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Homeschooling: A Comprehensive Survey of the Research

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Abstract *This article provides a comprehensive summary of the English-language research and scholarship on homeschooling, organized into the categories of demographics, curriculum, academic achievement, socialization, law, relationships with public schools, transition to college/adulthood, and international homeschooling. The 351 texts used in this review were culled from virtually the entire universe of English-language academic texts on the topic—more than 1,400 total. Scholarship was evaluated using three primary criteria: quality of scholarship, significance or influence, and distinctiveness of insight. This review sought to answer the following questions: What primary topics or themes are addressed in the literature? How effective are the methodology and analysis performed? What does the research reveal about homeschooling, and what questions remain unanswered?*

Keywords homeschooling, home education, alternative education, curriculum, academic achievement, socialization, religion, school regulation

I. Introduction

From the establishment of large-scale public and private education systems in the United States in the 19th century through the late 1970s, nearly all American children received their formal education in schools. But beginning in the late 1970s and increasing steadily since then, the home has become a popular educational locus for an ever expanding number of families across an ever widening swath of the U.S. population. This increase has often been dubbed the "homeschooling movement," since many families involved have engaged in aggressive and concerted political and legal action to make it easier to keep children at home during the school day (Gaither, 2008a). Though an accurate count is impossible, the National Center for Educational Statistics estimated that in 2007 around 1.5 million children, or 2.9 %

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of the school-age population, was homeschooling. This was a 36 percent increase from the same organization's 2003 estimates (Planty et al., 2009). Not surprisingly, the remarkable growth of the phenomenon (and its politically charged nature) has triggered a robust if sprawling scholarly literature (Lawrence, 2007; Nemer, 2002; Ray, 1999).

Homeschooling scholarship suffers, however, from a number of limitations. First and foremost, the literature is almost entirely qualitative in nature. While many of these qualitative studies are ambitious and imaginative, taken as a whole, homeschooling research has an anecdotal quality it has yet to transcend. Quantitative research on homeschoolers has been hampered by several factors. Basic demographic data are unavailable. Every state in the U.S. has its own unique homeschooling law, and states approach data collection in a very haphazard fashion. A few states that require homeschoolers to register keep meticulous records. Some states are unable or unwilling to devote the resources necessary for consistent data collection and thus have records that vary widely between counties and by year. And many states, especially those that do not require homeschoolers to register their practice, keep no records at all (Isenberg, 2007). Additionally, homeschoolers are a notoriously difficult demographic to study because of the diversity of individuals engaged in the practice, the deinstitutionalized nature of the phenomenon, and the distrust with which many homeschoolers regard external surveillance (Goymer, 2000; Kaseman & Kaseman, 1991; 1995; 2002).

A second limitation of the literature is that much of it is politically motivated, particularly in the United States context. A large number of studies, especially those most frequently cited in popular accounts and in the media, have been performed under the auspices of a prominent homeschooling advocacy organization: HSLDA, the Home School Legal Defense Association (Ray, 1990; Ray, 1994; Ray, 1997a, Ray, 1997b; Rudner, 1999; Ray, 2004b; Ray, 2010). Most of these studies have been conducted by Dr. Brian D. Ray and published independently through his organization, the National Home Education Research Institute, or NHERI. Though these studies have large sample sizes and employ sophisticated statistical techniques, they suffer from serious design limitations and are often used disingenuously to make generalizations beyond what their specific conclusions warrant (Gaither, 2008b; Oplinger & Willard, 2004; Ray, 2004a; Welner & Welner, 1999).

HSLDA-funded studies are not the only examples of politicized homeschool research. Many university-housed academics who have published on homeschooling have come out clearly as critics of or advocates for homeschooling (Apple, 2000; Balmer, 2007; Knowles, 1991a; Kreager, Jr., 2010; West, 2009). Like the literature on many other contemporary school reform issues, the controversial nature of homeschooling lends itself to normative argument. While homeschoolers often overstate the level of animus against them in the Academy, occasionally

pieces do appear that give their suspicions a degree of credibility (Kaseman & Kaseman, 2002; Lubienski, 2000; Yuracko, 2008; West, 2009).

This paper aims to distill from this decidedly mixed body of work the most reliable data and conclusions and to arrange this knowledge in a clear and compelling form. In so doing we hope to foster high caliber future work on one of the most dynamic contemporary educational trends. We are not the first to synthesize homeschooling research (Chapman & O'Donoghue, 2000; Cizek & Ray, 1995; Lawrence, 2007; Meehan & Stephenson, 1994; Meighan, 1995; Nemer, 2002; Ray, 1999; Wright, 1988). But most extant research reviews are dated, limited in scope, or use sources indiscriminately. Our review aims for systematic treatment of the literature, derived from the most comprehensive bibliography ever assembled, carefully culled for quality. In doing so, we will address the following central questions:

1) What primary topics or themes are addressed in the literature?
2) How effective are the methodology and analysis performed?
3) What does the research reveal about homeschooling?
4) What questions remain unanswered?

Given the necessarily interpretive nature of these questions, the reader may be curious about our own positionality. We are both academic students of homeschooling, fascinated by it as a social phenomenon and convinced of its significance as an educational movement. We are neither indiscriminate advocates for homeschooling nor unrestrained critics of the practice; we consider homeschooling a legitimate educational option, one that can result in exemplary growth or troubling neglect. Above all, we are interested in furthering accurate, empirically grounded knowledge of homeschooling in our own research and in the synthetic review we provide here.

II. Methodology

To inform this review and address its central questions, the authors collected and analyzed virtually the entire universe of English-language homeschool research and scholarship: more than 1,400 academic texts were reviewed, including 756 journal articles, 318 theses, 113 book chapters, 83 books, and 81 reports. (The complete list of texts we reviewed is available at www.icher.org, catalogued by author, date, and topic.) Citation lists were generated by starting with a core group of research known to the authors as well as through numerous online databases, including ProQuest, Academic Search Complete, Lexus Nexus, Wilson Web, and ERIC, searching for terms such as *homeschooling*, *unschooling*, *home schooling*, *home education*, and *homeschooler*. We used the reference lists from all of these texts to generate additional leads, then used the reference lists from *those* texts, and so on. By the end

of our search, we were encountering no new references, a strong indication that we had virtually exhausted the extant body of literature.

From there, three primary criteria guided our decisions about what texts to include in our written review:

> 1) Quality of scholarship: Is the methodology sound? Does its design enable the author to answer the questions posed? Is the analysis well-supported by the data generated?
> 2) Significance or influence: Has the text been cited widely by researchers, policymakers, and even the popular media?
> 3) Distinctiveness: Does the research offer insight into a relatively unexamined aspect of homeschooling, or does its methodology explore the phenomenon from a new and potentially illuminating angle?

In some cases, all three criteria were met, but certainly not always. Some homeschooling research, for example, while not peer reviewed and having questionable methodological rigor, has had enormous influence both in terms of public perception and educational policy. In other cases, unpublished research that has gained relatively little attention is included in our review, such as a doctoral dissertation that offers unique insight into a facet of homeschooling previously unexplored by scholars. While we very rarely draw from online sources, newspapers, and magazines, the only category we automatically excluded were "how to" books (thousands of these texts, written by and for homeschoolers, offer practical advice to parents).

From our review and analysis of these texts, we have identified eight general categories of homeschooling scholarship, and these topics shape the structure to follow. The vast majority of extant homeschooling research has been conducted by U.S. researchers about the U.S. experience, and our review reflects that reality. Section III synthesizes what is known about homeschooling demographics in the United States, both at the macro level and among various subgroups, including Christians, racial minorities, and children with special needs. We also include here data on parental motivation for homeschooling. Section IV examines U.S. homeschool curricula and practice. Section V canvasses the literature on academic achievement. Section VI does the same for socialization, which includes the development of social skills as well as broader values formation. Section VII reviews the literature on U.S. homeschooling law at both the constitutional and statutory levels. Section VIII explores the evolving relationships between homeschooling and public education in the United States. Section IX appraises the literature on the transition of homeschooled children to higher education and adult

life. Finally, Section X surveys the growing body of work on homeschooling in countries outside the United States.

III. Demographics

Comprehensive demographic data about homeschoolers are difficult to obtain, largely because many states do not require homeschoolers to register, forcing researchers to rely on invariably incomplete datasets. This section will focus almost exclusively on the U.S. context; international homeschooling demographics will be addressed in Section X. The most reliable estimates of homeschooler demographics in the United States are drawn from the National Household Education Survey (NHES), which uses a rigorous random sampling design wedded to enormous sample sizes to obtain statistical data on all aspects of the education of children in the United States. Since 1999 the NHES survey has included questions about homeschooling, questions that have reappeared every four years (Belfield & Levin, 2005; Isenberg, 2007). The most recent analysis estimates that 1.5 million children were being homeschooled in 2007, a 74 percent relative increase since 1999 (Planty et al., 2009).[1] According to these data, the rate of increase has actually accelerated since 2003. Assuming a similar growth rate since 2007, there are well over two million homeschoolers in the United States today—more than 4% of the school-age population.

The NHES survey provides further demographic breakdowns, although the relatively small number of homeschooler respondents (n=290 in 2007) renders the data about these subgroups less statistically reliable (Belfield, 2004). The 2007 survey (Planty et al., 2009) reports that homeschoolers live overwhelmingly in two-parent households (89%), and slightly more than half (54%) with only one of those parents in the workforce; these percentages are much higher than the national averages for school-age children (73% and 21%, respectively). Homeschool parents report moderately higher education levels, with half holding at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 43% of the broader K-12 parent population. Household income is fairly similar, although a smaller percentage of families earning less than $25,000 choose to homeschool their children.

While drawn from datasets prior to the 2007 NHES survey, Isenberg's (2006, 2007) multiple regression analyses generate a number of additional insights into homeschooler demographics. Perhaps most significantly, he suggests that while sociological accounts of homeschooling tend to focus on families strongly committed to the practice, the broader quantitative picture suggests greater variation in demographics and consistency. He finds that more than half of homeschool parents send at least one of their children to a conventional school, and more than

[1] Given the reluctance of many homeschoolers to respond to outsider queries, particularly those sponsored by the government (Belfield, 2002; Kaseman & Kaseman, 2002; Lines, 2000), the NCES figures are likely underestimates.

one-third of homeschooled children return to institutional schooling after the first year; both of these percentages appear somewhat lower for religiously-motivated families, however.

Many researchers have explored the various motivations parents have for homeschooling their children. Analyzing data from the 1998 and 2000 General Social Surveys, Yang & Kayaardi (2004) found that demographic, religious, socio-economic, and family-structure characteristics played no statistically significant role in parents' decision to homeschool (echoed by Essenberg, 2004), although small-scale studies suggest that parents' own negative schooling experiences correlate with such a decision (Knowles, 1991b; Wyatt, 2008). Again, the most comprehensive data emerge from the NHES survey: in 2007, the three most common reasons for homeschooling were "a concern about environment of other schools" (88%), "a desire to provide moral or religious instruction" (83%), and "a dissatisfaction with academic instruction at other schools" (73%). When asked to identify their *most* important reason, more than one-third (36%) of parents identified moral or religious instruction, followed by school environment at 21% (Planty et al., 2009). Smaller studies of motivations for homeschooling also suggest that families are influenced by a similar mixture of factors (Anthony & Burroughs, 2010; Collum, 2005; Dahlquist; York-Barr & Hendel, 2006; Princiotta & Bieleck, 2006).

Some scholars question the value of classifying parents' motivations for homeschooling, or at least the methodology for doing so. In a meta-analysis of 12 studies exploring parental motivation, Spiegler (2010) asserts that the methodology used to discern parental motivations has an often unappreciated effect on the results. Some categories, for instance, are much broader than others (e.g., "poor learning environment" could be a subset of "concern about school environment" which itself could be a subset of "desire to provide moral or religious instruction"). In addition, Spiegler points out, the reasons that parents give for homeschooling are typically not independent of their particular circumstances (e.g., the characteristics of their local schools, state policies regarding standardized testing, and the opportunities that children have outside of the local school for curricular and extracurricular activities). Finally, he also echoes Rothermel's (2002, 2011) observations that parental motivations often change over time. Harding (2011) and Lees (2011) amplify this point, exploring the ways in which parents perceive their role and purpose as teachers in different and evolving ways as they experience homeschooling with their children.

One significant motivation that emerges in many qualitative studies that isn't directly addressed in the NHES survey, however, is the goal of forging an alternative model of the family from what is typical in contemporary U.S. culture. Homeschool parents express the desire to retain deeper influence and involvement in their children's daily lives—they view schooling as embedded in the broader

project of education, which is in turn embedded in the even broader project of parenting. Homeschooling becomes a means to strengthen the bonds between parents (especially mothers) and their children, which in turn will help children resist the deleterious influences of consumerism, moral permissiveness, and anti-intellectualism that they see as pervading modern culture and institutional schooling (Brabant, Bourdon, & Justras, 2003; Dahlquist, York-Barr, & Hendel, 2006; Mayberry & Knowles, 1989; Morton, 2010; Stevens, 2001; Wyatt, 2008). Frequently this motivation has a religious source, especially among conservative Christians (Carper, 2000; Knowles, Marlow, & Muchmore, 1992; Mayberry, 1988; McDannell, 1995; Sun, 2007).

As part of their resistance to the broader surrounding culture, some homeschool parents are particularly wary of government institutions and the notion of professional expertise (Gaither, 2008a; Khalili & Caplan, 2007). This includes not only public schools but other forms of child-related authority such as social workers and health care providers. A study of nearly 1,000 parents of school-age children, for instance, found that homeschool parents are significantly more concerned about vaccine safety and have less belief in the importance of vaccinations; only 19% trust the government to set policy in this matter, compared to 57% of other parents (Kennedy & Gust, 2005).

While some homeschool parents see themselves as part of a broader social movement in direct opposition to (the inherent flaws of) institutional schooling, many others simply view their choice as an alternative approach to educating their children (Collum & Mitchell, 2005; Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Nemer, 2004). Perhaps the most consistent ideological thread, one that crosses demographics of all kinds, is the conviction among homeschool parents that they should have sole or at least primary responsibility for the education of their children (Green & Hoover-Dempsey, 2007; Howell, 2005; Jackson & Allan, 2010).

This core conviction is especially prominent among conservative Christians, who view the raising and educating of their children as a sacred responsibility given to them by God (Kunzman, 2009a; Talbot, 2000). Although the NHES survey doesn't ask about religious affiliation, most researchers surmise that conservative Christians comprise the largest subset of U.S. homeschoolers (Hanna, 2011; Mayberry, 1988; McDannell, 1995; Stevens, 2001). Whether this percentage is two-thirds, one-half, or less is a matter of speculation. What is beyond dispute, however, is the dominant profile of Christian homeschool advocacy groups, particularly the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). Their influence in politics and policy often lends the impression among outsiders that homeschoolers are primarily conservative Christians, despite the longtime presence of secular homeschooling, and the more recent emergence of homeschool networks for a wide range of religious traditions. Isenberg's (2007) analyses suggest that conservative Christian families are less likely to homeschool when they live in school districts with heavy

concentrations of evangelical Protestants, either because local public schools reflect their values or the high density of evangelicals allows for ample private religious school options.

Some racial, linguistic, and ethnic minorities are drawn to homeschooling as a way to preserve their cultural and linguistic distinctives, but little research has been conducted on this phenomenon (Gaither, 2008a). Carlson (2009), for example, reports that virtually no empirical research on the intersection of homeschooling and bilingual education exists, but contends that homeschooling can help avoid the deterioration of the non-school language. While anecdotal reports frequently assert that the homeschool population is gaining racial diversity, the percentage of white homeschoolers has remained steady at approximately 75% of the total population over the past twelve years of NHES surveys (Bielick, Chandler, & Broughman, 2001; Planty et al., 2009; Princiotta & Bielick, 2006). Racial, ethnic, and religious minorities often cite dissatisfaction with public schools as a motivation for homeschooling, with a particular concern that the school environment and curriculum either ignores the cultural contributions of their group or actively stereotypes and oppresses their children (Apple, 2006a; Collum, 2005; McDowell, Sanchez, & Jones, 2000). This perspective—and motivation for homeschooling—seems especially prominent among African Americans and Muslim Americans (Elliott-Engel, 2002; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; James, 2007; MacFarquhar, 2008; Martinez, 2009). Black families who make the decision to homeschool sometimes face criticism from other African Americans, who see such a choice as abandoning the promise of integrated public schooling that previous generations fought so hard to achieve (Apple, 2006a; Fields-Smith & Williams, 2009; James, 2007).

Eleven percent of homeschool parents in the 2007 NHES survey reported that their child's "physical or mental health problem" was an important reason for homeschooling. In states where homeschools are considered private schools, districts are required to provide special education services to homeschoolers unless their parents refuse those publicly-funded services (Osborne, 2008). Some research suggests that homeschooling, with its opportunity for differentiated instruction and individual attention, may offer a qualitatively different—and in some ways superior—educational environment for children with special needs (Arora, 2003; Duvall, Delquadri, & Ward, 2004; Duvall & Ward, 1997; Ensign, 2000; Kidd & Kaczmarek, 2010). Other researchers advocate that school districts should work actively in a support role for homeschool parents (Arora, 2006; Reilly, Chapman, & O'Donoghue, 2002). With this goal in mind, some scholars have called for IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) to be amended so that homeschoolers qualify for special education services regardless of a state's regulatory framework (Duffey, 2000; Knickerbocker, 2001; Lambert, 2001).

Considering exceptional needs more broadly, more than one-fifth of homeschool parents surveyed pointed to their child's "special needs" as a reason for homeschooling. While undoubtedly some of these needs refer to learning disabilities and other challenges that would qualify for special education services, other families choose to homeschool because of their child's advanced academic abilities. While there exists a growing body of advocacy literature and anecdotal accounts of homeschooling gifted children, virtually no empirical research is available (Kunzman, 2007; Winstanley, 2009). Gifted education advocates often point out that while public schools recognize their obligation to provide appropriately modified curricula for students with disabilities, this frequently does not hold true for highly gifted students who also need substantially different educational opportunities. The curricular flexibility of homeschooling allows for forms of pedagogy and curricula that resonate with gifted education: intense, in-depth focus on a particular subject or project; accelerated pacing; individual mentoring; "real world" internships; and accessing programs and coursework within the broader community (Goodwin & Gustavson, 2009; Kearney, 1992). In addition, advocates for homeschooling of gifted children contend that homeschooling provides vital flexibility in responding to the frequently asynchronous nature of giftedness, where students are uneven in their abilities. Unlike most institutional schooling, homeschooler curricula need not conform to a standardized and unvarying "grade level" (Morse, 2001).

One of the few stereotypes of homeschooling that appears to hold true across demographics is that mothers are responsible for most of the home instruction (McDowell, 2000; Morton, 2010; Stevens, 2001). In Lois's (2006, 2009, 2010) ethnographies of homeschool motivations and practices, she finds that homeschool mothers experience intense role strain, which can lead to emotional burnout. They often strive to manage this challenge by viewing homeschooling as a "season" of life which requires outsized devotion but reaps outsized rewards. When outsiders accuse them of being socially overprotective and relationally hyperengaged, mothers in turn question whether contemporary U.S. culture values protective nurturing and close family relationships enough.

The role of women in conservative religious homeschooling has received significant scholarly attention. The disproportionate sacrifice required of mothers in the homeschooling endeavor—and the helpmeet role that women are often expected to inhabit and endorse—raises questions for some observers about gender oppression and inequitable educational opportunities for girls (MacFarquhar, 2008; McDannell, 1995; Joyce, 2009; Talbot, 2000; Yuracko, 2008). Other scholars, while acknowledging these possibilities, suggest that homeschool women often embody and encourage a different kind of feminism, one that shapes not only the future of their families but also the homeschooling movement as a form of resistance to contemporary culture (Apple, 2006b; McDowell, 2000; Stevens, 2001).

IV. Curricula and Practice

Two factors have made it difficult to study the actual practice of homeschooling. The first is the sheer variety of practices that fall under the homeschooling umbrella. The second is the difficulty researchers have had in obtaining access to the homes of actual homeschooling families. What literature exists on homeschooling curriculum and practice falls for the most part into one of two categories. First are the survey studies, where a researcher (often a graduate student with a homeschooling background working on a dissertation) constructs a convenience sample of homeschoolers in a nearby region, sends out a survey, and compiles the results (Cai, Reeve, & Robinson, 2002; Hanna, 2011; Keys & Crain, 2009; Lunsford, 2006; Perry, 2008). Second are the case studies, where researchers embed themselves in the homes and networks of one or more families so as to present thick descriptions of their subjects (Kunzman, 2009a; Lois, 2006; Port, 1989; Stevens, 2001). Other studies based on personal interviews and on the writings of homeschoolers themselves have also yielded insights into curriculum and practice (Gaither, 2008a; Laats, 2010; Rieseberg, 1995; Safran, 2009).

Without question the most frequently discussed element of homeschooling practice has been the dichotomy first noted by Jane Van Galen (1986; 1988) in her doctoral dissertation and in an influential 1988 article. In these works Van Galen coined the terms "ideologues" and "pedagogues" to represent the two broad types of homeschoolers she found. The "ideologues" were the conservative Christians who typically prosecuted their home schools much like the traditional schools they had left behind, complete with formal curriculum, tight schedules, authority-figure teacher, and so on, but suffused with religious content. "Pedagogues," in contrast, reacted not to the secularism of public education but to its formalism, choosing to use the home as a haven from the regimentation and drill of institutional schooling. Van Galen's distinction was rendered canonical in 1992 by another influential and widely cited article titled, significantly, "From Pedagogy to Ideology" (Knowles, Marlowe, & Muchmore, 1992).

Researchers have continued to employ Van Galen's dichotomy. Some have found her terminology inadequate for various reasons and have proposed alternatives, but the basic distinction between a small group of homeschoolers whose efforts reflect a more liberatory pedagogy and a much larger group of homeschoolers whose aim is to educate for fidelity to their version of religious conservativism has proved remarkably resilient (Coleman, 2010; Gaither, 2008a; Kunzman, 2009a; Stevens, 2001). A 2002 survey of conservative Christian homeschoolers found that these parents continued to exhibit "a significantly more controlling motivating style" than a public school control group, because it fit with their ideology of childhood sinfulness and the need for obedience to authority (Cai et al., 2002, p. 377). On the other side, a 2009 survey of homeschoolers who did not have religious motivations revealed that most "wanted their children to learn at their

own pace and have the freedom to pursue their individual interests" (Keys & Crain, 2009, p. 6). One 2011 survey of 250 homeschooling families summarized Van Galen's categories for respondents and asked them the degree to which these terms still resonate. The survey found 47% of respondents self-identified as "ideologues," 25% as "pedagogues," 26% as "both," and only 4% as other or no comment (Hanna, 2011).

Whether homeschoolers identify as Ideologue, Pedagogue, or both, they have available a wide range of curricular options; these exist along a continuum from complete "school in a box" curricula available for purchase to "unschooling," which aims to have learning be entirely child-directed, free of any external imposition (Coleman, 2010; Gaither, 2009; Taylor-Hough, 2010; Thomas & Pattison, 2008). Often a new homeschooling mother, understandably concerned about her abilities to do an adequate job, will try in her first year or two to replicate exactly what is done in traditional schools. Many curricula have emerged since the late 1970s to help homeschooling parents do this. The most popular and historically significant of these have been Accelerated Christian Education (ACE), A Beka, and Bob Jones Complete, all created by and for the conservative Christian subset (Jones, 2008; Laats, 2010). Other options for parents looking to replicate the formal schooling experience include correspondence programs and umbrella schools, which likewise provide a complete curriculum along with access to supports like teachers, grading services, guidance counseling, standardized testing, and diplomas (Gaither, 2008a; Taylor-Hough, 2010).

One of the most consistent findings of research on homeschooling practice is that after a year or two of assiduous effort to mimic formal schooling at home, homeschooling mothers gradually move toward a less-structured, more eclectic approach (Charvoz, 1988; Holinga, 1999; Knowles, 1988; Lois, 2006; Stevens, 2001; Van Galen, 1988). Why? Lois, who embedded herself within a community of homeschooling mothers for three-and-a-half years, found that this shift enabled mothers to cope with the added responsibilities with which homeschooling burdened them. Letting go of control and reducing expectations of progress helped these mothers avoid burnout (Lois, 2006). The eclectic model also recognizes that all family interactions, even the informal and spontaneous, become educational opportunities (Barratt-Peacock, 2003; Thomas, 1994).

As homeschooling has grown and matured, curricular options have proliferated wildly. In the 1990s and early 2000s the primary ways curriculum providers accessed their customers were through Christian bookstores and especially conventions or curriculum fairs, some of which by the late 1990s had attendance in the thousands (Gaither, 2008a; Kunzman, 2009a; Lunsford, 2006). One systematic study of U.S. homeschooling conventions found that by 2004 there were 74 conventions in the United States enjoying single-day attendance of over 600 (Lunsford, 2006). At many of these, homeschoolers could browse the products of

100 or more vendors (Gaither, 2008a). Amidst the increasing options, two that have garnered scholarly attention are the so-called "classical" curriculum, whose organizing principle is an adaptation of the medieval Latin *trivium*, and the "Charlotte Mason Method" which seeks to engage the whole child through nature study and great "living books" (Leithart, 2008; Medlin, 1994; Taylor-Hough, 2010).

Homeschoolers rely extensively on networks of the like-minded to help them with their daily educational functions (Medlin, 1994; Safran, 2010; Safran, 2009). Researchers studying these networks have categorized them along a continuum of increasing formality. Most informal are the "support groups" that meet in homes, on playgrounds, and/or online for mutual encouragement and information-swapping. Slightly more formal are "timetabled groups" that pool resources in a common space open to all members (Safran, 2009). Approaching institutional formality are "mom schools" where a homeschooling mother offers her instructional expertise to children of other families and, finally and most popularly, "co-op groups" that replicate traditional schooling in many ways. In co-ops homeschooling families typically meet together in a rented space to have their children take classes in groups taught by the parents or even occasionally by hired experts (Gaither, 2008a; Safran, 2009).

Such groups serve a variety of functions beyond their stated goals. Safran (2010) has explained how they promote "legitimate peripheral participation," inducting novices into the tropes and values possessed by homeschooling veterans and gradually turning them into more committed practitioners. Groups also frequently serve as ideological sorters, with the most powerful and high-profile groups typically requiring leaders, and sometimes all members, to sign statements of faith affirming conservative Protestant theological principles. This situation has produced a good bit of tension within the homeschooling world (Gaither, 2008a; Stevens, 2001)

Beyond social networks, homeschoolers often rely heavily on information-rich resources like libraries and the internet. Furness (2008) finds that the remarkable over-representation of homeschooling families among regular library patrons stems largely from a spirit of frugality that many homeschoolers possess. Hanna (2011), in a 10-year longitudinal study (a rare thing in homeschooling research), finds that between 1998 and 2008 the daily lives of most of her 250 subjects changed profoundly due to a dramatic spike in reliance on the internet both for social networking and for curricula. The internet has, especially since the mid-2000s, transformed the world of homeschooling by limiting the power of conservative Protestant groups to serve as information gatekeepers for the practice (Gaither, 2008a).

As children grow older, issues of curriculum and practice grow increasingly complicated. Older homeshooled children often report feeling more socially isolated than their younger peers (Kunzman, 2009a). More importantly, instruction grows

increasingly difficult as the subjects get harder. Laats (2010) found that traditional Christian curriculum, with its stress on memory recall and rote learning, tends to be more effective in the younger than older grades. Hanna (2011) found that as children age, their homeschooling experience is increasingly characterized by reliance on networks outside the home, especially co-ops and internet resources. For many older homeschoolers, however, even these helps are not enough. Isenberg (2007) found that only 48% of homeschooled children from religious homes and only 15% of those from secular homes continue to homeschool for more than six years; homeschooling grows less common as children age, even among highly educated, more affluent families.

V. Academic Achievement

The subject of homeschooler academic achievement has received much scholarly attention, but unfortunately most of this work contains serious design flaws that limit its generalizability and reliability. From 1990 to 2010 five large scale studies of academic achievement have been conducted under the sponsorship of HSLDA (Ray, 1990; Ray, 1994; Ray, 1997a; Ray, 1997b; Ray, 2010). These studies all rely for their data on samples of homeschoolers recruited for the purpose. Volunteers are asked to submit demographic data as well as the results of one or more group of standardized test scores, with promises made that the research will be used for homeschooling advocacy. These self-reported scores (from tests that are typically proctored by the parent in the home) are then compared against national averages and the results reported. In every case homeschooled students have consistently scored in the 80th percentile or above on nearly every measure.

The original studies are always clear that the data being presented do not reflect a random sampling of all homeschoolers, and that they do not control for key variables like race, SES, marital status, or parent educational attainment when comparing against national averages. Such caveats are critical, for the homeschooler sample obtained by this recruitment strategy is not representative of national norms, nor, indeed, of all homeschoolers. For example, in the most recent HSLDA-sponsored study, published in 2010, the sample of 11,739 homeschooled children came from families that were 95% Christian, 91.7% white, 97.7% married, 80% with stay-at-home moms, and 45.9% with incomes over $80,000 per year (Ray, 2010). Though such limitations are noted in the original studies, the less technical versions produced for popular consumption and the press releases put out by HSLDA habitually ignore such caveats and cite these studies as proof that homeschoolers outperform public schoolers by wide margins on standardized tests (Gaither, 2008b; Kunzman, 2009a).

The most widely cited such study in the history of homeschooling research is undoubtedly Lawrence Rudner's 1999 "Achievement and Demographics of Home School Students." Conceived and commissioned by HSLDA, it derived its massive

sample (20,760 subjects) from the Bob Jones University Press Testing and Evaluation Service, a popular fundamentalist Protestant homeschooling service provider. Parents for the most part administered the tests (Iowa Tests of Basic Skills or Tests for Achievement and Proficiency) themselves, but in this case the results were reported directly to Rudner by Bob Jones University. Parents also completed a demographic questionnaire, and the results again show a sample far whiter, more religious, more married, better educated, and wealthier than national averages. Students performed on average in the 70th to 80th percentile on nearly every measure. Rudner's text is full of qualifications and cautions, stating very clearly, "This study does not demonstrate that home schooling is superior to public or private schools. It should not be cited as evidence that our public schools are failing. It does not indicate that children will perform better academically if they are home schooled" (Rudner, 1999, p. 29).

Despite such disclaimers, Rudner's study continues to be cited uncritically in the popular press, in advocacy-motivated homeschool research, and even in otherwise non-partisan research as demonstrating that homeschoolers outperform public schoolers on standardized tests, despite multiple efforts by various scholars to emphasize that these studies of academic achievement do not employ random sampling nor do they control for confounding variables (Belfield, 2005; Dumas, Gates, & Schwarzer, 2010; Haan & Cruickshank, 2006; Saunders, 2009-2010; Welner & Welner, 1999). The Rudner study remains "perhaps the most misrepresented research in the homeschooling universe" (Kunzman, 2009a, p. 97).

There have been several other studies of academic achievement prosecuted since the 1980s, most on a much smaller scale. Frost and Morris (1988) found in a study of 74 Illinois homeschoolers that, controlling for family background variables, homeschoolers scored above average in all subjects but math. Wartes, similarly, found that homeschoolers in Washington state scored well above average in reading and vocabulary but slightly below average in math computation (Ray & Wartes, 1991). The HSLDA-sponsored studies also found that homeschoolers do comparatively less well in math than in language-based subjects (Ray, 1997a; Rudner, 1999). Likewise Belfield (2005), in a well-designed study that controlled for family background variables, found that homeschooled seniors taking the SAT scored slightly better than predicted on the SAT verbal and slightly worse on the SAT math. A similar study of ACT mathematics scores likewise found a slight mathematical disadvantage for homeschoolers (Quaqish, 2007). Given this persistent corroboration across two decades we might conclude, tentatively, that there may be at least a modest homeschooling effect on academic achievement—namely that it tends to improve students' verbal and weaken their math capacities. Why? Answers here are only speculative, but it could be that the conversational learning style common to homeschooling and the widely-observed phenomenon that homeschoolers often spend significant time reading and being read to

contribute to their impressive verbal scores, while math is not given the same priority (Frost & Morris, 1988; Kunzman, 2009a; Thomas & Pattison, 2008).

A second generalization that emerges from many studies on academic achievement is that homeschooling does not have much of an effect at all on student achievement once family background variables are controlled for. This conclusion is implicit even in many of the HSLDA-funded studies, which consistently find no relationship between academic achievement and the number of years a child has been homeschooled (Ray & Wartes, 1991; Ray, 2010). In other studies it is more explicit. A 1994 study of 789 first year students at a Christian liberal arts college found no significant difference on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test between students who had been homeschooled and those attending conventional schools (Oliveira, Watson, & Sutton, 1994). A 2004 survey of 127 seniors at a diverse suburban public high school categorized subjects by the degree to which their parents were involved in their learning. Students from the "high parent involvement" cohort scored significantly higher on the ACT than students reporting low levels and exactly the same as homeschoolers taking the ACT (Barwegen, Falciani, Putnam, Reamer, & Star, 2004). A 2005 study comparing all self-identified homeschoolers who took the 2001 SAT (n=6,033) with public and private schooled SAT takers found that when controlled for family background, "there is not a large gap between the scores across school types" (Belfield, 2005, p. 174).

A final consistent finding in the literature on academic achievement is that parental background matters very much in homeschooler achievement. Belfield (2005) found greater variance in SAT scores by family background among homeschoolers than among institutionally-schooled students. Boulter's (1999) longitudinal sample of 110 students whose parents averaged only 13 years of education found a consistent pattern of gradual decline in achievement scores the longer a child remained homeschooled, a result she attributed to the relatively low levels of parent education in her sample. Medlin's (1994) study of 36 homeschoolers found a significant relationship between mother's educational level and child's achievement score. Kunzman's (2009a) qualitative study of several Christian homeschooling families found dramatic differences in instructional quality correlated with parent educational background.

The future direction of studies of academic achievement may lie in the methodology of a recent paper by Martin-Chang, Gould, and Meuse (2011). These researchers sought to overcome the methodological flaws of previous studies by comparing homeschooled students to demographically paired institutionally schooled students. In this study *both* groups were recruited and both administered tests in the same controlled environment by the same researchers. The small sample size of this study (37 homeschoolers and 37 conventionally-schooled students), the *post hoc* division of the homeschoolers into a "structured" subgroup and an "unstructured" subgroup, and the lack of clarity on how long those in the

homeschool group had been homeschooling all limit the generalizabilty of the particular findings (the researchers found that "structured" homeschoolers perform better than institutionally schooled peers but that "unstructured" homeschoolers perform worse), but the design itself represents real progress.

VI. Socialization: Social Interaction and Values Formation

Questions about homeschooler socialization arise frequently from outside observers and in the popular media, often accompanied by concern that homeschooling deprives children of formative group interactions and the inculcation of societal norms and expectations. Homeschool advocates vigorously contest these assumptions, questioning whether institutional schooling provides a desirable form of socialization in the first place. They argue that the proliferation of homeschool learning cooperatives and extracurricular group activities offers ample opportunities for social interaction, but with less of the negative social influences associated with traditional schooling, such as peer pressure and bullying.

Much of the debate, then, hinges on what constitutes desirable socialization, and this question is reflected in both the empirical and normative research literature on homeschooling. For the purposes of this review, we have distinguished between two general categories of socialization. The first involves learning how to interact effectively in group settings and broader society, understanding its rules of behavior and social customs. The second category involves navigating a range of social influences—parents, peers, local communities, broader society—in the formation of personal values, beliefs, and commitments.

Socialization as Social Interaction

In light of homeschool advocates' criticism of institutional schooling's socialization efforts, it bears mention that asking, "Do homeschooled children acquire the necessary social skills to function effectively in broader society?" does not mean homeschoolers (or anyone else) must mimic the behavior and customs of the wider culture. Rather, the relevant question is whether children gain the social fluency to *navigate* that context, learning how to develop relationships and work effectively with others.

Out of the 72 studies we reviewed that conducted empirical research exploring the socialization of homeschoolers, nearly all of them focused squarely on this first category of social interaction, evaluating children's social skills through a variety of methods. Compared with some other facets of homeschooling research, the "socialization question"—specifically, do homeschoolers learn vital social skills that help them interact successfully in broader society—has received significant (albeit unsystematic) attention. The predominant view of this research is that the homeschoolers studied compare favorably to their conventionally-schooled counterparts across a range of social skills and that they do engage in extracurricular

activities that provide opportunities for group interaction, often participating at rates comparable to institutional schoolchildren.

As with all empirical homeschooling research, however, the findings merit substantial caveats. Besides the sampling limitations endemic to all homeschooling research, studies exploring socialization have relied almost entirely on self-report of students and/or their parents. The most common measurement instruments employed in homeschooler socialization studies include the Social Skills Rating System (with sub-topics of cooperation, assertiveness, empathy, and self-control) and the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale; a variety of other questionnaires focusing on peer friendships and loneliness have also been administered. The most widely publicized studies on homeschooler socialization have been conducted by Ray (1997a, 2004a) but their findings—drawn from surveys of adults who were homeschooled—have been frequently misrepresented by homeschool advocates, who overlook the studies' non-random samples and reliance on self-reporting (Willard & Oplinger, 2004).

A few studies have included other data sources beyond self- and parent-evaluation. Shyers (1992) employed a double-blind protocol of behavioral observations of 70 homeschoolers and 70 public school students which revealed significantly fewer "problem behaviors" among homeschooled children ages eight to ten. Chatham-Carpenter (1994) asked children to monitor and record all substantial (longer than two minutes) social interactions over a month's time; homeschoolers and public school students reported no statistically significant differences in the number of social contacts they had, although the contact list included a wider range of ages for homeschoolers. Similar to the well-publicized Ray (1997a, 2004a) studies mentioned above, Knowles & Muchmore (1995) collected data from adults who had been homeschooled. Their study, while far less expansive in number than Ray's research, probed more deeply by conducting life history interviews with ten adults who had been homeschooled (culled from a pool of 46 volunteers to represent a range of demographic diversity). The authors found no indication that their homeschooling experience had disadvantaged them socially and suggested that it may have in fact contributed to a strong sense of independence and self-determination.

This latter observation is echoed by research examining the social integration of homeschoolers in the college setting, which finds that homeschoolers compare favorably to their institutionally-educated peers in social behavior and leadership (Galloway & Sutton, 1995; Sutton & Galloway, 2000). Medlin (2000) offers the small caveat, however, that the college setting in which Sutton and Galloway conducted their research may have been especially well-suited for homeschoolers, since so many of them enrolled there.

A few studies, even while presenting largely positive analyses of homeschooler socialization, observe that homeschoolers occasionally express a greater sense of

social isolation and appear less peer-oriented than public school students (Delahooke, 1986; Seo, 2009; Shirkey, 1987). This perception is frequently echoed in concerns voiced by public school officials, who worry that homeschoolers do not receive adequate peer group socialization (Abrom, 2009; Fairchild, 2002; Kunzman, 2005). Other studies observe that a lower dependence on peer relationships may have some positive benefits as well, such as less concern about fluctuating social status (Medlin, 2000; Reavis & Zakriski, 2005).

The benefits and drawbacks of institutional schooling's peer socialization return us to the dispute over desirable socialization raised at the beginning of this section. Normative arguments about social skills and group interactions appear in the homeschool research literature as well (Meighan, 1984b; Monk, 2004). Wyatt (2008) makes a thoughtful case for homeschooling as an appropriate and effective means of socialization for many families. He surveys the literature on the social context of public schools and theorizes that many choose homeschooling in pursuit of an alternative conception of the family and in resistance to broader culture and its values. Merry & Howell (2009) affirm this idea, arguing that homeschooling encourages a more intimate, supportive style of parenting that fosters healthy social and personal development in their children.

The few homeschooling-related articles published in medical journals reveal some concern among health care providers as it relates to homeschooled children's socialization (Klugewicz & Carraccio, 1999; Murray, 1996). Pediatricians are urged to exercise extra vigilance with this population due to the absence of health care screening (formal and informal, mental and physical) often conducted in public school settings (Johnson, 2004; Wallace, 2000). Despite such cautions, however, the professional medical literature suggests a growing acceptance of homeschooling as a legitimate educational option, much in the way that some alternative medicine has slowly gained legitimacy among practitioners (Abbott & Miller, 2006).

Socialization as Values Formation

Beyond the notion of socialization as effective navigation of social norms and behaviors, however, exists a more complex question of socialization as values formation. That is, socialization entails not only how children interact with others in various social settings, but how children develop convictions about what is important to them and why. Such considerations veer quickly into normative territory and have generated a sizeable body of literature, much of it philosophical in nature, focused on issues of children's autonomy, religious inculcation, and preparation for democratic citizenship.

The role of education in fostering personal autonomy has received ample attention in scholarly literature (e.g., Brighouse & Swift, 2006; Callan, 1997; Feinberg, 1980; Galston, 2002; Spinner-Halev, 2000), but recent years have seen theorists turn their attention more squarely on homeschooling in this regard. Reich

(2002, 2008) posits a trinity of interests—parents, children, and the state—in education and argues that children have their own interests that must be distinguished from parents. One of these interests, Reich contends, is in "minimalist autonomy": children should develop the capacity to reflect critically on their values and commitments, and they should have a range of meaningful life options to select and pursue. Reich and similarly-minded scholars (Blokhuis, 2010; West, 2009; Yuracko, 2008) worry that some forms of homeschooling will inhibit the development of such autonomy in children, since parents can serve as sole instructors and restrict access to a variety of ideas and perspectives.

Other theorists disagree with Reich's emphasis on autonomy, or dispute his contention that the homeschooling milieu poses a particular risk to its development, often questioning whether public schools are any more likely to foster minimal autonomy (Glanzer, 2008; Merry & Karsten, 2010). Still others (Conroy, 2010; Kunzman, 2012) doubt that the state, in the role of guarantor of children's rights (Brighouse, 2002), possesses the wisdom or capacity to evaluate whether anyone has met some minimum threshold for autonomy.

As noted in the Demographics section, religion plays a prominent role in many parents' motivation to homeschool their children. Religious parents' often profound commitment to instilling particular values and beliefs in their children adds another layer of complexity to the project of values formation and the question of children's autonomy. Buss (2000) contends that adolescents need exposure to ideologically diverse peers to help facilitate the process of identity development, and she argues that religiously-inspired homeschooling may inhibit such development, especially in adolescents (see also Blokhuis, 2010; West, 2009; Yuracko, 2008).

But there may also be ways in which religious homeschooling promotes independent thinking and offers alternative life options to consider. As noted previously, homeschooling is a countercultural endeavor for many families, and an ethos of resisting authority and questioning professional expertise appears quite common (Meighan, 1984a)—perhaps especially so for conservative religious homeschoolers (Kunzman, 2010). The very act of homeschooling serves as an assertion of their conservative religious identity (Liao, 2006), and this countercultural ethos may in turn foster the kind of mindset that characterizes autonomous thinking. Much depends, of course, on whether the countercultural resistance is informed by critical consideration of a range of alternatives or merely unreflective acceptance of a single competing narrative.

The few empirical studies related to homeschooler values formation offer a mixed and uncertain picture. Some research suggests that conservative religious parents adopt a more authoritarian stance to their homeschooling (Cai et al., 2002; Manuel, 2000; Vaughn, 2003), whereas Batterbee (1992) reported homeschoolers tested higher for intrinsic motivation and autonomy. McEntire (2005) found homeschoolers to be more settled in their personal values and commitments than a

comparison group of public school students—but whether this serves as evidence of thoughtful personal reflection or inflexible adherence to dogma remains unclear. In a study of 30 children and their parents from two Christian homeschool support groups, Kingston and Medlin (2006) found no statistical difference in their response to the statement, "I want my child to decide for him/herself what values to believe in," as compared with the responses of 50 public school parents from the same geographical area. Of course, what parents say they want for their children, and the actions they take in that regard, do not necessarily align.

But the most empirically compelling data regarding religious values formation suggests that efforts to contrast homeschoolers with their institutionally-educated peers may be ultimately misguided. In his analysis of the National Survey of Youth and Religion dataset, Uecker (2008) finds that, for children with deeply religious parents, whether or not they were homeschooled made no statistical difference in their religious behavior and commitments. The parents' influence was the same regardless, a counterintuitive finding that calls into question the assumption by many theorists that the homeschool milieu increases the ideological influence of parents.

The democratic state also has an interest in the values formation of its youth, as it depends on informed citizens who are committed to respectful engagement with fellow citizens in the public square. Some scholars see homeschooling as the most extreme formulation of broader shift toward educational privatization (Nemer, 2004), and express concern that such a shift degrades a vital sense of mutual civic obligation and tolerance (Balmer, 2007; Lubienski, 2000, 2003; Ross, 2010). Apple (2000) is especially wary of this dynamic with conservative Christian homeschooling, and in particular the political forces driving homeschool advocacy organizations such as HSLDA; their vision of the state (and its public schools) as the enemy of freedom, rather than the promoter of the public good, threatens a democratic vision of the common good. But homeschoolers do not necessarily see their avoidance of public schools and their resistance to contemporary culture as a rejection of community; some view homeschooling as a way to re-establish local communities in a modern society where such associations have withered (Moss, 1995).

Some empirical research suggests that homeschoolers do value political and civic engagement. Ray's (2004a) well-publicized study of adults who were homeschooled shows them voting more often than national averages, and volunteering for civic organizations at a much higher rate, although he did not control for income, education, or other demographics. Smith and Sikkink (1999) did, however, and found that private school and homeschool families are consistently more involved in civic activities than public school families. Whether such activism adds to the vitality of the public square or fosters greater balkanization of perspectives and positions remains an open question.

VII. Homeschooling Law

Measured by sheer volume, topics surrounding homeschooling law have probably received the most scholarly attention. In Section VIII we will discuss some specifics of homeschooling law as it relates to public education. Here we examine homeschooling law more broadly, first at the constitutional level and then at the level of state statutes. In both domains the scholarly literature has tended to be either descriptive or normative, seeking either to explain the current status of the law or to craft legal arguments that might change that status.

The Supreme Court has not to date entertained a case explicitly about homeschooling. That has not stopped homeschool advocates from claiming repeatedly that homeschooling is a constitutional right protected by the First Amendment's free exercise clause and the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause and the right to privacy that has emerged from it (Farris, 1990; Henderson, 1993; Klicka, 2006; Whitehead & Crow, 1993). These constitutional claims, if true, undermine not only compulsory attendance laws but also complicate other legal limits imposed upon parents like child abuse or health policy laws (Duke, 2003). Is homeschooling a right guaranteed by the Constitution?

The general consensus among legal scholars and in the courts has been that neither First nor Fourteenth Amendment arguments for homeschooling are compelling (Murphy, 1992). The Fourteenth Amendment argument may be the stronger of the two, as the Supreme Court has long recognized parental rights to raise children (Buchanan, 1987; Wang, 2011). Perhaps ironically given that so many conservative homeschoolers want to overturn them, it was the abortion jurisprudence, especially the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* and the 1992 *Casey* decisions, that established most clearly that child-rearing is a fundamental right (Lerner, 1995). But at the same time, the Court has also consistently upheld the power of the states to compel attendance at some school and to regulate private schools. To date no lower court has found a constitutional right to homeschooling in the Fourteenth Amendment (Devins, 1984; Gaither, 2008a; MacMullan, 1994; Peterson, 1985; Richardson & Zirkel, 1991; Zirkel, 1986).

First Amendment claims have been repeatedly asserted by homeschoolers and their lawyers, usually citing *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972) as a precedent. The legal consensus is that *Yoder* cannot be applied to most homeschoolers, for, in the words of the majority opinion, "probably few other religious groups or sects" could qualify for an exemption to compulsory school laws similar to that obtained by the Amish in this famous case (Keim, 1975; Lickstein, 2010; Peters, 2003). On two occasions, both times in Michigan, state courts have found a constitutional right to homeschool in the First Amendment's free exercise clause. But no other state has to date agreed, and most legal scholars also disagree that current First Amendment jurisprudence would support a constitutional right to homeschooling (Gaither,

2008a; Ross, 2010; Zirkel, 1986; Zirkel, 1997). That has not stopped some states from granting more independence to religiously motivated homeschoolers than to others (Bach, 2004).

Part of what legal scholars do for a living is to construct hypothetical arguments that could reasonably hold up in court. Several scholars have attempted to do this for the issue of homeschooling's constitutionality. Given the confusion over whether or not parental education is a fundamental right and the degree of scrutiny that must be applied by government to legitimate infringing on homeschooling parents' privacy, divergent arguments are plausible (Beckstrom, 2010; Schulze, 1999; Wang, 2011). Good (2005), for example, deconstructs the Supreme Court's First Amendment jurisprudence, especially as it interfaces with other rights to create hybrid situations, and argues for a less stringent "balancing test" to be applied to parents asserting free exercise claims. Lerner (1995) makes a similar argument grounded in Fourteenth Amendment abortion jurisprudence to claim that "Undue Burden" is a better regulatory threshold than "Rational Basis," a claim that would make it more difficult for states to regulate homeschooling. Some scholars go further and argue, as homeschooling advocates typically do, that the Fourteenth or First Amendment do in fact make homeschooling a fundamental right (Kreager, Jr., 2010; Olsen, 2009; Tomkins, 1991). On the other side of the political spectrum, some claim that the Constitution rightly interpreted prohibits home education outright, or at least requires strict regulation (Lupu, 1987a; Lupu, 1987b). Yuracko (2008), for example, argues that states not adequately regulating homeschooling violate the Constitution's equal protection clause. Other scholars seek to reframe the debate between parents and the state so as to limit parental rights by bringing in the interests of the child (Dwyer, 2006; McVicker, 1985; Woodhouse, 2002) or by appealing to the common law principle of *parens patriae* (Blokhuis, 2010). Still others call for increased regulation of homeschooling, arguing against the "hybrid rights" doctrine that has emerged of late to claim that the state's interests in producing literate, tolerant citizens outweighs parental rights (Greenfield, 2007; Ross, 2010; Waddell, 2010). Waddell (2010), in a particularly incisive summary of these issues, concludes that the Supreme Court's conflicting and vague jurisprudence is largely responsible for this chaos of competing views, and he hopes that a future decision by the Court will clarify the situation.

Turning to state statutory law we find an even more confusing and intimidating literature. Again, much of the scholarship is descriptive, fulfilling the much-needed task of bringing order to the dizzying array of state statutes and court decisions, and correcting historical misrepresentations sometimes made by homeschooling advocates who overstate the historic statutory hostility to homeschooling (Somerville, 2005; Tobak & Zirkel, 1982). Between 1982 and 1988, twenty-eight states passed new homeschooling legislation, often in response to court decisions finding their previous compulsory education statute unconstitutionally vague or

otherwise deficient. The result has been a patchwork of laws that vary widely between states (Baxter, 2010; Campbell, 2001; Cibulka, 1991; Cooper & Surreau, 2007; Dare, 2001; Gaither, 2008a; Henderson & Golanda, 1991; Kreager, Jr., 2010; Kunzman, 2008; Miller, 1999). In addition, there is much interest in the degree to which these intra-state policy differences correlate with differences between states in number of homeschoolers per capita, levels of racial integration in public schools, student achievement, and other variables (Levy, 2009). Studies thus far have found, so far as the limited data allows, that different regulatory climates correlate weakly or not at all with percentage of homeschoolers in a state, the rate of growth in homeschooling, or homeschooler test scores (Hail, 2003; Stewart & Neeley, 2005). Ray and Eagleson (2008), for example, found no correlation between degree of state regulation of homeschooling and SAT scores of 6,170 test takers self-designating as homeschoolers in 2001.

As with constitutional law, much of the literature on statutory matters is normative, seeking to influence public policy by constructing legal arguments that challenge or endorse the current situation. Typically, such arguments fall into one of two camps. Some legal scholars, either homeschooling advocates themselves or libertarian-leaning, advocate for reduced regulation or no regulation at all (Burkard & O'Keefe, 2005; Kallman, 1988; Mangrum, 1988; Nappen, 2005; Page, 2001). Others, often motivated by concerns about child welfare, gender equity, or ideological balkanization, argue for some sort of regulation. Some regulation advocates argue for a more maximalist climate, including such components as annual testing, competence tests for parent educators, and curricular checks like portfolio assessment or subject mastery tests (Bartholomew, 2007; Greenfield, 2007; Kelly, 2006a, 2006b; Tabone, 2006). Others, seeking a middle ground that respects parent and state interests, advocate for a more minimalist regulatory climate limited to registration with the state and competency tests in basic literacy and numeracy (Alarcón, 2010; Baxter, 2010; Devins, 1992; Kunzman, 2009b; McMullen, 2002; Moran, 2011).

Finally, some legal scholars direct their analysis toward issues that do not easily fall into our constitutional or statutory categories. The overlap of child custody cases and homeschooling is a vexing issue that often pits one parent's desire to homeschool against another's who doesn't (McMahon, 1995; Ross, 2010). Federal policy like *No Child Left Behind* sometimes destabilizes the parent/state relationship in ways that could impact homeschooling, at least indirectly (Russo, 2006). Subsequent sections of this article will touch on several other issues that bring together normative legal analysis and the political process.

VIII. Homeschool/Public School Relationships

The relationship between homeschoolers and public schooling has varied widely over time and locale. As discussed earlier, many homeschool parents express

dissatisfaction with the environment and academic quality of institutional schooling; it appears that public school officials typically share similar sentiments about homeschooling. The National Education Association is generally critical of homeschooling and advocates increased regulation, including a teaching license for all home instructors, and prohibiting homeschoolers from all public school extracurricular activities. Most empirical studies (the bulk of which have been doctoral dissertations) of superintendents' and state-level officials' views on homeschooling reveal strong skepticism concerning the academic and social quality of the homeschooling experience, as well as the conviction that homeschooling should be more tightly regulated (Abrom, 2009; Boothe et al., 1997; Brown, 2003; DeRoche, 1993; Fairchild, 2002; Hendrix, 2003; Kunzman, 2005; Slavinski, 2000; Yeager, 1999). Interestingly, Riegle & McKinney (2002) found that homeschoolers concede that not all families provide a high-quality homeschooling experience—but place the blame on school districts who encourage failing students to withdraw with the intent to homeschool, which allows districts to avoid counting them as dropouts (Francisco, 2011; Radcliffe, 2010).

Homeschoolers access public school resources in a variety of ways, and the degree of access afforded them ranges widely by state, and often even by districts within the same state. Currently, fourteen states have laws mandating that homeschoolers be allowed to enroll as part-time students, and nine states explicitly prohibit it; the rest leave it up to district discretion. The National Household Education Survey indicates that homeschooler part-time enrollment has remained constant at around 15 percent over the past 12 years of surveys (Bielick et al., 2001; Planty et al., 2009; Princiotta & Bielick, 2006). In terms of extracurricular participation, the tide appears to be shifting toward access, and current regulations are more generous: twenty-two states require districts to make room for homeschoolers, six states refuse to allow it, and for the rest it remains a local decision.

Some homeschoolers have filed lawsuits to force districts to allow greater access, but courts have consistently refused to recognize a constitutional right by homeschoolers to access public school classes and activities (Batista & Hatfield, 2005; Keddie, 2007; Prather, 2000; Thompson, 2000), ruling that such decisions are in the hands of state legislatures or the discretion granted to local districts. Despite the general resistance by many public school officials to homeschooler access, a few studies suggest that cordial and cooperative relationships do exist between homeschoolers and some local school districts (Angelis, 2008; Dahlquist, York-Barr, & Hendel, 2006; Lamson, 1992; Waggoner, 2005). In Florida, where homeschooler involvement in public school extracurriculars is permitted, 147 athletic directors surveyed generally felt that homeschoolers participated successfully—they were good teammates, maintained good grades, and adhered to required codes of conduct (Johnson, 2002).

Most legal analyses of this issue advocate for policies, or even court rulings, that mandate wider homeschooler access (Fuller, 1998; Gardner, 2001; Grob, 2000; Keddie, 2007; Lukasik, 1996; Roberts, 2009; Webb, 1997), although Wilson (2001) also raises concerns about the potential exploitation of homeschool athletes unless consistent rules are enforced regarding recruitment and academic standards. Other scholars argue from a more philosophical vantage point that welcoming homeschooler participation in public school activities can provide civic and curricular benefits for all students (Holt, 1983; Lukasik, 1996; Reich, 2002). Homeschoolers themselves are split on whether accessing public school resources and experiences is a wise move, with some worrying that participation in state-funded activities will subject them to greater state oversight and, ultimately, more regulations in all aspects of their homeschooling (Gaither, 2008a; Huerta, 2000).

Over the past 15 years, however, a new kind of partnership between homeschoolers and local districts has begun to emerge (Dahlquist, York-Barr, & Hendel, 2006; Lines, 2000). The tremendous growth in homeschooling has spurred districts to design and support hybrid programs, wherein schools provide curricular materials, recordkeeping, and some academic oversight, but homeschool parents play an active, often primary, role in the instructional process. Local districts can thus count these students in their daily attendance and receive additional funding. Small-scale studies suggest that, for homeschoolers willing to establish a formal relationship with the local district, the combination of curricular resources from the school and instructional support from parents provides homeschoolers with a valuable learning experience (Angelis, 2008; Dalaimo, 1996; Lamson, 1992).

The proliferation of online technology has clearly helped school districts provide a convenient and flexible schooling experience for homeschoolers, who may not need to be physically present at all to avail themselves of district resources and guidance. But these same technological advances, combined with increasing legislative support for school choice, have also created a fertile landscape for the growth of cybercharters. These online charter schools are often run by for-profit companies who view homeschoolers as a lucrative target audience, but their lack of standardized record-keeping and external oversight have led to a wide range of academic outcomes for participants (Cavanaugh, 2009; Gaither, 2008a; Huerta, 2006, 2009). States also worry that cybercharters result in what is essentially state-sponsored homeschooling, with homeschoolers who were previously "off the books" now straining already-depleted education funds (Huerta, 2006, 2009; Klein & Poplin, 2008; Rapp, Eckes, & Plucker, 2006).

More than a decade ago, Hill (2000) predicted that the burgeoning growth in homeschooling would ultimately lead to new configurations of schooling that transcended traditional school structures, and this is certainly coming to pass. Whether in the form of hybrid partnerships with public schools or for-private cybercharters using state resources, the lines between public and private, home and

school, continue to blur. With this in mind, some theorists fear that the "public" in public schooling may disappear in ways that threaten the civic mission of common schooling (Apple, 2000; Cox, 2003; Lubienski, 2000). Other scholars see this phenomenon as a welcome re-integration of private and public spaces that had been severed by the industrial revolution (Klein & Poplin, 2008). One especially pertinent issue, given the prominence of homeschooling among conservative religious families, is the appropriate role of religious instruction in a hybrid context when public monies are used for parent-directed instruction infused with religious content (Apple, 2007; Cambre, 2003; Huerta, 2000).

IX. Transition to College/Adulthood

The great majority of studies performed on homeschooled adults are concerned with homeschooling graduates' collegiate experiences. Most of these studies are quantitative, and most follow a predictable pattern. The researcher will obtain a convenience sample of college students (often from the researcher's own institution) who had previously homeschooled and then compare them with a random sample of students of similar background from the same institution who had attended conventional schools.

Most studies of this sort have found little to no difference on a wide range of variables between previously homeschooled and previously institutionally schooled students, though on a few measures homeschoolers consistently come out on top, if only by small margins. Several studies have found that homeschoolers outperform their institutionally schooled peers with similar demographic backgrounds in grade point average. Cogan (2010) found this at a Midwest doctoral institution. Jenkins (1998) found it at a community college. Two studies have found the same at private Christian colleges (Holder, 2001; White et al., 2007). Jones and Gloeckner (2004a) found it as well, though the difference in their study was not statistically significant.

Studies of other variables have found little to no difference between college students who were homeschooled and those who attended traditional schools. Studies of student retention and graduation rates have found no difference (Cogan, 2010; Jones and Gloeckner, 2004a). Studies of successful emotional and social transition to college have similarly found little to no difference (Bolle, Wessel, & Mulvihill, 2007; Saunders, 2009-2010). A study of student stress levels likewise found no difference (Rowe, 2011).

Studies comparing the personalities and college experiences of homeschooled and conventionally schooled college students have found slight differences between the groups on some measures and little to no differences on others. White, Moore, and Squires (2009) found that college students who had been homeschooled for their entire lives scored significantly higher for openness to new experiences, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, but on other personality measures there was no significant difference between groups. Another study by White et al. (2007)

found that homeschoolers reported less anxiety but otherwise were indistinct from their institutionally schooled peers on a variety of measures of psychosocial health. Sutton and Galloway (2000), likewise, found no statistically significant difference between groups of homeschooled, private schooled, and public schooled college students on thirty-three of forty measures of college success. The one category where homeschoolers tended to outperform their peers from other schooling backgrounds was campus leadership—homeschoolers were significantly more involved in leadership positions for longer periods of time.

A smaller number of studies have approached the homeschooled child's collegiate experience using qualitative methods. The qualitative studies have largely found the same—that previously homeschooled college students transition well to college and do well in college (Smiley, 2010). But these studies do add two insights to the bigger picture of homeschoolers' college experience. First, two studies have found that homeschooled first-year college students often struggle more than their conventionally schooled peers with the task of writing research papers. This may be partly because many homeschooling families do not stress research-based writing very much in the lower grades and partly because many conservative Christian homeschoolers have a difficult time learning how to write for a secular audience using secular argumentation and sources (Holder, 2001; Marzluf, 2009). These same studies found that over time homeschoolers were able to catch up to their peers and eventually produce capable writing that adhered to the standards of the secular academy.

The second insight qualitative study of homeschooled college students offers is that these students on the whole do not change their religious or political views very much as a result of their collegiate experiences. Marzluf (2009) found that his writing students were able to learn the conventions of secular writing but did not budge from their consistently conservative political and religious views. Smiley (2010), similarly, found that most in his sample reported having their home values *strengthened* as a result of their exposure to other perspectives in college. As usual with qualitative findings, it is difficult to know how far to extend such generalizations, but these two observations do raise new questions quantitative studies might take up in the future.

The second major issue with which the literature on homeschoolers and higher education is concerned is admissions, both the attitudes of admissions staff toward homeschooling and the policies or lack of policies institutions of higher education have for homeschooled applicants. Again, most of this literature is quantitative, consisting for the most part of surveys of admissions officers. The consistent finding of such studies is that homeschooled applicants are accepted at roughly the same rates as their conventionally schooled peers, that admissions staff generally expect homeschoolers to do as well as or better than their conventionally schooled peers in college, and that while colleges and universities welcome homeschooled

applicants, most do not go out of their way to provide special services or admissions procedures for homeschoolers (Duggan, 2010; Haan & Cruickshank, 2006; Jones & Gloeckner, 2004b; Sorey & Duggan, 2008). One qualitative look at attitudes of admissions officers at three institutions, however, found that many officers privately believe that homeschoolers are close-minded religious bigots, suggesting that what such individuals report on surveys might not always tell the whole story (Millman & Millman, 2008).

One topic in dire need of scholarly attention is the wider adult experience of the previously homeschooled. Brian Ray's *Home Educated and Now Adult* (2004) is by far the most frequently cited study in this regard. This survey of 7,306 adults who had been homeschooled is very similar in tone and methodology to the HSLDA-funded research on academic achievement. Survey instruments were sent out via homeschooling networks to veteran homeschoolers, almost all of them evangelical Christian, who were asked to contribute to the study as a way of demonstrating homeschooling's effectiveness to the broader public. Not surprisingly, the results were superlative. Homeschoolers were found to be better educated than national averages, to vote at high rates, to have a positive view of their homeschooling experiences, and to be generally well adjusted, productive members of society (Ray, 2004a; Ray, 2004b).

A considerably less flattering portrait emerged from the *Cardus Education Survey* (Pennings et al., 2011). The survey used random sampling to examine the lives of religious, young adults, age 24-39, who had been homeschooled through high school. It compared them to graduates of Protestant, Catholic, and public schools. Homeschoolers in this sample had similar spiritual lives to graduates of Protestant schools, but they got married younger, had fewer children, and divorced more frequently than adults in the other groups, even when controlling for background variables. Formerly homeschooled young adults reported lower SAT scores than the privately schooled subjects, attended less selective colleges for less time, and reported at higher rates feelings of helplessness about life and lack of goals and direction. Clearly, much more work needs to be done before we can determine the long term impacts of homeschooling on adulthood.

X. International Homeschooling

Homeschooling is a growing phenomenon in many countries around the world, albeit in much smaller percentages of the school-age population than the United States. Stevens (2003) suggests that the "normalisation" of homeschooling in the U.S. has established an important precedent—rationales, curricular options, organizational structures—that will lend legitimacy for the practice in other countries. Given the vastly greater numbers of homeschoolers in the United States compared with other countries, it is not surprising that the majority of empirical studies and related scholarship address the U.S. context. Nevertheless, more than

150 academic texts focused on homeschooling across the globe are available in English. We have incorporated a few of these texts into earlier sections of this review, when they addressed homeschooling issues more broadly. This section will include scholarship on homeschooling demographics, practices, and policies focused specifically on contexts outside the United States.

Canada

Canadian homeschool regulations vary by province, with data collection practices and homeschooler adherence ranging widely; as a result, no comprehensive statistical portraits of Canadian homeschooling are available (Luffman, 1997). In their two-year study of Canadian homeschooling, Aurini & Davies (2005; see also Davies & Aurini, 2003) conducted 75 interviews with a range of individuals, either homeschoolers or active observers of the phenomenon. The authors conclude that homeschooling is becoming increasingly accepted in Canada—nearly 1% of the student population. They suggest that this is due less to the embrace of neo-liberal philosophies of market-driven school choice, and more because homeschooling allows parents to customize their child's education in accord with their own values and priorities.

Arai (2000) asserts that the number of Canadian homeschoolers is significantly undercounted because many homeschoolers do not register; his small-scale study of Canadian homeschooler motivation suggests they have less of an emphasis on religious reasons than U.S. parents, but a similar dissatisfaction with conventional schools' curricula and environment. Brabant, Bourdon, & Justras (2003) echo these findings in their survey of 203 homeschool families in Quebec, a markedly different sociocultural context than broader Canada. They concur that religious motivations are much less prominent in parents' decision to homeschool, as is the categorical rejection of state intervention in education, compared with the U.S. data; instead, parents emphasize an alternative conception of family life.

Similar to research in the U.S. context, reliable longitudinal data is scarce. In a study of 620 Canadian adults who had been homeschooled, a significant majority describe themselves as well prepared for life and engaged in a wide variety of civic activities (Van Pelt, Allison, & Allison, 2009). The participants, however, had been drawn from a larger sample of Canadian homeschoolers recruited by Ray (1994), and similar to Ray's other large-scale studies, were clearly not representative of the broader Canadian homeschool population (see section V for a more detailed methodological critique of Ray's studies).

Europe

The primary focus of recent scholarship on European homeschooling has been the proper role and authority of the state in education. Homeschooling regulations vary widely in Europe, and continue to shift over time (Petrie, 2001; Taylor & Petrie,

2000). In a review of the policy environment in European countries with readily available data, Blok and Karsten (2011) found 11 that specifically designate homeschooling as a legal right, imposing state oversight ranging from submission of written documents and achievement testing to home visits. With the exception of the United Kingdom, the percentage of the school-age population that homeschools is estimated at less than one-tenth of a percent, and often much lower. Other European countries cited by scholars as permitting some variation of homeschooling include Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, and Switzerland; frequently, regulations are enforced selectively and inconsistently at the local level (Glenn & de Groof, 2002; Kostelecká, 2010; Petrie, 2001; Sliwka & Istance, 2006; Spiegler, 2010).

The greatest number and percentage of European homeschoolers reside in the United Kingdom, where regulations provide significant latitude for a variety of content and instruction (Monk, 2009). Modern homeschooling in the UK emerged in the late 1970s (Meighan, 1981; Meighan & Brown, 1980), and while 20,000 homeschoolers registered with the government in 2009, estimates of actual numbers reach as high as 80,000—the uncertainty being due to the perception that large number of homeschoolers don't notify state authorities (Hopwood, 2007; Webb, 2011). Rothermel's (2011) interviews with 100 homeschooling families reveals a diversity of motives and methods, and it appears that religiously-motivated homeschoolers are a significantly smaller group than in the United States (Monk, 2009; Webb, 2011). Jennens (2011) contends that, until recently, research about homeschooling in the United Kingdom had been conducted primarily by homeschool advocates, and Webb (2011) criticizes UK studies of homeschooler academic achievement (e.g., Rothermel, 1999, 2002, 2004) as suffering from the same sample flaws of self-selection and uncontrolled testing conditions as many U.S. studies (e.g., Ray, 2010; Rudner, 1999).

Scandinavian countries also permit homeschooling, and academic scholarship has focused on the Norwegian and Swedish contexts in particular. Beck (2010) estimates that two-thirds of the approximately 400 Norwegian homeschoolers do not register with the state. The motivations for homeschooling differ by region in Norway, but Beck (2008, 2006) characterizes homeschoolers as a populist subculture that resists the structures and pedagogies of public schools and emphasizes the freedom and centrality of the family. As such, Beck (2010) contends, homeschooling can contribute to greater diversity in social perspectives. In Sweden, however, where only about 100 families homeschool, the prospect of such ideological diversity is viewed with great caution by state authorities (Villalba, 2009).

Concern about alternative educational experiences and the potential for social divisiveness appears most acute in Germany, where homeschooling is legally

forbidden except in rare medical circumstances. Even here, however, some localities turn a blind eye toward the practice and approximately 600-1,000 German children are homeschooled (Spiegler, 2009, 2010). As discussed below, recent controversies over state intervention in homeschooling families has prompted a robust normative scholarship analyzing the relationship between the family and state in educational matters.

Ivatts (2006) reports that Gypsy/Roma and Traveller families are increasingly opting for homeschooling, although actual numbers are difficult to pinpoint. Parents' reasons include a perception that the school curriculum is irrelevant, fears of racism and bullying, and concern that their ethnic culture will be eroded with prolonged exposure to public schooling. Ivatts estimates that more than half of the population are homeschooling at the secondary level, and he recommends stricter state oversight to help avoid educational neglect.

Australia

Australian homeschool regulations vary by regional jurisdiction, but homeschooler compliance is inconsistent and therefore total numbers are difficult to estimate (Glenn & de Groof, 2002; Lindsay, 2003; Varnham, 2008). In their review of Australian homeschooling research, Jackson and Allan (2010) echo findings similar to the U.S. in terms of the variety of curricular approaches employed by parents, whose primary motivation appears to be concern about school environment and curricula. While no comprehensive studies have been performed on Australian homeschoolers' academic achievement, smaller-scale studies reveal homeschooler test scores equal to or greater than those of their public schools peers (see also Allan & Jackson, 2010).

Other Countries

A few academic texts have focused on other countries' homeschooling contexts. Varnham (2008) describes a relatively strict regimen of state oversight in New Zealand, but reports that homeschooling has nevertheless grown rapidly over the past dozen years. Kemble (2005) explains that homeschooling, while not explicitly legal in Japan, is typically prompted by social difficulties at school; the state's approach to such situations is case specific and students excused from school attendance to study at home are not officially viewed as homeschoolers. Jung (2008) interprets the increasing numbers of Korean homeschoolers as an adoption of Western individualism, both for the children and the mothers who break away from the school system to teach them. Seo (2009) studies four middle-class Korean homeschooling families who rebel against the rigid, test-driven state school curriculum, but who all eventually return to conventional schools. Seo predicts that homeschooling's prospects for growth are limited because of the culture's deep-seated collectivist values. Tung (2010) describes the homeschooling experiences of

four Taiwanese Christian families, who seek to provide a more religiously-infused learning experience. These families value the flexibility that homeschooling provides both in terms of curricular content and increased family time, but they worry that Taiwanese society's ignorance toward homeschooling and strong emphasis on conventional academic credentials will limit their children's future educational and career options. Neuman and Aviram (2003) explore the nature of homeschooling in Israel, where the practice is currently prohibited except in rare circumstances, and only 60 families have registered with the government (although more apparently homeschool without authorization). Israeli parents' motivations include negative experiences with public schools and a desire for closer family bonds. South African homeschoolers, small in number but growing, appear to have similar demographics and motivations as U.S. homeschoolers (Brynard, 2007; de Waal & Theron, 2003; Moore, Lemmer, & van Wyk, 2004).

The Family and State in International Homeschooling

The decision to homeschool one's children typically involves a conviction on the part of parents that they can provide a superior education to institutional schooling. In contrast to the U.S., where this belief is frequently motivated by a profound distrust of the state and public schooling, the international context often finds parents choosing homeschooling for more pragmatic reasons. Homeschooling is seen as a way to provide a different learning experience, to enact an alternative vision of family life, or even just as a means of temporary escape from institutional school circumstances (Brabant et al., 2003; Kemble, 2005; Monk, 2009; Kostelecká, 2010; Rothermel, 2011; Webb, 2011).

Nevertheless, the proper role of the state in children's education is very much a part of the international discussion. As noted earlier, much recent scholarship—particularly involving Europe—has focused on normative questions of regulation. Several legal scholars have criticized Germany's stance toward homeschooling, where the practice is outlawed and parents are occasionally prosecuted for their refusal to enroll their children in state schools (DeBoer, 2008; Koons, 2010; Martin, 2010). Reimer (2010) argues that in order to honor the principles of liberalism, the German state needs to accommodate greater diversity of educational approaches. Similarly, Meisels (2004) argues for a robust conception of parental rights and the legalization of homeschooling in Israel. Countries where homeschooling is permitted have also received criticism for their current regulatory regimes. Allan & Jackson (2010) advocate for consistent homeschool regulations across Australia that provide ample flexibility for diverse curricular approaches (see also Hobson & Cresswell, 1993).

Scholarship on British homeschooling has also focused significant attention on policy issues. Monk (2009, 2004, 2003), for instance, argues that the state has a vital role to play in protecting children's educational interests while still leaving

room for parents to shape and direct that education. Jennens (2011), however, presents survey research suggesting that health and welfare officials overestimate the oversight and quality-control capacities of local education agencies regarding homeschooling. Webb (2011) urges a regulatory partnership between local education authorities and homeschool organizations, with the latter able to represent the perspectives and priorities of homeschoolers. Other scholars advocate for reduced state involvement, such as McIntyre-Bhatty (2007) and Rothermel (2010), who critiques a recent government report advocating greater state oversight (Badman, 2009).

XI. Conclusion

As Petrie (2001) contends, governmental policy regarding homeschooling should be informed by careful, well-reasoned research. Yet homeschoolers are often urged by their fellow practitioners and movement leaders to avoid participating in research studies (Kaseman & Kaseman, 2010; Stevenson, 2009; Webb, 2011), unless the study is sponsored by homeschool advocacy groups themselves (Ray & Smith, 2008). Public dialogue and political decisionmaking about homeschooling should not be guided by either advocacy-based research or isolated anecdotes, the latter of which tends toward the extremes of self-taught geniuses or children locked in cages.

As noted throughout this review, many questions about homeschooling—particularly "the average homeschooler"—remain unanswered. Nevertheless, a substantial and growing body of scholarship is available to inform policy decisions. Comprehensive studies that provide data about homeschooling writ large are admittedly scarce, but taken as a whole, the partial glimpses provided by the 354 texts cited in these pages—and many more not included here—sketch a useful portrait of homeschooling philosophies, practices, and outcomes. And with more than 150 doctoral dissertations from the past decade focused on homeschooling, it seems likely that scholarly research will continue to grow, and with it our understanding of the practice and its implications for society.

What kinds of research will be especially useful moving forward? Some types of studies, we suggest, have become largely redundant; for example, we have enough microstudies based on convenience samples that ask about parental motivation, and we don't need more research that compares achievement test scores of a group of volunteer homeschoolers to national averages. Instead, our understanding of homeschooling would benefit from new methodologies and research questions. Methodologically, the homeschool literature is especially weak in two areas. First, very few quantitative studies employ random sampling or provide enough data and subjects to allow the researcher to control for background variables. Second, we have very little rigorous longitudinal data that would enable us to probe the long-term impacts (or lack thereof) of homeschooling on adult lives. In terms of research questions, researchers should push beyond typical homeschooling topics such as

academic achievement, parental motivation, and socialization. Very little is known, for example, about homeschooling among various ethnic minorities or about families who homeschool due to a child's special needs. Further comparative research in the international context will likely broaden our conceptions of homeschooling, and exploration of the ways in which new media influences curricula will provide insight into both the potential for new kinds of learning experiences and the possibilities and limitations of state involvement.

Homeschooling itself will almost certainly continue to grow, and nations and communities will grapple with the question of how best to balance the interests of children, parents, and society in the realms of education and schooling. Tensions between the relative domains of the state and family run strong in the United States, and in some ways track political affiliation—although with the irony of libertarian conservatives and anti-establishment liberals making strange bedfellows in their resistance to state oversight of home education. While homeschooling may not be as overtly politicized in other countries, this could be as much a function of homeschoolers' lower numbers and influence as it is a byproduct of a unique political dynamic in the United States. Even now countries enact markedly different interpretation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (which the United States has not ratified), and states' involvement in schooling ranges from near-absolute control (e.g., Germany and Sweden) to the minimal regulation typical of many U.S. states (e.g., United Kingdom). Further complicating questions of state oversight will be the inevitable proliferation of educational alternatives enabled by the accelerating role of technology in education. Technology will also increasingly influence homeschooling itself in profound ways—not only in terms of instructional content and delivery, but also by facilitating communication among homeschoolers for both support and political mobilization.

Most fundamentally, homeschooling will continue to challenge modern conceptions of schooling, education, and the family. Conventional categories of schooling, curriculum, and achievement will continue to blur, shifting not only participants' conceptions of education but very likely broader society's as well (Lees, 2011). As these and other trends unfold, new research questions will arise. Homeschooling will remain fertile ground for research—not only as a fascinating educational phenomenon in and of itself, but also for what it pushes us to consider about the purposes of education more broadly.

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