

# **Four Key Barriers Affecting the Choice to Homeschool: Evidence from a Fragile Community; and Changing Homeschool Demographics**

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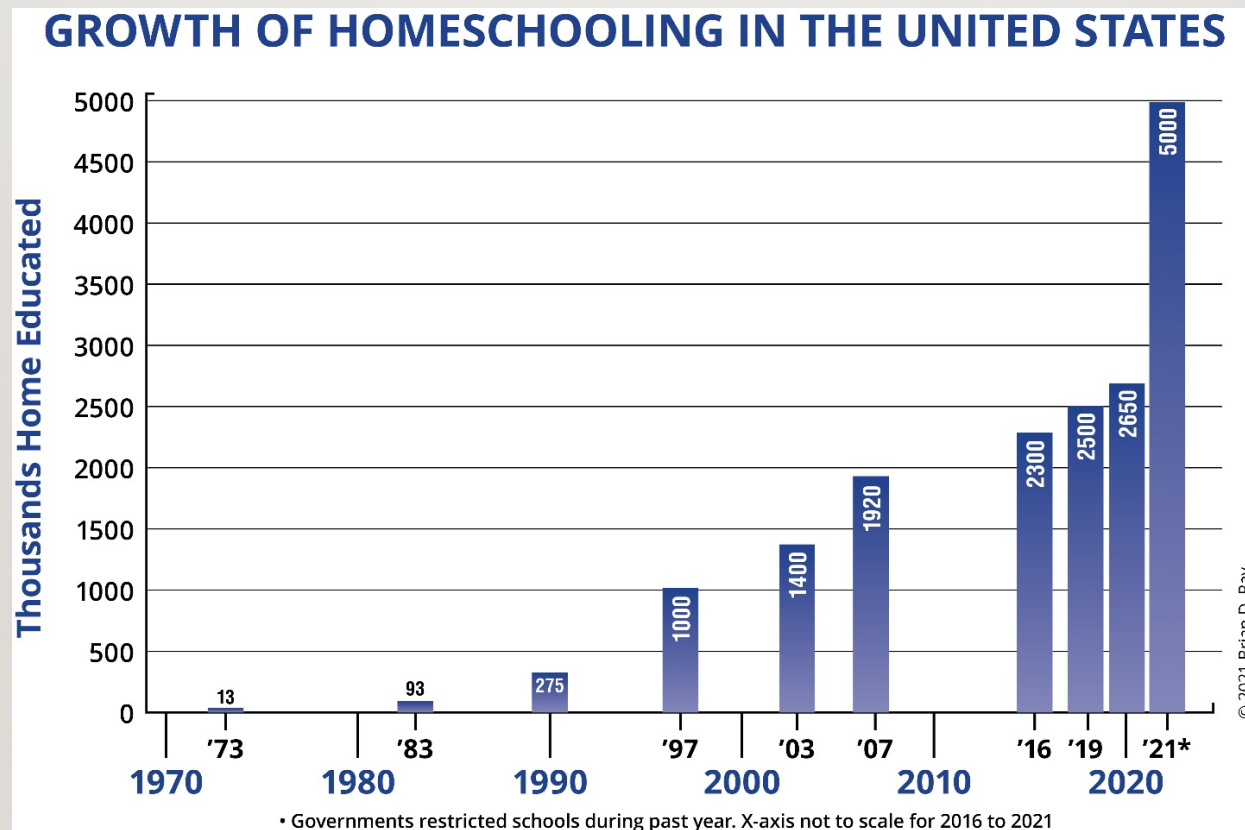
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# Context and Purpose

- 2.6 million K-12 homeschool students in the USA, March of 2020
- Based on state-provided data, US Census Bureau data, and other sources; I estimate 4.5-5.0 million March of 2021



# Changing Demographics

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- For decades, families of median income for families with children; 2016\* “poor” 21%,; US 2019 “poverty” 10%
- For decades, data suggested couple more years formal education for homeschool parents; 2016 less than high school, 15%; US 2019, 12,%
- For decades, noticeably disproportionately white; 2016 white, non-Hispanic, 59%; US Census B. 2019, 60%
- Main reasons for homeschooling have shifted over time

\* 2016 in this slide indicates USDE, NHES 2016 data.

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- This quickly growing form of education ...
  - Rapidly increasing number of studies past 15-20 years
  - Yet most research uses non-representative samples of median-income white Americans

# Contribution



- ▶ State-representative sample of homeschooling families
- ▶ A fragile community recruited to the panel through randomized double-blind methods
- ▶ Demographic variables do not explain much variation in homeschooling
- ▶ Four perceived barriers
  - ▶ laws, child concerns, socialization, knowledge
  - ▶ negative predictors of now homeschooling and desire to homeschool

# Definitions

- **Homeschooling** is parent-led home-based private education; that is, parents currently privately homeschooling at least one school-age child (in grades K-12)
- **Fragile communities** are areas where groups of people are characterized by high proportions who are struggling in their daily lives and have limited opportunities for social and economic mobility
  - Low income and Black persons tend to be overrepresented in fragile communities

# Data

- Nationally representative online panel
- 800 Low-income families: \$40,000 or less, children ages 2-18, in Georgia
- 68 questions that related to respondents' self-perceived barriers about homeschooling
- Data were collected before the government restrictions regarding Covid-19

## Selected demographics

Variable	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Child currently homeschooled	0.20	0.40	0	1
<i>Desire to homeschool children</i>				
Definitely	0.17	0.37	0	1
Somewhat	0.17	0.38	0	1
Not really	0.35	0.48	0	1
Not at all	0.31	0.46	0	1
Parent	0.97	0.17	0	1
Any homeschooling while growing up	0.14	0.35	0	1
Male	0.15	0.35	0	1
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
White	0.44	0.50	0	1
Black	0.50	0.50	0	1
Hispanic	0.03	0.16	0	1
Asian	0.02	0.13	0	1
Others	0.01	0.11	0	1
Read Bible in the past week	0.50	0.50	0	1
Volunteered in community in the past week	0.31	0.46	0	1
Age	33.73	7.61	18	66
<i>Locale</i>				
Urban	0.23	0.42	0	1
Suburban	0.30	0.46	0	1
Small Town	0.29	0.45	0	1
Rural	0.17	0.38	0	1

# Data reduction

- Code 67 Likert items in increasing order and standardize
- 11 themes for 63 items – factor analysis & agreement (2 coders)
- Retain first principal component for these 11 themes
- Total 17 outcomes:
  - 11 themes, 5 standalone questions and 1 dichotomous variable

# Original survey questions

Do you desire to homeschool your child(ren)? – **Desire to homeschool**

Are you currently privately homeschooling at least one school-age (i.e., in grades K-12) child? – **Now homeschooling**

I do not understand the homeschool laws in my state – **Don't understand laws**

I was homeschooled and my experiences make me think I should not homeschool my children – **Was homeschooled**

# Themes – socialization and knowledge

Concern about  
social isolation of  
my child/children

Concern that  
children will not  
have good social  
development

I do not know how  
to get started  
homeschooling

I do not understand  
what  
homeschooling  
looks like in  
practice

# Perceived Barriers

## Stand-alone items

- ▶ Feel barriers
- ▶ Don't understand laws
- ▶ Regulations burdensome
- ▶ Special needs child
- ▶ Was homeschooled

## Themes:

- ▶ Support systems
- ▶ Curriculum
- ▶ Ethnic concerns
- ▶ Opinions
- ▶ Experiences
- ▶ Self concerns
- ▶ Child concerns
- ▶ Socialization
- ▶ Knowledge
- ▶ Skills
- ▶ Resources

## Determinants of now homeschooling a child and desire to homeschool

	(1)	(2)
Variables	Now homeschooling	Desire to homeschool
Parent	-0.018 (0.083)	-0.088 (0.278)
Homeschooling exp. (growing up)	0.254** (0.041)	0.414** (0.117)
Male	0.095* (0.040)	0.049 (0.125)
Black	-0.029 (0.033)	-0.095 (0.105)
Hispanic	-0.152 (0.087)	-0.425 (0.268)
Asian	0.070 (0.110)	0.147 (0.289)
Others	-0.161 (0.124)	-0.658 (0.451)
Income (10k-15k)	0.049 (0.053)	-0.083 (0.167)
15k-20k	-0.109* (0.052)	0.020 (0.171)
20k-25k	-0.034 (0.051)	-0.103 (0.155)
25k-30k	-0.054 (0.050)	-0.010 (0.156)
30k-35k	0.019 (0.049)	0.141 (0.149)
35k-40k	-0.014 (0.054)	-0.029 (0.166)

## Determinants of now homeschooling a child and desire to homeschool

Variables	(1) Now homeschooling	(2) Desire to homeschool
Frequency (rel. service)	0.030 (0.016)	0.026 (0.050)
Past week (read bible)	0.051 (0.033)	0.264* (0.104)
Past week (prayed to god)	0.001 (0.045)	-0.035 (0.140)
Past week (volunteer)	0.092** (0.033)	0.112 (0.101)
Has religious faith	-0.055 (0.043)	-0.151 (0.132)
Age	0.001 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.006)
Suburban	-0.052 (0.039)	-0.122 (0.120)
Town	-0.127** (0.041)	-0.318* (0.130)
Rural	-0.026 (0.046)	-0.127 (0.142)
Employed (part-time)	0.084* (0.042)	-0.057 (0.127)
Employed (full-time)	-0.005 (0.034)	-0.163 (0.106)
Single	-0.097** (0.032)	-0.032 (0.100)
Divorced	-0.059 (0.046)	-0.224 (0.145)

## Determinants of now homeschooling a child and desire to homeschool

	(1)	(2)
Variables	Now homeschooling	Desire to homeschool
Separated	-0.115 (0.073)	-0.072 (0.257)
Widowed	-0.078 (0.110)	-0.231 (0.319)
Graduated high school	0.062 (0.051)	0.498** (0.170)
Technical or vocational training	0.098 (0.065)	0.621** (0.208)
Attended college but did not graduate	0.018 (0.054)	0.263 (0.179)
Associate's degree	0.110 (0.061)	0.457* (0.200)
Bachelor's degree	0.095 (0.065)	0.686** (0.206)
Graduate degree or higher	0.110 (0.107)	0.576 (0.390)
Constant	0.198 (0.123)	-0.028 (0.401)
Observations	793	557
Adj. R-squared	0.146	0.072

## Correlates of now homeschooling a child and desire to homeschool and respondents' self-perceived barriers about homeschooling

	Now homeschooling		Desire to homeschool	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Feel barriers	-0.014 (0.029)	-0.039 (0.027)	-0.176 (0.126)	-0.261* (0.126)
Don't understand laws	-0.049** (0.010)	-0.034** (0.010)	-0.178** (0.044)	-0.159** (0.045)
Regulations burdensome	0.016 (0.012)	0.008 (0.012)	-0.057 (0.054)	-0.103 (0.053)
Special needs child	0.031** (0.012)	0.015 (0.011)	0.075 (0.047)	0.004 (0.049)
Was homeschooled	0.036** (0.011)	0.023* (0.011)	0.012 (0.049)	-0.047 (0.051)
Support systems	0.053** (0.015)	0.021 (0.015)	-0.070 (0.062)	-0.206** (0.065)
Curriculum	0.057** (0.015)	0.026 (0.015)	-0.075 (0.063)	-0.199** (0.065)
Ethnic concerns	0.065** (0.014)	0.039** (0.015)	0.015 (0.061)	-0.110 (0.066)
Opinions	0.077** (0.014)	0.038** (0.014)	0.099 (0.061)	-0.046 (0.066)
Experiences	0.022 (0.014)	-0.008 (0.014)	0.026 (0.062)	-0.085 (0.064)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

## Correlates of now homeschooling a child and desire to homeschool and respondents' self-perceived barriers about homeschooling

	Now homeschooling		Desire to homeschool	
Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Self concerns	0.039** (0.014)	0.014 (0.014)	-0.106 (0.062)	-0.215** (0.063)
Child concerns	-0.016 (0.014)	-0.029* (0.014)	-0.179** (0.063)	-0.227** (0.062)
Socialization	-0.059** (0.014)	-0.060** (0.014)	-0.253** (0.063)	-0.255** (0.063)
Knowledge	-0.039** (0.014)	-0.041** (0.014)	-0.269** (0.060)	-0.323** (0.061)
Skills	-0.002 (0.014)	-0.006 (0.014)	-0.237** (0.061)	-0.283** (0.062)
Resources	0.021 (0.014)	0.008 (0.014)	-0.103 (0.061)	-0.168** (0.061)
Controls	No	Yes	No	Yes

# Takeaways

- Uniqueness of this study
  - Representative sample
  - Focus on Black families: Fragile community
  - Focus on barriers to homeschooling
- Demographics don't explain much of the variation in homeschooling
- Four barriers: laws, child concerns, socialization, knowledge
- More barriers faced by fragile families that do not already homeschool their children versus those that currently do
- Limitations: external validity. Need replication with larger representative sample