriculum supplier. This tendency is most pronounced in the Allen home where the mother values her curriculum because "a lot of it just tells you (as the teacher) verbatim what to say," and all written materials and
tests are sent away to be graded. It is less obvious in the Young home where several curricula are "piecemealed" together to fit each child’s "unique personality." As the two most experienced home schoolers in the sample, however, these families confirm a second of Van Galen’s findings: with experience and a growing confidence in their ability to teach their children, Ideologues move away from an uncritical acceptance of their curricula and began to allow their children more freedom and autonomy in schooling; they move toward the less structured end of a continuum. The typology is even less certain in the Harris home, however, where economic constraints combined with the youth of their children make any assessment difficult. Even though this mother-teacher would still "like to have a curriculum, even if I did I would still do things off the cuff.

The Pedagogical parents in this sample make a conscious effort to modify the traditional curriculum by emphasizing experiential learning and choosing their materials from a wide variety of sources. They show a tendency to experiment with various techniques and materials, and structure learning to meet their perceptions of their children’s interests and abilities. In all of these homes the mother functions more as a facilitator of learning than as a deliver of instruction: she supplies the materials and is available to help when needed, but the emphasis is clearly on self-motivated and directed work. This tendency is most pronounced in the Palmer
and Franklin homes where there is virtually no formal curriculum or instruction. For the former, home schooling is based upon idiosyncratic notions of "what is really useful," while the latter practices what can only be termed "unschooling." As Doris Franklin put it: "I am beginning to not like the term home schooling because it is confining too. It surprises me how arbitrarily and literally people define it."

In many respects, however, the data contrasts with such a neat typology. The similarities among the families, as in the case of motivations and goals, suggest that most of these parents share many of the same challenges and devise related strategies in developing effective programs for their children. The exceptions to the following discussion are those closest to practicing "unschooling" (Franklin and Palmer). It is important to point out that "unschoolers" represent both the minority of the parents in this sample as is the case nationally. However, the Palmers made several statements which evidence a concern that their children remain at a comparable grade-level and that "it teach them enough to function in the real world." The implication is that not even alternative educators are immune from pressures to teach their children with an eye toward socially-defined academic standards. Setting aside the two "unschoolers" then, the other three Pedagogues appear show little desire to give up all reference to an outside source in establishing their
programs. While only one family uses a purchased curricula, two others look to conventional sources for their model. In one case a curriculum obtained from a local public school system furnished the outline for early home schooling, while another consults with professional educators and publications about "what is age-appropriate." All six of these families set aside specific hours for schooling, and though there is a much greater emphasis on spontaneity among the Pedagogues, flexibility is valued across the categories. There is also a great emphasis placed on independent learning, especially for the older home schooled children. Once assignments have been made, there is an expectation that they will be completed; consequences for the failure to do so are evident. One characteristic which is shared by these six families, and distinguishes them from the "unschoolers" in the sample, is their religious orientation. Each of them spoke, in varying degrees, of seeking ways to integrate their religious beliefs with their more strictly academic efforts. The extent to which religious beliefs lead toward a higher degree of structure in home schooling, however, is not demonstrable from the data collected here. What is certain is that this group, comprising both Ideologues and Pedagogues, share many fundamental assumptions about the learning enterprise. As a result, they establish programs which have a definite structure and, after communicating expectations to their children as to desired outcomes, exercise a firm hand in
ensuring that they are met.

In other aspects of the programs there is unanimity across all categories. All of the families draw upon a variety of resources to supplement their home schooling programs though there is a wide spectrum in terms of the degree of control exercised by parents over these. Television, for example, is used as an educational tool in all of these homes. In five of the six religiously-oriented homes, however, programming is monitored carefully and viewing selections have to be made based upon their educational and moral value. In addition, families regularly make use of the public library system for supplementary materials and often assemble impressive personal libraries. A curious exception to this pattern is the Allen home, where despite the strongest adherence in the sample to a religiously-oriented, curriculum package and the most limited use of supplementary resources, there is little or no control exercised over television. The television appears to provide a convenient means of entertaining the children, a common occurrence in the homes of many conventionally-schooled children as well.

All parents, with the exception of the Allens, rely primarily on informal methods of evaluating their children’s progress even though all participate in the state-sanctioned schedule of formal standardized testing for their children. Nor are these children social isolates. All of these families participate to some degree with a homeschooling support
network which, in conjunction with outside classes and organized sports, provides opportunities for social interaction with both home schooled and conventionally schooled children.

In summary, the programs found in these home schools do not vary substantively in terms of content from traditional schooling. Though there is variation in terms of subjects of study, all parents emphasize competence in essential skills commonly found in schools. The typology offered by Van Galen does highlight basic differences in the pedagogy of those more ideologically motivated in their decision to homeschool and those who are more clearly seeking an alternative paradigm for education. The match between the stated goal of independent thinking and the home schooling program is more problematic in the homes of the Ideologues, however. Although all of the parents try to tailor their curricula in some measure to the interests and abilities of their children, there is a much greater degree of control exercised over the content of this program and a greater reliance upon structuring learning around textbooks among the Ideologues. At the same time, the data suggests that structure and screening may reflect the religious beliefs of the family more than pedagogical beliefs; it is a more prominent feature in the homes of religiously-oriented Pedagogues than in the two non-religious ones. In all homes across all categories, the cultivation of self-discipline in work habits and independent
learning, particularly at the older age ranges, is highly valued.

Significantly, all of the African-American home schoolers, three of whom are clearly Pedagogues, are inclined toward a more rigorous curriculum than an "unschooling" family would be. The two most highly structured families in terms of scheduling time periods (Shabazz and Baker), for example, are African-American Pedagogues. All four families make participation in and completion of home schooling activities mandatory. One mother even resorts to culturally-specific imagery to impress upon her children that "there are too many of my people over there in the Atlantic Ocean, at the bottom. I don't have time to play." The fact that all four are religiously-oriented may be a factor in the make-up of their program. Inability to locate African-American home schoolers who are not religiously-motivated thus limits the inferences that can be drawn. Yet it is difficult to ignore a sentiment running through each of their case studies that their children cannot afford the "luxury" of a totally experimental pedagogy. Education has historically provided a central means of access to personal and social advancement for the African-American community, and these parents would agree with one writer who "cannot imagine white society accepting 'unschooled' African-American adults for jobs or higher education." As she explains it: "You must understand that I was told, as a child, that I had to work twice as hard to get halfway there. This
meant as a black person in America, my struggle would be a difficult one. I believed this as a child and I am convinced of it as an adult" (Nichols-White 1992, 6). As a result, as Adrian Shabazz put it: "Teaching African-American kids has to be a conscious, conscious, conscious effort." The observation that their concerns and experiences as a class of home schoolers is distinctive from that of the class of European-Americans is highlighted by the decidedly negative reports from two mothers about their interactions at public gatherings of home schooling parents.

How are the civic education programs in these homes structured and why?

As non-participants in the system, public or private, of formal schooling, home schooling children are not exposed to what is projected as one of the most important vehicles for the development of civic culture. While it is accepted that parents play a significant role in transmitting values and attitudes which impact on their children's life as adult-citizens, schools are charged with promoting rules and providing the experiences which lead to social and political toleration, and thus cohesion. In effect, schools are invested with a character-building function in the education of America's future citizens that rivals and, at times, even supplants that of the family. Though tolerance may not be practiced at home, the diversity of the school experience is
seen as leading to an amelioration of any negative consequences from the home experience.

In home schooling, however, parents exercise a greater degree of influence over this process than any single agent could under conventional circumstances. In fact, the desire to maintain a high level of influence over the character-formation function has been established in this study, as in repeated others, as a prime motivating factor for most home schooling parents. The nature of the civic education found in these homes, including both its affective and cognitive dimensions, is the question to which this inquiry now turns.

Any notion that the civic education found in the homes of home schooling families is inherently subversive of the social and political order of the nation is not indicated by the findings of this study. Each of these families accepted most, if not all, of the values mandated by the Georgia Department of Education to be part of the civic education programs throughout the state. Points of difference arose from the fact that each family had reservations about exactly what the values mean. The concept of "patriotism" was a noteworthy pole of controversy. Both those who accepted it and those who did not asserted their loyalty to the nation. The right to home school, established with a certainty in the state of Georgia and increasingly across the country, was touted as proof of the superiority of the American system in
relation to others where such individual liberties do not exist.

At the same time each respondent made it clear that their patriotism was not, as one mother expressed it, of the "flag-waving, demagogic brand." There was a consensus among these parents that their children not be raised with a reflexive, non-critical acceptance of the social and political policy of the nation. Generally schools were portrayed as sites of indoctrination where a normative content based on compliance with rules and acceptance of authority is dominant. Accommodation to the status quo, both within the school as well as within the social and political system is the goal there. Thus, they reject civic learning in schools because of its focus on socializing, adjusting, and acculturating the child to the prevailing political order. We see here many of the features of the "allegiant American" model of civic education described by Litt (1965) and Wirt and Kirst (1982) as predominant in American schooling. It is in regard to civic education that the parental desire for independence of mind and action is most vigorously expressed.

Naturally there are differences in ideological orientation. Each family transmits civic culture from its own unique perspective regarding the history, health and future of the political community. These perspectives are often formed by parents' personal histories as participants in it. Dan Young's preference for "theocracy" and the "Afrocentrism" of
the Shabazz, Robinson, and Harris families stand as examples. The religious beliefs of several parents who assert that there is a scriptural responsibility for "good citizenship," whether Biblically or Qu’ranically-based, or that one owes allegiance first to God rather than country, are another. Statements of mistrust of the government and politicians made by the politically motivated parents are yet another. The fact that investment in multiple ideological positions (i.e. religious, politically mistrustful, and Afrocentric) is common for a single family confounds any attempt at simple categorization based on political ideology. What ties these parents together is a the stated goal that civic education should be directed towards the cultivation of a critical, analytical mind to produce citizens who are not "zombies" or "blindly loyal" to the sociopolitical system.

A real concern is that placing the family at the center of the social universe limits civic education to the whims and fancies of each individual family, thus severing the connection between childrearing and the creation and maintenance of social cohesion. The refusal to participate in public value formation through formal schooling, however, does not mean that these parents "lock their children in a closet" or put them "in a vacuum," as parents described it. Appropriating the major role in citizen-character formation only means that the public is involved peripherally in this process. The argument is that people who are firmly grounded
in their own belief-systems, who possess a strong sense of self and enjoy group affiliation at a level close to the home, are better prepared to resist becoming passive consumers of civic education and acritical defenders of the status quo. The implication is that home schooling is a superior method for producing strong individuals who can act as an active and enlightened citizenry in a democratic, pluralistic society.

In the words of one father, "since you have this cadre of home schoolers who tend to be very self-assured and directed toward what they want to do, they can't help but to orchestrate changes in this society - whether conscious or unconscious. It's just the nature of their upbringing." It is, as one father put it, "going to the roots" of what has distinguished the United States historically: its protection of individual liberty and the establishment of just conditions for its exercise. Knowing yourself thus leads, according to several parents, to active involvement in the life of the community, the state, the nation and the world.

This conviction was expressed forcefully by the African-American parents in the sample. Three of the four families described their approach to the task of civic education as "Afrocentric." While this approach was described in terms which are inclusive of the study of other races and cultures, it is an assertion of the overriding import placed by these parents on their specific experiences as members of a minority culture in America. They are preparing their
children for citizenship, but to be what one father termed "African-American citizens." In other words, they perceive themselves to have a different agenda than that of the general home schooling population because their children must be able to act in a culture where "we reduce things to race issues" and where experiences of racial stereotyping and intolerance are a reality, both in their own lives and those of their children. As one father stated: "Even the way you look at history...depends a lot on what you see, on what your cultural experiences are in that society." Thus citizenship has to be taught in terms of the "realities (African-Americans) have to live within in the social structure." The foremost task, expressed repeatedly throughout the interviews, is to impart the knowledge of the cultural history of Americans of African ancestry ("Until man first knows himself, he cannot know anyone else.") and to raise the self-esteem of their children in a society where "psychologically damaging" images are commonplace. This is the path to educating children who are able and, even more importantly, willing to assume the harness of civic leadership.

Thus all of the families in the sample spoke of the necessity of understanding the basic history and structure of the American governmental system. This need was expressed not in terms of a compulsory course to be passed, but of essential knowledge for the performance of duties which are inherent in citizenship. Likewise the families were unanimous in their
perception that promoting understanding and basic respect for different cultures and ideologies among their children was a key component of their home schooling efforts. Maintaining an "open mind" has never meant, as one mother put it, the children "have to necessarily adopt all of these things or accept them all."

Although standing outside of mainstream America, and on the whole critical of the contemporary social order, these parents evidence no desire for their children to be non-actors in its civic life. While placing the highest value on personal independence and autonomy within the social order, they do not reject social participation. On the contrary, the appeal to social responsibility is stated firmly as a duty, whether expressed in religious, cultural, or moral terms, or as simple national affiliation.

To what extent are the means used in these civic education programs consistent with the proposed ends: the cultivation of independent thinking and action? In terms of curriculum content, the basic components of what usually constitutes a civic education program in conventional schools, including the study of history and geography, is found in every home. There are, however, significant differences in the ways these subjects are approached.

For the most part the Pedagogues build their program around the study of world history and cultures. This focus was stated cogently by the mother who insisted that "I teach
them world history because to me it's a global thing. You can't separate the U.S. out and teach history." Included within the program is a willingness to confront controversy as it occurs in American society. The clamor over issues that sharply divide Americans penetrates into these 'classrooms,' particularly through the study of current events as they unfold. Awareness of current events is essential, as one mother put it, because "They have to know the language, and the younger they are the better it's going to be." The objective is empowerment. Learning the mechanics of government is not enough; active citizens must understand political realities. As in other subject areas, the stated emphasis on developing the ability to critically analyze materials and events rather than rote memorization is pursued with authenticity in the homes of Pedagogues. Conventional methods requiring the acquisition of information through memorization, such as the division of governmental powers or name-place location of states and capitals, are used. But the aim is to "search for real explanations" of events. Questioning is highly valued as is searching for relationships between people, nations, or events. A common method is to study history backwards in time from current events. Understanding reality also requires teaching a "fair share of every historical event from every walk of life, as evenly and as balanced a perspective" as possible. On the whole, the curriculum found in these homes is focused on
analysis and inquiry. It differs sharply with this characterization of conventional school civics offered by Wirt and Kirst (1982:48): "The curriculum is formalistically descriptive, weakly linked to reality, devoid of analytical concepts except legalistic ones, highly prescriptive in tone and - as a direct consequence of all this - noncontroversial."

The curriculum found in the homes of the two Ideologues is somewhat more provincial and less controversial in comparison. Formalistic descriptions of governmental structures and ethical prescriptions based on Christian principles are the main features of a program which is not overly concerned with understanding the nature of the contemporary political world; the latter, in fact, is viewed as corrupted by its very "worldliness." Despite the stated intention to "be aware of world cultures," United States history and culture is the central focus of study. Issues of current controversy in American society are not systematically addressed, although this tendency is more pronounced in the Young home where television viewing is strictly screened. As a result, with one important exception, the civics curriculum in the homes of Ideologues is not easily distinguishable from that found in the system of secular schools: though it is also prescriptive, the normative content in these homes emphasizes compliance with Scriptural authority rather than with any intrinsic authority of the political system.

Materials are selected to meet each family's needs,
although it is clear that the range is much wider and encompasses a far greater diversity of perspective in the homes of the Pedagogues. On the whole, the Pedagogues try to avoid "a sense of monolithic wisdom" by incorporating materials that are inclusive in terms of race, gender and ethnicity. As a result, the treatment of minorities does not depict them as insignificant actors or as mere human interest facets of history. As one mother reported, "we try to include everybody...because nobody had a monopoly on intelligence or inventions or anything. Everybody had a contribution in some way." Multiple texts are used, and the freedom "to concentrate and dwell" in an area is exercised "even if you move at a snail's pace." The focus thus is less on the breadth of history covered than on the depth to which it can be penetrated. Variety of textual materials also ensures that there is no assumption of social harmony. On the contrary, care is made to represent not only the positive qualities of the nation's history and social life, but its disharmonies and disunities as well. Television was cited as an extremely useful medium in this project. Watching the news and the coverage of current social and political issues was cited as a particularly effective way to engage the children in studies related to civics.

The materials used by the Ideologues are far less diverse and controversial. For the most part texts are generated by a purchased curriculum or are carefully selected to conform to
ideological considerations (i.e. a Christian perspective). At the same time ideology did not prevent one family from critiquing a textbook because "it didn’t even teach where black people come from" or another from sitting their children down to watch the film *Glory* because they should know "how the whites treated the blacks" in the Civil War era." In other words, they are not interested in promoting a false view of history - it "should be related openly and honestly" - but religion provides the lens through which all events are viewed. In a similar vein matters of controversy within the social and political community, when they are addressed at all, are examined in light of "Biblical authority" rather than on the basis of a pluralistic, conflict-ridden political world where interest groups clash over the competing demands they make on the system. Hence even the materials used in the civic education appear more prescriptive than analytical in their orientation.

All of the parents in this study regard the teacher as a potentially powerful instrument of socialization to the civic order. Without exception these parents agree that the modelling of desired behaviors by parent-teachers is the most significant way to transmit civic culture to their children. The sentiment was expressed most clearly by one mother who noted that "A lot of the teaching in home schooling is not done with ‘teaching.’ Because children observe and learn by observation, seeing what you do, the interactions that we
have."

Numerous examples were offered, encompassing activities both within the home and without, to describe this modelling. These include family "councils" where topics of personal and social concern are discussed, voting, attendance at public forums, political lobbying, public speaking, and participation in charitable projects.

One crucial feature of the parent-teacher as a model for civic socialization is the extent to which they adhere to values normally defined as democratic in their daily practice of home schooling. It could be argued that allowing the children-students more control over the learning process, characteristic of the program of the Pedagogues, is more conducive to the cultivation of democratic values than that of the Ideologues where such freedoms are less apparent. In the homes of the former the teacher appears to function mostly as a facilitator of learning, while for the latter she has more of a controlling influence.

Of course allowing children the freedom to learn independently does not ensure independence of thought and action in a political and economic world where constraints on individual autonomy (i.e. racial, gender, economic) are a reality. Freed from the pressures which hinder many professional educators from addressing controversial questions, however, these parents make substantial efforts to integrate materials and topics that are intended to promote a critical examination of what one father referred to as "the
hidden agendas which are operating in the foundations of this country." This is not to say that parents do not provide any guideposts, that everything is always open to question. These parents, especially the religiously-oriented Pedagogues, do hold definite ideas about the ethical and moral values they want to impart to their children, and these values inform their positions on matters of civic concern. But, while retaining their status as the principal figure of authority in the family, these parent-teachers believe it a necessity to provide an environment for the free exploration of ideas and the unhampered expression of them, even if their children’s conflict with their own.

In contrast, the task of helping future citizens to understand political reality so as to impact on it is of less concern to the Ideologues than conformity to fundamentalist religious doctrine. In bringing their children home from school they are expressing foremost their interest in challenging the power of social institutions in childrearing. They see home schooling as a way to reclaim control over this process for themselves. While the Pedagogues stake a similar position, this appears to be the primary, even sole focus of the Ideologues. As a result, the parent-teacher is expected to, in a sense, "indoctrinate their children" to their world-view.

It is acceptable for the children to be "open minded" about historical events, for example, "because that’s not an
issue of value within our family." On the other hand, exposure to competing belief-systems and serious inquiry into controversial subjects, supported by a curriculum and materials which are conducive to this task, are seen as unnecessarily confusing to young minds who have to be protected from a "worldly" value system. Knowledge of political reality - that is, how citizens, interest groups and political authorities actually conduct themselves, the empirical operations of political systems - is of little import as opposed to their ideological operations and the extent to which they conform to the ideological system transmitted by parent-teachers.

This is not to say that Ideologues 'brainwash' their children any more than it is to charge schools with the same. Home schoolers should be held to no higher standard of performance in civic education than schools are, and the record of the latter in this regard is unimpressive indeed. Rather, the point is that Ideologues do not appear to provide the pedagogical experiences consonant with the goals of independent thinking and action. They reject the prevailing civic ideology of the schools - earlier referred to as the "allegiant American" - due to its focus on compliance with a culture they perceive as "wicked." Yet the model operating in these homes, what Litt (1965) refers to as the "rational-activist model" of civic education, does not require specialized, formal instruction in citizenship. In a throwback
to nineteenth century liberalism, the good citizen is essentially a product of character training who participates responsibly in the affairs of society, with "strong emphasis on the moral component of civic duty, on public responsibility, and on voluntary participation" (p.36). Conventional learning of governmental forms and institutions is adequate, undergirded as it is by a highly moralistic religious belief-system.

While civic training among the Pedagogy shares some of these features, it is clear that they carry the process further. They also place the family at the center of the social universe, believing that the practical lessons taught there are the ones which prepare children for the responsibilities of an adult-citizen. The model of social change proposed is highly individualistic, suggesting that by the single citizen's actions, by modelling - whether of the parent to the child or the child to others - change is inspired. Yet pedagogy also incorporate a study of the empirical operations and limits of the political system aimed at developing the analytic skills which may be essential for empowered action within it. In addition, they provide a diverse range of materials reflecting alternative viewpoints and offer to their children the intellectual freedom to explore divergent ideas. As a result, the approach found in these homes - individualistic as it is - approximates Litt's "analytic citizen" and may indicate directions civic education
could take in the substantive enhancement of our civic culture.

How does the home schooling experience impact on these families and their programs?

The case studies demonstrate convincingly that these parents value the impact home schooling has on their families. For some the benefits were foreseen; both Ideologues and Pedagogues turned to home schooling, in part, because the time pressures of a life centered around conventional school schedules interfered with family life, making it impossible to create the home environment they desired. For others pedagogical concerns were principal, and the personal benefits were unanticipated.

What is suggested by the data is that many parents who home school, whatever their ideological orientation, regard the school as an intrusive presence in their lives. It is not just that they dislike surrendering their children to the socialization of the school experience or the poor quality of the education offered there. They resent the fact that their children are out of the home so much that they hardly see them; time spent together is at a minimum. The result, in some cases, is a sense of "hardly knowing" their own children and "strained relationships." In other words, sending their children off to school interferes with their ability to
The benefits attributed to home schooling thus include the chance to spend more time with their children and to enhance family life. In particular, parents praise the spontaneity and flexibility which home schooling affords, and the chance to take more control over their schedules and routines. They report closer relationships between siblings than when their children are age-segregated in schools during the day, only to return home where they are expected to enjoy the company of diverse age ranges. Perhaps more importantly, parents also believe that home-based education enables them to know their children more intimately and to bond more closely, to know them well enough to respond effectively to their developmental needs. It helps them to create a dynamic climate for learning in their homes from which all members, themselves included, benefit. One can imagine no better role model for the education of young people than having the adults around them actively engaged in refining their own lives. In effect, they believe that home schooling provides the conditions which enable them to become better parents.

This is not to say that there are not costs. In addition to economic losses due to lost income, most parents report experiencing some measure of stress in the dual role of parent and teacher. Each parent-teacher develops personal strategies for alleviating these stresses and avoiding 'burnout.' Clearly educating one’s children at home is no
simple task. Not surprisingly, the stresses are most acute for those parents who are new to home schooling or who face additional pressures such as economic hardship.

For most parents, however, experience brings growing confidence in their ability to provide a comparable or superior education at home. With confidence comes a willingness to relinquish control over the learning process and to allow children the opportunity to exercise greater choice in curricular matters. Although this tendency is stronger among the Pedagogues, it is evident among all families, confirming Van Galen (1988b) and Resetar's (1990) findings that home schooling parents gradually move toward more flexibility and informality in their programs.

Indeed all of the parents in this sample reported that they want to continue home schooling. Although some will return their children to school at some point and others consider it from time to time, no parents discussed this possibility out of a sense of frustration or disappointment with home schooling. On the contrary, this ongoing examination of the efficacy of their efforts stems from the same question that inspired these parents to homeschool in the first place: how to provide the best education for their children. Short of major transformation in American schools or changes in personal life circumstances, it appears that home will remain the preferred location for learning for these families.
Is there a hidden curriculum operating in these home schools which affects the nature of the civic education found there?

The idea of a hidden curriculum suggests that schools impact more on civic values by the structure of their pedagogy and the organizational imperatives of professional educators than they do through the content of the formal curriculum. In other words, the order, discipline and hierarchy of most schools prevent the transmission of the democratic values they purport to support. At its most trenchant, this critique charges that the hidden curriculum is actually designed to coerce students into acceptance of and compliance with the authority of officials — political and otherwise.

This perspective has its adherents among the parents in this sample. Both Pedagogues and Ideologues charge the American school system with a hidden agenda. As one mother put it, democratic values "may be given lip-service in schools and taught in terms of American history, yet the daily practice of school doesn't encourage those behaviors." Another mother believes that "schools want you to see just what the media wants you to see, just what the Establishment wants you to know." The charge by African-American parents that schools "sugar-coat history" and tell "the big lie" are relevant too. As suggested earlier, these parents protest the "allegiant American" model of civic education, and propose home schooling as a way to preserve the independence of their
children.

The notion of a hidden curriculum has been debated at length by both supporters and detractors. Feelings of disenchantment with American schooling, however, do not justify charging more than can be substantiated. While it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the validity of this critique for schools as a whole, it is reasonable to ask whether the 'schooling' experience in these homes transmit subtle or hidden messages that impact on the nature of the civic education found there. The analysis proceeds along two lines.

First of all, when parents choose to remove their children from the system of formal schooling in America, they are rejecting one of the most pervasive and influential social institutions in the culture. Until recently in most jurisdictions, and continuing today in a few, they did so at considerable legal and personal risk. An obvious question is what lessons are home schooled children taught about the price of being different, of making choices which run counter to mainstream cultural practices. The statements of the two most experienced parents in the study describing their early fears about home schooling are telling reminders of the kinds of pressures parents can face.

Liberalization of compulsory school attendance laws, a trend prompted in large measure by the intensive lobbying of home schooling families and advocates, has laid to rest many
of these fears. Current Georgia law is among the least restrictive in the country, allowing only the most formal oversight by public authorities. None of the respondents reported having any anxieties in this regard, at least in the present climate. In fact, they are all duly registered with local school systems and in compliance with testing requirements. Two families even sought assistance from local schools; their requests were denied.

Nor are the parents in this study secretive with relatives, friends and neighbors about their home schooling, including those who try to dissuade them from it. Most described these conversations as having the effect of strengthening them in their conviction that home schooling was the right choice for their family. This confidence persists despite their minority status as home schoolers among their relatives, friends and neighbors, not to mention in the society as a whole.

In short, the ease of home schooling in Georgia and the growing numbers of people exercising this option appear to have alleviated the personal and political conflicts families find themselves in even as they face opposition. These families are home schooling in a society that has shown considerable adaptability in recent years in accommodating what was at one time a risky venture. Rather than teaching lessons about society’s limited tolerance for dissent — about being ‘outlaws’ — now they feel confident in asserting that
they are not dissidents at all. In their eyes, the decision to homeschool is an active expression of their full participation in the American system. In this sense the message of home schooling is not hidden at all; participation is proudly proclaimed as an affirmation of the benefits of the American civic culture. One mother put it in this way: "What I don’t want people to see is that it is on the outside of the American way. It is the American way!" By their own willingness to be non-conformists, to question one of our most cherished and fundamental beliefs (i.e. the value of formal schooling), home schooling parents show a strength of character which itself stands as a model for autonomous thought and action.

On the other hand, the question of the congruence between the goals parents hold for their children and the content and structure of their civic education programs is more problematic. While there were differences in the stated goals of the parents in this study, the one outcome that is valued by all - across the spectrum of motivations and ideologies - is the development of children who are independent thinkers. Time and again parents critiqued schools because of the "worldly" and irreligious values taught there, the "Eurocentrism" of its curricula, or the pressures to accept authority unquestioningly, among others. They want their children to be raised in an environment that is protected from much of the social and peer pressures common to school. The
preferred path is for the child to be socialized within the family into the values and attitudes relevant to civic culture. Hence the family, and not an outside institution (public or private), occupies the center of the social universe.

The data related to the teaching of civics, however, raises questions as to the viability of efforts aimed at independence of mind and action in the homes of the Ideologues. Upon review, the three elements of their pedagogy - curriculum, textbooks, and teaching - share a common shortcoming. The focus in civic education is clearly more prescriptive than analytical. Not only do the Ideologues not challenge the pedagogy of conventional schooling, which they criticize as fostering dependence, but they make minimal effort to incorporate alternative perspectives into their programs. Full contact with the competing ideas of America's increasingly diverse, multicultural society is subject to a restricted pedagogy. A real question can be asked, however, as to whether the curriculum in these homes could in any way be characterized as "hidden." These parents make it no secret that one of their primary aims is to limit their children's exposure to values, ideas and people whose beliefs diverge from their own. Yet children are not "locked in a closet," prevented from experiencing the world, and they do not appear to be taught intolerance or bigotry; they may even be allowed to "make up their own minds." But whether they are being
supplied with the analytical tools to decode ideological positions which diverge from those transmitted through the family, thus granting them some measure of credible challenge to the family’s own ‘conventional wisdom,’ is questionable.

The contrast with the Pedagogues is apparent. These parents challenge sources of monolithic wisdom, if not in their religious views then at least in terms of the subject-matter and pedagogical approach in areas related to civic education. Exposure to the empirical operations of the political system is fully integrated into the program. The home school, in a sense, functions as a microcosm of the civic order, with its requirement of the art of negotiation and compromise. Despite the religious conservatism of several of these parents, real efforts are made to infuse the curriculum with elements of freedom and choice. The degree of religiousness is thus not indicated as a significant variable. For the two European-American ‘unschoolers,’ their libertarian leanings lend obvious roots to their pedagogical orientation. The other Pedagogues are joined by only one characteristic: their common identity as people of color, specifically as Americans of African heritage. The extent to which their identity as a cultural minority represents an independent variable, hitherto unexplored in the literature on home schooling, is the question on which this analysis now focuses.
Is there a set of issues which differentiates European-American and African-American home schooling families?

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that there appears to be a distinct set of concerns which are held in common by African-American home schooling families. Naturally the small size of the sample limits the ability to generalize to all members of this population. The data indicates, however, that African-American home schooling parents perceive that their experiences differ from those of the general home schooling population. Furthermore, the range of experiences arising out of their status as a minority, non-European culture in America impacts conclusively on their home schooling in terms of motivations, goals, pedagogical choices, and civic education.

The fact that all of the African-American parents in the sample are religiously-motivated, for example, serves as a point of departure. Although this trend is consistent with studies describing the characteristics of the general home schooling population, there was no difficulty in making contact with European-American home schoolers who are not religiously-oriented. Yet efforts to find non-religious African-American parents who home school were unproductive. This study makes no claim that they do not exist, but it suggests that a strong religious or cultural foundation may be a necessary ingredient in the decision of African-American
parents to home school. After all, institutional learning has historically been associated with the ideology of upward mobility for cultural minorities in America. The desire to merely experiment with pedagogical alternatives may not be sufficient itself as a motivator.

At the same time none of the four African-American couples in the sample are true Ideologues. Three clearly stated their main motivations as pedagogical. The fourth, also dissatisfied with their child’s academic experiences in school, did express ideological concerns. These related more to the adoption of racial stereotyping, however, than to the religious fundamentalism typically associated with Ideologues. The point is that intellectual preparedness, the result of a rigorous educational experience, is of great importance to African-American home schoolers. When they choose to remove their children from the system of institutional learning, they do so out of the belief that a home-based education not only provides them with a chance to impact on the development of their children’s values and beliefs, but that the home is a superior environment for learning.

The fact that three of these four families, as opposed to only one European-American family, describe themselves as motivated by "political beliefs" fixes their decision even more securely within a cultural context. These political beliefs do not in any sense arise out of extreme ideological positions; conservatism would be a more apt descriptor of
their essential ideology. Rather, these parents are making a statement about how they perceive African-Americans faring, both historically and in a contemporary sense, within the American system. As part of their critique of American society, they indict the schools for failing African-American youth - academically and culturally - with disastrous results in terms of educational attainment. At its severest, this critique depicts the school as perpetuating the cycle of poverty in the African-American community by legitimizing failure as an objective measure of individual ability.

Thus their goals and pedagogical choices become intelligible. Consistent with all members in the sample, these parents want their children to be independent thinkers. This means the development of skills of "critical thinking" and of "reasoning" leading toward the ability to "make up your own mind." They desire children "who simply do not see the need to fit into someone else's mold." For the African-Americans this project assumes a distinctly cultural connotation, one which is rooted specifically to their experience as African-Americans. In a society where images which are "damaging psychologically" to African-Americans are commonplace, their children have to live with racial stereotypes every day of their lives. As one mother described it: "There are concerns that exist in American society, if I was home schooling in another country these are issues I wouldn't even have to address because the environment is
totally different, but we live in a society where we reduce things to race issues. Then we have to teach certain things."

What are these "certain things?" First and foremost, it is the cultivation of a secure cultural identity as an American of African ancestry. This means countering the negative images with teaching about the contributions of Africans to both world and American culture. Contrary to a popular misconception, in all of these cases what is termed as an "Afrocentric" approach is inclusive of the histories and achievements of all the world's cultures. But it is important to these parents that their children see the "functional purpose" history serves in a society; in other words, a "hidden agenda" which relegates the study of 'black history' to one month a year and treats unpleasant events in the nation's history as episodic or aberrations rather than as evidence of a systematic pattern of denial of human rights. Examples of the latter that were cited include Columbus' alleged "discovery" of the Americas and the original constitutional acceptance of slavery and the denial of full civil or human rights to African-Americans.

A positive cultural identity also means addressing the issue of racism head-on. As one mother put it: "The children have to acknowledge the existence of it because they encounter these experiences in their lives." The strong spiritual beliefs of these families serve them well in this
regard. They reject bitterness and rebellion in favor of focusing "on God and not on reacting to man," choosing to "take the emotion that is a natural result of (injustice) and channel it in ways that can bring about change." But the goal of "better understand(ing) prejudice" is certain, and parents seem to agree with one mother who favors home schooling because it "enables me to better prepare my child so that they won't have the confusion I had."

These goals have an obvious curricular impact in terms of what materials are employed and topics are discussed in the home. They also have an impact on parents’ pedagogical choices. As mentioned earlier, African-American Pedagogues are considerably more structured in their home schooling than the European-American Pedagogues. They are not 'unschoolers,' even though they may incorporate similar methods into their programs such as self-directed and experiential learning. They are far more likely to look to educational authorities for their guides, however, and to establish a regimen which must be adhered to by their children-students. Such firmness is portrayed as a "necessity" in working with African-American children in general, the sense of which may be heightened among African-Americans pursuing an educational alternative such as home schooling.

These tendencies crystallize in regard to the civic education programs in these homes. For their children are being prepared to be what one father describes as
"African-American citizens" and a mother describes as members of an "African-American intelligentsia." Formalistic knowledge of governmental structures and of the nation's history, the accumulation of knowledge without the understanding that comes from critical analysis, are perceived as inadequate to this task. With more consistency and passion than that evidenced by the European-American parents in the sample, these parents consider it essential that their children "not be illiterate" of how the American system operates and of their power to effect change within it. This is not to say that their efforts are any more authentic than those of the other Pedagogues. Nevertheless, there is a sense that African-Americans face pressures and conflicts peculiar to their position as a minority culture in a society where victimization on the basis of race remains a reality. As one mother tells her charges: "You must conduct yourself in a certain way. People think certain things of African-American people. You don't want to sell that lie. You have to be conscious of every move you make so that misconception is not perpetuated by you."

These pressures extend to interactions with others within the home schooling movement as well. The problem described was not so much one of outright racism, but of a more subtle variety. On the one hand, this takes the form of an assumption that all home schoolers are white, middle class, and Christian. This comes across when books at home schooling
conferences or the texts used by curriculum publishers focus on Western European literature and history to the exclusion of other cultures and perspectives. It also comes across when the African-American home schoolers in attendance overhear remarks made by other parents that strike them as racially-biased or when they feel excluded socially at these events. The level of alienation experienced by African-American home schoolers was vividly illustrated by contacts made at one of these conferences. The initial response of two mothers to the idea of participating in this study were favorable. When contacted later, both completed and returned the initial questionnaire. Efforts to arrange the home visit for intensive interviewing, however, were fruitless. After repeated attempts to arrange a meeting by telephone, it became clear that they had grown uncomfortable with the idea and withdrew from the study. As one mother put it, they did not like the idea of "a white man getting inside of our heads and psychologizing us." Lack of attention by home schooling groups to the need to overcome barriers such as these is conspicuous at best, reflecting a lack of understanding of and sensitivity to cross-cultural communications.

On the whole, African-American parents who choose to educate their children at home appear to be responding to a set of concerns that are distinguishable from European-Americans. Although there is considerable common
ground between the groups, the African-American parents in the sample are motivated by and make choices based upon their experience as African-Americans. Rather than trying to change schools or waiting for the government to improve the lot of African-Americans, they choose to home school in the belief that it will better prepare their children to live as people of color in America. In the process they are giving their children one of the most important lessons they could learn. They are demonstrating that they are capable people, that they can act independently, and in terms of citizenship, that the full exercise of their civil rights - regardless of pressures to conform to the dominant culture - is in itself a major step toward self-determination.
CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the process of socialization in home-based educational programs, with a particular focus on the transmission of civic culture within these homes. An extensive review of the research literature relating to the subject led to the posing of eight research questions. A multiple-case study design was selected as the most effective method for answering them. Eight families who home school in the metropolitan Atlanta area were identified as the sample. A case study of each family was generated based upon multiple sources of evidence, including questionnaires and intensive interviewing within the home. A "chain of evidence" was maintained throughout this study by incorporating a profile of each family in the body of the report (Chapter Four) as well as prodigious quotations in the presentation of the data (Chapter Five). An analysis of the data (Chapter Five) addressed each of the research questions.

Findings and Conclusions of the Data Analysis

This study sought to answer eight research questions
related to home-based education. The findings and conclusions indicated by the data analysis are provided here.

What are the backgrounds and current life circumstances of these home schooling families?

Although the sampling procedure only examined parents’ motivations for home schooling and their race to identify participants, the families represent a variety of income levels, occupations, lifestyles, and spiritual orientations. The notion that home schoolers are typically white, middle class, and Christian is not supported by this study. The high level of educational attainment among the mothers suggests that the children educated in these homes enjoy teachers who have a high degree of literacy and who are well-acquainted with the standards of the conventional educational system.

The home schooling movement is even more diverse than is commonly thought. Home schooling cuts across many social lines and reflects the general make-up of America’s pluralistic society. Parents are not much different from mainstream Americans except in their willingness to accept total responsibility for their children’s education. The fact that these families are willing to accept the "opportunity costs" of home education by foregoing a second income evidences their deep commitment to the task.
What are these parents’ motivations for home schooling their children?

Although the numerical dominance of religiously-oriented families in the home schooling movement was confirmed by the data, this study found that the reasons why parents choose this option for their children are complex and defy any simple typology. Parents are motivated by multiple issues, encompassing both affective and cognitive concerns: dissatisfaction with academic content or standards in schools; the desire to employ alternative pedagogical practices; the desire to preserve family unity, frustration with the effects of peer socialization and a perceived lack of discipline and morality in schools.

In a sense, all home schooling parents are ideological in that they want to instill strongly-held beliefs in their children and want to maintain some measure of control over outside influences that might compete with their attempt to transmit these. Naturally there is great variety in the nature of these ideological positions (i.e. free thinking; orthodox Islam or Christianity; cultural pride). Identification of political beliefs as important by parents across the ideological spectrum suggests that the decision to remove their children from school-based programs reflects more than an educational choice for most parents. It is a statement of resistance to the acculturating mission of
schools and thus, implicitly or explicitly, a political act.

What goals do these parents hold for their children?

The data gathered here reveals that the home schooling parents, representing a variety of ideologies and motivations, are concerned primarily with the character-building function of education. As used here, character refers to religious or moral traits and to mental abilities that serve to preserve the distinctive qualities of each individual child. Schools are rejected as the referent for this process; they are viewed as serving more as a force for social conformity than as a protector of individual integrity. They are replaced by the family which assumes the role as the central socializing agent for these children.

Consistent with the emphasis on character-building is the desire for their children to be independent thinkers, a goal which is shared by parents despite obvious differences in how they portray it. Two elements are involved: first, children must be secure enough in their own belief-systems so that they are willing to resist pressures to conform to social expectations, and second, they must have the skills of critical analysis that make independent thinking possible.

By focusing on building character and cultivating independence from societal pressures, parents are asserting the primacy of personal objectives over social ones. They see
the childhood years as the chance to make a lasting imprint on their children’s development and they are unwilling to relinquish this task to social institutions.

Beyond transmitting family values and beliefs, African-American home schoolers portray independence of mind as part of the process of developing a heightened cultural consciousness. Implicit in their statements is a critique that schools, no less than other social institutions, serve to perpetuate racial stereotypes and offer only a limited understanding of the black experience in America. In their zeal to promote social conformity, according to these parents, schools tend to downplay racism and racial conflict and fail to offer any coherent analysis of their roots, thus presenting a false notion of reality to African-American children.

How are these goals pursued in these home schooling programs?

Emphasis upon building character does not prevent these parents from offering a well-rounded and comprehensive educational program to their children. The programs found in these homes do not vary substantially in terms of content from traditional schooling. Whatever their ideological orientation, these home schooling parents are committed to providing their children with the skills to be successful in fulfilling their personal goals.

In large measure the data confirm the relationship
between parental motivations for home schooling and the nature of their educational programs. Those parents for whom ideology is the dominant concern tend to rely upon curricula purchased from Christian publishers and to be relatively uninterested in pedagogical innovation. As they gain experience in home schooling, they begin to allow their children more influence over the process and to emphasize independent learning. Those parents seeking pedagogical alternatives make a conscious effort to experiment with different curricula and methods. The mother-teacher functions more as a facilitator of learning than as a formal teacher, choosing instead to supply materials drawn from a variety of sources and to allow the child to make self-directed choices. Thus the match between the stated goal of independent thinking and the structure and content of the educational program is problematic in the homes of the former.

At the same time two observations limit any definitive conclusions. The data reflects that religiously-oriented families, whatever their initial motivations, adopt a more structured approach and exercise more rigorous screening of materials than non-religious parents. In general, they are very concerned that their educational programs are consistent with their religious beliefs. Independence is thus limited by the need to conform to the moral and ethical precepts contained there.

The African-American parents, even if they are interested
in alternative paradigms of learning, appear to be inclined toward a rigorous program. The fact that African-American parents emphasize both structure and pedagogical innovation suggests a point of distinction based upon their experience as members of a cultural minority. An explanation can be found in their perceptions that their children cannot afford too much experimentation if they want to advance in the American society. The belief that African-American children are held to different standards than European-American is indicative of their view of their cultural status as a whole.

How are the civic educations programs structured in these homes and why?

Any idea that the civic education found in home schools is inherently subversive of the American social and political order is not supported by the data. These home schooling parents have no interest in undermining a system which enables them to exercise their individual liberties in such a fundamental way. In fact, the American system is generally praised for its protection of individual rights, and home schooling is described as fully consistent with American traditions.

At the same time parents reject the idea that patriotism requires total allegiance to the policies and practices of the
civic order. However much they value the American system, they express their allegiance to God or to moral and ethical beliefs rather than to a government. Their argument is that children who are raised to feel secure in their own belief-systems are better prepared to assume leadership roles as adult-citizens, able to act on the basis of significant values and not from political loyalties.

It is in regard to civic education that the parental desire for independent thinking and action is most clearly expressed. Running throughout the case studies is a critique of schools as sites of indoctrination to the civic order - the "allegiant American" model of civic education. While placing the highest value on personal independence and autonomy within the civic order, however, these parents are not rejecting public participation or social responsibility. What they maintain is that the strength of the nation rests in the ability of the individual to act from his own convictions, and that home-based education is best suited to allow the unimpeded development of these.

Examination of the curriculum, materials, and teaching roles in these homes indicates that not all parents provide the pedagogical experiences consonant with independent thinking and action in the contemporary civic order. Civics in some homes is ideologically rigid, thus tending to be prescriptive and provincial. Conventional study of history and governmental institutions is considered adequate,
undergirded as it is by a highly moralistic belief-system. Divergent viewpoints and current events are carefully screened. Opposing tendencies are present in homes where alternatives are sought. Sources of monolithic wisdom are challenged and critical analysis of the empirical operations of the political system form the very basis of the civic education. As a result, the task of cultivating intellectual freedom appears to be pursued with more authenticity there.

As in other areas, African-American home schoolers describe an agenda in civic education which is culturally-specific. The Afrocentric approach to the study of history, for example, suggests that the way in which historical events are viewed is related to the individual’s cultural experiences in that society. In the case of America, where racial oppression is an historical fact and experiences of racial stereotyping and intolerance are a contemporary reality, children must be prepared for a life as "African-American citizens." The goal of cultural education in these homes, however, is not separatism but humanism, not withdrawal from the American system but full rights and empowerment within it.

How does the home schooling experience impact on these families and their programs?

The case studies demonstrate with certainty that these
parents value the impact that home schooling has on their families. It provides them with more control over their daily schedules and more time together as a family. More crucial is the claim that home schooling enables parents to function better as parents. The findings reveal that a common American experience - having children out of the home at school and separated from other family members for so many hours - is viewed by many home schooling parents as dysfunctional for family life. School is portrayed as an intrusion on family life, not only subjecting their children to unwanted socialization and an inferior education, but interfering with parents' ability to bond with their children and to respond to their developmental needs effectively. While for most of the citizenry this reality appears inescapable, home schooling parents believe that the costs far outweigh any benefits.

This is not to say that home schooling is stress-free. All parents describe the task as an arduous one, though no parents consider returning their children to school out of frustration. On the contrary, parents report growing confidence in their ability to provide a superior education in terms of both academic and social skills. With confidence comes a willingness by parents to ease their control over the learning process and to allow their children more choices in pedagogical matters.

Many of the valued benefits of home schooling are thus highly personal. Yet the learning described as taking place
in these homes, encompassing all family members and all aspects of their lives together, indicate that home schooling offers a holistic approach to learning that goes far beyond the terrain traditionally associated with schooling.

Is there a hidden curriculum operating in these home schools which affects the nature of the civic education found there?

Generally the hidden curriculum in home schooling has been seen as the result of the legal and personal controversies encountered when parents choose to exclude their children from the compulsory education system. These parents report no problems in the state’s system of administrative oversight; nor do they feel ostracized socially. Liberalization of compulsory attendance laws to accommodate home schooling and the growing acceptance of it by the general public has eased many of the conflicts experienced previously. Rather than communicating messages about society’s intolerance of dissent, these parents reject the label of ‘dissident’ and proudly proclaim their home schooling as positive proof of the possibility for autonomous thought and action in America.

Examination of the hidden curriculum should now turn to the actual operations of the home school. The data reveal that some parents approach the task with strict intentions which, while not hidden (i.e. fundamentalist Christian doctrine), influence virtually every choice they make about
their children’s education and raise questions about the child’s ability to reflect critically on the family’s own brand of conventional wisdom. At the same time the willingness of parents to be non-conformists by home schooling and preserving a family-centered lifestyle is itself a model for the independent thought and action they desire for their children.

Is there a set of issues which differentiates European-American and African-American home schooling families?

Perhaps the most significant finding of this study is that there appears to be a set of concerns which are held in common by African-American home schoolers and which distinguish them from European-American home schoolers. All families who choose to home school have to address the questions of ‘why’ and ‘how’ to home-educate their children. For all parents a referent point is their personal history, including their values, beliefs, and ideological orientation. Differences in experience, arising out of their status as members of a minority non-European culture in America, set African-Americans apart from the general home schooling population and impact plainly on their motivations, goals, pedagogy, and civic education.

Despite their strong religious backgrounds, these parents
were more likely to describe their decision to home school as motivated by political beliefs than were European-Americans. These beliefs have their root in parents' perceptions of the negative status of African-Americans in the society and of the contribution of schools to perpetuating it. Thus their goals emphasize the necessity of developing a secure cultural identity, the skills of critical analysis and communication to counter stereotypes of African-Americans, and the ability to cope effectively with experiences of racial discrimination. In turn these goals impact on the content and structure of their programs.

These tendencies are most evident in African-American parents' approach to civic education. Theirs is a definite view that African-Americans must be vigilant in the exercise and protection of their civil liberties. This task requires more than a working knowledge of the American political system; it requires the ability to analyze its operations and confidence in their power to participate within it. There is a clear sense that African-American home schoolers face pressures and conflicts peculiar to their status as African-Americans. Ultimately they are attracted to home schooling because of its potential as a means to determine the course of their own lives and to prepare their children to live as people of color in America.
Implications of the Research Findings

This study grew out of an interest in the socializing function of formal schooling in America. Going to school is a daily experience for the majority of American children. There they do more than develop intellectual skills and gather knowledge. Schools are seen as a central institution for producing norms and values in the younger generations which promote social cohesion. It is to the school that we give the primary responsibility for reconciling the interests of the individual, the group, and society at large. At its best the school is seen as a shaper of democratic community, preparing young people for an adult life of public participation in guiding the institutions of the American society.

An obvious question arises when parents choose not to expose their children to this ritual of public value formation, as growing numbers of Americans have decided in recent years. The question is underscored by the fact that home schooling parents are often motivated by their dissent from the values taught in conventional school settings and by a desire to have more control over their children’s value formation. In the process of accepting total responsibility for their children’s education, home schooling parents are pursuing a highly personal solution to what is commonly thought of as a social concern. This study attempted to examine the implications of the civic socialization taking place in the homes of these families for the maintenance and
advancement of democratic community in America.

Policymakers and critics of home schooling should be encouraged by the results of this study. Any idea that home schooling is inherently divisive of the body politic is not evident. While highly critical of many aspects of contemporary society, most home schooling parents are not attempting to withdraw from it. Those who isolate their children, or "lock them in a closet" as one father put it, or teach bigotry and intolerance, are clearly the exception. However much they disagree with the values and ideas taught in school or found in the society as a whole, home schooling parents praise the strengths of a system which enables them the freedom to pursue their own objectives and fully expect their children to enjoy the full fruits of their rights within it. Moreover, they teach their children that the exercise of rights brings responsibility which extends beyond the family into enhancing the life of the community at large.

Several implications of this study are significant for administrators who guide school practices. First, home schooling parents are not arguing for the abolition of schools as we know them by calling on parents to remove their children in a grand exodus from them. They acknowledge that most parents are not interested in assuming such a responsibility, and that schools provide a service which is valued by them. At the same time they believe that their experiences point to valuable lessons about ways to make schools more effective.
Specifically, these parents join the chorus of criticism leveled at the quality of civic learning in schools. The results of this study should serve as a reminder that questioning and not submission to the status quo is patriotic in the American tradition. The desire to ameliorate social tensions by promoting a sanitized version of the culture’s past and present is not conducive to strengthening the moral fiber of its future leaders. Nations must be able to reflect critically on both historical and contemporary events. Respect for individual and cultural differences is only part of the task. The development of the skills of analysis and effective communication are others. Many home schooling parents testify to the potential for exercising authority without being authoritarian, and for having deeply-held beliefs without being dogmatic.

The findings of this study imply that the home schooling movement has even greater diversity than has been thought previously. This diversity is not only philosophic or ideological, but cultural as well. The ease of making contact with African-American home schoolers, and their statements about the large number of others who home-educate their children, are a sign of this. Evidence of what is at best cultural insensitivity within the movement is troubling. Furthermore, the desire to inculcate a predetermined set of values and beliefs can render goals such as independent thought and values such as tolerance meaningless. It is clear
that ideology can be either liberating or imprisoning. Oversimplifying intellectual life may bring a measure of security, but it hardly reflects the complex challenges of pluralistic America where the ability to negotiate and compromise is fundamental for civic health. Failure to attend to the match between theory and practice signifies a potential shortcoming of home schooling which can only be addressed by honest effort.

Educational researchers should be excited by the results of this study. Promising avenues for further investigation are plentiful. In general, studies involving home schooling offer an opportunity to explore the ways in which parents influence the course of their children’s education as well as into how to make these relationships more effective. The specific findings of this study point to additional research into the impact of teachers as models of desired civic values and behaviors. Though the hidden curriculum of schools may be an unintended by-product of the size of contemporary schools, it is clear that many home schooling parents see the structure of schools as antithetical to the cultivation of democratic values and make conscious efforts to address this concern in their home-based programs. This study also indicates that opposition to the "allegiant American" model of civic education is not confined to those embracing extreme political ideologies, and highlights the urgency of efforts to develop new paradigms of civic learning. Finally, evidence of
the diversity of the movement suggests that previous research may have excluded cadres of families whose motivations, goals, and programs diverge significantly from the general home schooling population. It is far too early to speak definitively about a subject that researchers are just beginning to explore.

**Recommendations**

Several recommendations can be made based on the findings of this study. Policymakers and school administrators are encouraged to continue the trend toward relaxation of compulsory school attendance laws in order to allow home schooling to proceed free of the conflicts of the past. A further step would allow home schooling parents and their children to have access to public educational facilities and programs. Beyond any question of parents' rights as taxpayers, cooperation with schools would be of obvious benefit to home schoolers. They would be able to participate in select activities such as music ensembles and team sports, or to study in specialized areas such as the sciences where expensive laboratory equipment is required. It is odd to deny these children opportunities for the very social interactions critics believe they lack. Schools might even find that these children and their parents serve as positive role models for other students and parents.

Home schooling parents, support groups, and larger
associations are urged to adopt policies and practices which are inclusive of the variety of cultures whose members home school their children. Support groups and home schooling associations have a particularly important role to play in this regard. In addition to building the representation of minority home schoolers in their organizations, they should sponsor training sessions on cross-cultural communication and address the specific needs of these home schoolers at their conferences. As an example, workshops on teaching history or literature must focus not only on European and Anglo-American experience. Similarly, efforts should be made to lobby correspondence schools and curriculum publishers so that the books they prescribe reflect the diversity of the society.

It is further recommended to parents that they make genuine efforts to incorporate divergent perspectives into their home schooling programs. Parents who are secure in their own belief-systems need not fear exposing their children to ideas, people, and values that differ from their own. If conducted with care, it can have the effect of strengthening children in their own self-knowledge and preparing them to make a more substantial contribution to the building of America's democratic community.

Research projects indicated by the findings are numerous. Three in particular bear mentioning. It is recommended that the present study be replicated using a
participant-observation and incorporating a longitudinal perspective. Observation of actual home schooling activities would allow the collection of data bearing on the question of whether a hidden curriculum is operating in these homes. Follow-up interviews at one- and two-year intervals would trace the changes families go through as they home school and would aid the formulation of hypotheses relevant to these. Greater insight into the effects of the civic education in these homes would be gained by also including interviews with the children themselves. It is further recommended that studies be undertaken which would gather preliminary data from a national sample of home schoolers who are members of minority cultures. Contacts made during the course of the present study indicate that such a project is feasible. Subsequent studies could draw upon a larger sample to compare the attitudes, experiences, and problems of different cadres of home schoolers. Finally, a study which compares the civic values and ideas of home schooled teenagers and groups of privately and publicly schooled teenagers is recommended.
APPENDIX
HOMESCHOOLING PARENTS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN
A VERY EXCITING AND WORTHWHILE RESEARCH PROJECT:

"Homeschooling and the transmission of Civic Culture" will
examine the ways homeschooling parents carry out civic
education. Case studies will be assembled to document the
materials, methods and philosophies which parents use to
prepare their children for the rights and responsibilities
of public (civic) life. The researcher is particularly
interested in questions relating to the teaching of history,
of social responsibility, and preparation for life in a
multicultural, diverse society such as ours. Homeschooling
parents from all racial, ethnic, religious and philosophical
backgrounds are encouraged to participate.

The research procedure involves written responses to an
initial questionnaire and oral interviews conducted in the
home of participants. Observation of a homeschooling
session would be welcomed, but is not required. The total
commitment of time for participants should be 2-3 hours.

This project is being conducted by Tracy Romm, a doctoral
student in the School of Education at Clark Atlanta
University. Tracy is also a homeschooling father of two
young children. References are available upon request.

The anonymity of all participants will be protected
completely. If you are interested in participating, or know
of someone else who might be, please contact Tracy Romm at
the following address/phone number as soon as possible.

TRACY ROMM
361 STERLING STREET
ATLANTA, GA 30307
(404) 880-9172

September 21, 1991
November 10, 1991

Dear [Name],

Thank you for volunteering to participate in what promises to be an exciting and relevant research project. The goal of this study is to gain insight into an area of homeschooling that has not been explored to date: how parents prepare their children for the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire which I ask you to complete and within one week. This questionnaire will provide me with basic information about your family and your homeschooling program, and will enable me to be better prepared when I come to visit for the personal interview. Please note that you need not sign this questionnaire. Each family has been given a code number which will assist me in keeping all of your contributions to the study strictly confidential.

Upon return of the questionnaire I will telephone to schedule a visit to your home. This visit will require a maximum of 1 1/2 to 2 hours of your time. In addition to interviewing you, I would like to examine any curricular materials which are used in your program. I will also provide you with a notebook to record any thoughts, feelings or experiences over the following weeks which are relevant to the topic of the study.

I will want to conduct a follow-up interview after completing initial interviews with the other participating families. This second interview would take place either in your home or by telephone. I will also be inviting you to my home for a "home-cooked" meal and a roundtable discussion with the other participants after all interviewing is completed. There is no obligation to attend the dinner-discussion in order to participate in this study.

Once again, let me thank you for your input into my research. I am looking forward to receiving the completed questionnaire and to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Tracy Romm
361 Sterling Street
Atlanta, GA 30307
880-9172
HOMESCHOOLING QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is organized into two sections. Most of the questions can be answered by making a simple check mark with a pen or pencil. If you feel that your answer needs an explanation, feel free to attach an additional page. Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

Sincerely,
Tracy Room

Section A. This section asks questions about your child(ren) and the factors that influenced your decision to educate your child(ren) at home.

1. How many children do you have? _____

2. Please indicate the age of each of your children:
   (M = male F = female)
   _____ First child   _____ Second child   _____ Third child

3. Please indicate the sex of each of your children:
   (M = male F = female)
   _____ First child   _____ Second child   _____ Third child

4. At what grade level did you begin home schooling your child(ren)?
   _____ First child   _____ Second child   _____ Third child

5. Do you plan to home school your child(ren) through high school?
   ☐ no... If no, at what grade level do you think you will discontinue home schooling _________
   ☐ If you do not plan to home school your child(ren) through high school, will you send them to a public, private, or church-related school?
     ☐ public ☐ private ☐ church related
   ☐ yes.

6. Who takes the primary responsibility for teaching the child(ren)?
   ☐ mother ☐ father ☐ both equally
   ☐ other (please specify: ____________________________)

7. How many years have you been educating your child(ren) at home?
   _____ First child   _____ Second child   _____ Third child

8. Have any of your children been educated at home for a period of time and then enrolled in a public, private, or church-related school?
   ☐ yes. How long was the child(ren) schooled at home?

   At what grade level did you enroll the child(ren) in a public, private, or church-related school?

   ☐ no

9. Do you have any child(ren) living at home who are of school age that you did not provide home education for?
   ☐ yes... If so please explain why you chose not to home school that child(ren)?

   ☐ no

10. How important were your religious beliefs in making the decision to home educate?
    ☐ very important ☐ not too important
    ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important at all

11. How important were your political beliefs in making the decision to home educate?
    ☐ very important ☐ not too important
    ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important at all

12. Are there other factors that influenced your decision to home educate that I have not yet mentioned?
    ☐ yes... If yes, please describe those factors.

    ☐ no
13. Why did you opt for home schooling over public schooling?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

14. Why did you opt for home schooling over private schooling?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

15. Why did you opt for home schooling over church-related schooling?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

16. Do you participate in a local support group of other home schooling families?

☐ yes... Please describe the activities of this group.

__________________________________________________________________________

... Please rate your level of involvement with this group.
☐ high degree of involvement
☐ moderate involvement
☐ little involvement

☐ no

17. Are your children involved in any organized activities with other home school families?

☐ yes... Please describe those activities.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

☐ no

18. Do you talk about educating your child/ren at home with your friends, neighbors, or relatives?

☐ yes... Have these talks ever had an effect on your beliefs regarding home education ☐ yes ☐ no

... If yes, in what way?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

☐ no

19. Of those relatives, neighbors, and friends you feel close to, what proportion of them educate their children at home?

☐ all or nearly all of them ☐ about half of them

☐ more than half of them ☐ less than half of them

☐ none of them

20. Have any of your friends, relatives, or neighbors discouraged you from educating your child/ren at home?

☐ yes... Why did they disagree with your decision to home educate?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

☐ no

21. What changes in public schools would have to be made before you would consider sending your child/ren to a public school?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

22. What other things do you feel are important for me to know about your decision to educate your child/ren at home?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

23. Have you ever sought any assistance from your local public school?

☐ yes... Please describe those activities.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

☐ no

Section B. This section asks questions about your personal history. This information is particularly important for understanding the variety of people that are now educating their children at home.

1. What is your sex? ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. What is your marital status?

☐ Married ☐ Never Married

☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed

3. What is your age? If married, your spouse’s age...
4. What is your racial ethnic background?

- White/Anglo
- Black
- Hispanic
- Other (Please specify)

5. What was the last year of education you and your spouse (if married) received?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Wife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school</td>
<td>elementary school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>High school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Trade school</td>
<td>Technical/Trade school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Some college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
<td>Some graduate school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Which of the following categories comes closest to your family income last year?

- Under $10,000
- $10,000-$14,999
- $15,000-$19,999
- $20,000-$24,999
- $25,000-$34,999
- $35,000-$49,999
- $50,000 and over

7. What is your occupation?

8. If married, what is your spouse's occupation?

9. What are your academic goals for your children?

10. What are your social goals for your children?

11. Which of the following values do you consider to be valid goals of education?

- Democracy: government of, by and for the people, exercised through the voting process
- Respect for and acceptance of authority, including the law, in given circumstances
- Equality: the right and opportunity to develop one's potential as a human being
- Freedom of conscience and expression: the right to hold beliefs, whether religious, ethical or political, and to express one's views
- Justice: equal and impartial treatment under the law
- Liberty: freedom from oppression, tyranny or the domination of government
- Tolerance: recognition for and acceptance of the diversity of others, their opinions, practices and culture
- Patriotism: support of and love for the United States of America with zealous guarding of its welfare
- Courage: willingness to face obstacles and danger with determination
- Loyalty: steadfastness or faithfulness to a person, institution, custom or idea to which one is tied by duty, pledge or a promise
- Respect for the environment: care for and conservation of land, trees, clean air and pure water and of all living inhabitants of the earth
- Conservation: avoiding waste and pollution of natural resources
November 15, 1992

Dear Friends:

It has been many months since our interviews—many more than I had intended. So much for the plans of man....

We were graced by the birth of our third child last April; a daughter, and life has been fuller and richer than ever. I have had to be very flexible about my writing, but I believe that I am nearing the final stage of my dissertation.

Enclosed you will find a draft of the case study/profile I have written about your family. Please read it carefully. (You will note that you have been given a fictional name to protect your anonymity.) This is your chance to revise--add to--delete--correct any information in it. I want to know if I have misunderstood something you shared with me, or if I got certain facts wrong; you can also expand on a topic if you feel that more explanation would clarify what you were trying to say. My goal is to present as accurate a picture as possible of your family and your home school.

I will be calling within the next two weeks to speak with you. If there are minor changes, we can discuss them over the phone. If the points are more substantial, we can proceed in one of two ways: either I can record your comments over the phone or you can write them out and send them to me. Whichever works best for you is okay.

I just want to take a minute to thank you again for your participation in this project. The initial feedback from my advisors has been very positive. I would not have been able to come this far without your willingness to take time out of your busy lives and to speak so candidly with me. I am grateful.

Best wishes to you and yours in this autumn season.

Sincerely,

Tracy Romm

PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS:
4141 Wieuca Road
Atlanta, GA 30342
(404) 252-0993
PROTOCOL

I Mail initial questionnaire and cover letter

II Upon return of questionnaire, telephone to schedule an interview. Review questionnaire and make notes.

III On-site interview. Tape recorded. Examination of curricular materials. FIELD NOTES. Journals with instructions distributed.

IV a) Following interview, FIELD REPORT composed summarizing notes, offering tentative points of analysis, and recording methodological successes and difficulties.

b) Transcription of tape
c) Initial profile of family written.
d) Thank-you note with reminders RE: journal and follow-up interview

V Steps III and IV completed for each family before proceeding to next round of interviews.

VI At completion of initial interview cycle, coding of individual interviews to allow for cross-case analysis. Notes made for follow-up questions.

VII Telephone to schedule follow-up interviews. Reminder RE: journal.

VIII Follow-up interviews. Retrieval of journals.

IX FIELD REPORT

  a) Transcription of tape
  b) Coding of transcripts

X Revision of profiles

  a) Cross-case analysis begun

XI Thank-you note to each family with copy of profile for review/comment.

XII Revision of profiles based on responses to XI.

XIII Final report prepared--family profiles and cross-case analysis.
REFERENCES


