"I Need to Teach My Own Children": A Constructivist Grounded Theory Study of Home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago

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Abstract

Home-schooling as an alternative form of education has grown exponentially globally. Its growth in developed countries has seen the educational practice carve out a distinct space in political, educational, and academic discourse. In Trinidad and Tobago (T&T), educational discourse does not integrate the home-school rhetoric despite the noted growth and its increasing popularity in the educational landscape. Families are home-schooling with limited interference within a relatively untainted framework. This study utilized a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) method to better understand this practice in such a small society. It recognized the growth of home-schooling in T&T as an educational experiment, with possibilities to explore education done differently in its current incubator status. The 11 home-schooling parents of this study who were interviewed unveiled a manner of conceptualizing and enacting education that aligned closely with the writings of critical pedagogy: revealing a liberating, transformative education. Their home-school journey demonstrated a cognitive shift from many of the elements of the formal system that critical pedagogical theorists have heavily analyzed, capturing four emergent questions from the data: (a) who is my child? (b) what does he/she need? (c) how can I fulfil that need? (d) what kind of person am I educating?

Keywords: Home-school, pedagogy, education, Constructivist Grounded Theory.

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Author's declaration: I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

There is an overarching assumption that education is synonymous with schooling and that learning can only occur within an institutionalized setting (Pattison, 2018). International organizations like the United Nations (UN), although recognizing quality education as the driver of sustainable development, support the formal school as the provider of such education (Martin, n.d.; UNESCO, 2015). However, globally, many families are challenging this notion in favor of creating alternative learning environments that encompass a broad spectrum of educational philosophies and approaches. This practice has been widely referred to as 'home-schooling' or home-based education, "an age-old traditional educational practice" (Ray, 2015, para #1). Simply put, home-schooling is the process of parents educating their children at home instead of school (Kraftl, 2014). It is the ultimate in school choice; not simply between schools, but whether schools (Ministry of Education [MOE], n.d.).

Home-based education has been defined as a legal alternative to compulsory school attendance and covers various educational styles and approaches (Allan & Jackson, 2010; Thomas & Pattison, 2013). Ray (2022) defines home-schooling as individualized home-based education outside a conventional classroom or institutional setting, family-based, parent-led and sometimes student-led. The usage of either term is based on the legal and environmental context. For instance, the term home education is used in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia (Allan & Jackson, 2010; Pattison, 2018), whereas home-schooling is widely used in the United States (US) and Canada (Arai, 1999). Regardless of its terminology, the number of families choosing to home-school globally has grown, specifically in countries like the US, UK, Canada and Australia (Brabant et al., 2003; Home School Legal Defense Association of Canada [HSLDA], 2022; Kunzman & Gaither, 2013, 2020). It is estimated that in the US alone, there are approximately 2.5 million home-schooled students as of 2019, with a maximum estimated increase of 8% over the last several years (Ray, 2022).

Compounding this is the development of legal and guiding frameworks for home-schooling in these countries, indicating its normalization within those contexts (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013). Home-schooling discourse is as broad as its practice: ranging from demographics, curricula and practice to academic achievement and socialization (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Murphy, 2014). Not surprisingly, scholarship on home-schooling is concentrated within these spaces with little to no research on smaller, developing societies where home-schooling is still in its infancy. Although Ray (2015) laments that home-schooling in the US can now be considered borderline mainstream owing to its growth, the same cannot be said for smaller territories, where discussions around the practice remain sparse, dispersed, and unstructured. Thus, it still presents as an alternative form of education.

Over the last few years, there has been notably greater publicisation of the home-schooling option in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). Discussions of childhood educational practices within T&T have always been at the forefront. My interest in home-schooling emerged over the last couple of years. The word home-schooling was a foreign concept to me, as formal school attendance is normalized within this society. My exposure to more conversations about the option made me question why more parents adamantly wanted to take greater responsibility for their children's education instead of predominantly depending on institutionalized schooling. Reflexivity allows qualitative researchers to evaluate positionality, self-monitor and self-appraise the manner in which who we are and how we think can potentially impact the research process (Berger, 2015; Shaw et al., 2020). In this instance, my embodied relationship with mainstream education, through my own educational experiences as well as the mainstream schooling decision I made for my son has immediate implications on the research questions. The juxtaposition of home-school and mainstream schooling in the questioning could signal the creation of a schooling hierarchy and a perceived tension between the two. Grappling with my own questions about the efficacy of mainstream education placed me at a crossroad of tapping into an unfamiliar territory without a clear position as neither home-schooling advocate nor adversary, but certainly driven by curiosity. I view the world around me through a lens that may position mainstream better than

homeschool. I enter into the home-school space as an outsider due to my unfamiliarity or experience with what is being studied. In some ways, however, I find myself bridging the gap between familiarity and ignorance, a point to be fleshed out later in the study. Berger (2015) eloquently captured the crossroads at which I find myself. On the one end, he speaks of "have been there, have done that" (p. 221) referring to my familiarity with the parenting aspect; a shared identity; a point of mutuality between the participants and myself. The latter is referred to as "strangers in a strange land" (p. 227). This acknowledgement served usefully to determine and ponder in what ways each can potentially assist or hinder the co-construction process between the parents and me.

The Home-schooling Association of Trinidad and Tobago (HATT) is the most recognized body, hosting curriculum fairs, and further publicizing the educational option. In addition to an official website, members have made several media appearances discussing their educational approaches; and sharing their knowledge and experiences. The MOE recognizes HATT as an educational stakeholder, as evidenced by references in their major policy, documents (see MOE, n.d.). The MOE's acknowledgement of the need for greater articulation between the state and home-schoolers demonstrated a recognition of the significant role home-schooling plays in T&T. Furthermore, there has been a growth of blogs, home-schooling websites, and various articles discussing home-schooling in T&T (Ganpat, 2018), thus further supporting Aurini and Davies's (2005) conclusion that home-schooling is a growing social trend.

In the absence of home-schooling policies or guidelines, home-schooling families use the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago as the legislative provision for the practice. It gives the "right of a parent or guardian to provide a school of his own choice for the education of his child or ward" (The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, 1976, p. 18). Contradictorily, this provision operates within a system where the Education Act 4 of 1966 mandates attendance at school, with a clear definition of what 'school' means (Education Act, 1966, p. 52). Despite the progression of the home-schooling movement,

there is limited to no research on its practice within the English-speaking Caribbean.

1.1 Significance of the Study

Initial examination of the literature yielded one study in Barbados that explored the limited access to government information on home-schooling (Scale, 2017). Even in this study, the author articulated the need for more research on an educational practice that is clearly on the rise and sparking controversy across the region. He rationalized his study stemming from a case where the Barbadian government sued Rastafarian parents for illegal home-schooling, arguing that the parents were not following the home-school criteria. The criteria included the notification of officials, home visits and following the curriculum (as cited in Scale, 2017).

Home-schooling in T&T, as a seemingly trending form of alternative education, is situated within an educational context that parents have heavily scrutinized. From a policy standpoint, home-schooling is recognized as a legitimate form of education in T&T (MOE, n.d.). Within the English-speaking territory, great value is placed on education, predominantly attributed to the island's colonial past (De Lisle et al., 2010). Traditionally, education has been tied to status. Despite attempted changes to create equality (De Lisle et al., 2010a), it is argued that the colonial context continues to be mirrored, presenting education as elitist and not egalitarian (De Lisle et al., 2010).

The T&T education system is three-tiered: primary, secondary, and tertiary, with public and private schools at all levels. The "inherited differentiated system" within the country's colonial past has been dubbed its major pitfall (De Lisle et al., 2010, p. 2). Although there is the presence of differentiation at primary school levels, with a choice between government and private schools, the main contention rests with the selection criteria for transitioning to secondary school. The Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA) acts as the gatekeeper for this transition (Mohan, 2010). It has been described as "selective, stratified and segregated" (De Lisle et al., 2010, p. 9).

Competition ensues as students vie for entry into elite secondary schools, with a noted dichotomy between denominational and government

schools with notable differences in students' performance in each school (De Lisle et al., 2010a).This rigidity of the standardized testing structure as a rite of passage and the race for prestigious schools has concerned many parents and has given rise to the home-schooling alternative. While the government boasts of an egalitarian school system, the structure and practices within the education sector paint a different picture. The growing dissatisfaction with the quality of education has given home-schooling a viable space in the T&T educational market (Baksh, 2019; Edwards, 2007; 'Same Stress, Different Exams' 2013); one that requires and deserves further inquiry.

Home-schooling in T&T presents as the educational 'other' with attendance at school as the norm and limited insight available to adequately conclude about the practice in this context. Despite the Government's acknowledgement of its existence as a legitimation of its growth and contribution as a major stakeholder in the educational landscape, (see MOE, n.d.), home-schooling, by definition, presents as counter-hegemonic, presenting and practicing an educational philosophy different from that offered within mainstream settings. This study set out to better understand home-schooling in T&T, an almost normalized educational practice in other countries with little known about it in this one. It is a starting point to introduce a dialogue about home-schooling, through which home-school experiences are brought to the forefront.

For this reason, the study presents a theory of home-schooling in T&T. The study intended to neither support nor criticize home-schooling in T&T but rather to engender discourse on the practice and explore its development as a major educational stakeholder in an environment where home-schooling has not yet carved its space in the educational dialogue. The lack of research in small societies such as T&T gives rise to the pressing need to better understand educational practices like home-schooling to determine its possible impacts in these spaces. It allows diversification of the education discussion to explore the possibilities of other educational settings.

This study sought to curate the stories of 11 home-schooling parents to better understand home-schooling in T&T. The initial assumption was that home-schooling was simply the antithesis of mainstream education, poised to

reveal all that is problematic with the Trinbagonian education system. This home-schooling journey revealed and uncovered much more than was originally anticipated. This declaration is critical to the undertaking of this study and is discussed further in this paper. As such, this thesis intended to better understand why parents choose to home-school in T &T and further determine what this growth meant for the existing mainstream education system.

1.2 Purpose Statement

The application of a grounded theory approach was appropriate for this home-school study; it emphasizes theory development alongside its appeal in investigating unexposed social situations (Clarke, 2019; Kolb, 2012). The untapped research into home-schooling in T&T presents a unique opportunity to unveil a social phenomenon that has occupied a space on the fringes of the educational landscape. This method of inquiry was conducted through a constructivist lens. For this reason, I employed Kathy Charmaz's (2014) Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach as a guide. The study aimed to develop a theory of home-schooling as an alternative educational option in T&T by evaluating parental accounts of their home-schooling journey utilizing the procedural guidelines of CGT.

It should be noted that the objective was not to uncover a unified theory of home-schooling per se but to theorize on multiple accounts as told by the parents. It was about constructing meaning from the emerging diversities, similarities, and confusions of the parents' home-schooling stories. Mainly, parents' choices to play a more active role in their children's lives unites them, but their experiences are not singular. Thus, home-schooling does not look the same for each family. It prioritizes the subjective characteristics of home-schooling (Prigol & Behrens, 2019); each home-school journey is experienced differently, and mediated by specific circumstances.

1.3 Chapter Structure

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 provides greater detail on the methodological approach of the research. It provides the foundational understanding of the epistemological, ontological, and methodological philosophies and approaches that underlie this study's CGT approach. It also outlines the processes and directions taken with this approach. Chapter 3 presents the stories of the parents verbatim; it expresses how the parents navigated their home-school journeys. Furthermore, it gives credence to the power of voice in CGT as researcher and participants co-construct. Chapter 4 presents the literature review non-conventionally; in keeping with the CGT approach, it is positioned later in this paper. The literature review shows the progression and use of the data and demonstrates the evolution of the emerging theory of home-schooling and its relationship to the extant literature.

Chapter 5 is a representation of the completed home-school model. It initially explains the treatment of the research questions and the overarching answers that emerged. Next, it explains these research questions by relating categories derived from the CGT stages, synthesizing the parents' stories. This step was integral in the co-construction process, providing a comprehensive explanation of home-schooling in T&T. This chapter highlights the integration of the emergent categories with vital theoretical concepts, justifying and rationalizing the home-schooling explanation postulated by the research.

Chapter 2: Methodology

2.1 Chapter Introduction

Denzin (2018) stated, "To make the invisible more visible to others is, after all, a major goal of the interpreter" (p. 32). I entered the field with much trepidation, not for lack of certainty of the phenomenon I selected to investigate but knowing that I was venturing into a space unknown to me, about which I had many thoughts. Nevertheless, I was intrigued by an educational choice, an old practice but new to me. I considered myself a home-school architect, not one who works in isolation, who may initially draft alone, but one who conspires with all specialties of tradespeople to complete the project. Although I am imbued with ideas and preconceived notions of home-schooling, I remained guided by the experts; those who live and experience the phenomenon; the parents. Through discourse and interpretation, collectively, we created a substantive theory of home-schooling in a Trinbagonian context. This metaphor underscores the methodological approach underlying the epistemological and ontological foundations of this study of home-schooling in T&T.

Using the CGT approach was solidified due to the absence of empirical research on home-schooling in T&T. Beyond mentions in various media platforms and a study done in neighboring Barbados, there was notably no other research on home-schooling in the English-Speaking Caribbean territories (Ganpat, 2018; Scale, 2017), creating the impetus to build a theory. It provided an opportunity to analyze home-schooling using a ground-up, inductive approach, where the data informed the analysis. Furthermore, understanding theory building does not only occur at the data collection stage but permeates throughout all stages of the research: from initial conceptualization to analysis. Every aspect of the research process or the 'ground' must be considered in the interpretation (Denzin, 2007).

This study sought to curate the stories of home-schooling parents to understand the practice within its context better. I argued that a social justice agenda underscores a home-schooling discourse. According to Charmaz

(2017), the theory is the basis of social justice inquiry (as cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Whether explicitly or not, the decision to home-school challenges existing normative structures of education while simultaneously presenting itself as transformative (Apple et al., 2009; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017). My approach to exploring home schooling sought to highlight a seemingly personal decision and situate it within the broader Trinbagonian mainstream educational landscape. It is akin to Mills's (1959) sociological imagination; his private troubles-public issues dichotomy situates the biographical within the societal (as cited in Bryant & Charmaz, 2019; Denzin, 2018). It is premised on the understanding that the only way to capture the home-school experience accurately is through the narratives of those who live it. The decision to home-school, in itself, is a social action upon which derives much meaning.

In this thesis, I am not merely a storyteller, distanced from the narrations but central to the interpretation process, using reflexivity throughout theory creation. The researcher's reflexivity and the research's contextual situatedness make it a critical inquiry (Charmaz, 2014). Erben (2000) stated, "Narrative serves as a natural transition between description and prescription" (p. 389). It is an "analysis of narratives", as Polkinghorne (1995) describes stories used as data (as cited in Charmaz, 2017, p. 204). The narrative analysis brings to life and makes the stories of home-schooling parents intelligible. It presents their accounts in a contextual, situated, and non-segmented manner. Furthermore, it allows the researcher to position their life story in the research context.

Understanding home-schooling is improbable without the persons who engage in its practice, so their voices must be prioritized. Hence, this constructivist qualitative research was critical in its approach. It is a critical inquiry (Charmaz, 2017; Denzin, 2018); its emphasis is on highlighting the "disadvantaged" (Charmaz, 2017, p. 35). I prefer the title 'underrepresented' and the broader educational context within which they operate. For this reason, my task was to reveal and narrate stories of home-schooling parents through co-construction, which led to theory generation. This process of co-construction

through dialogue with the parents gave credence to a subject matter of great significance to these parents.

I remained reflective of my curiosity about the subject matter, my decision to investigate and my prior notions throughout the research process. There was no 'taken for granted' dimension in my quest to understand home-schooling within a Trinbagonian context. The co-construction of knowledge and the subsequent generation of theory between researcher and participant renders it impossible for the researcher to separate themselves from the phenomenon under study (Lincoln et al., 2011). Charmaz (2015) uses the word 'relativism' (p. 13), which is critical to this approach, as it frames the research undertaking, fostering conscious researcher reflexivity.

A fundamental aspect of CGT is the ability of the researcher to constantly dissect their worldviews and assumptions to determine how it influences the research undertaking (Charmaz, 2017). This "methodological consciousness" encourages, albeit mandates, researchers to acknowledge, identify and flesh out their participants, as well as their position, perspective and privilege as part of that construction (Charmaz, 2017, p. 36). Reflexivity is not simply inherent; it is explicit and questioned throughout the research process. Thus, every aspect of my research, including my individualisms, forming part of my construction of home-schooling, was brought to light through my interviewees' discourse. There was a constant reminder of my background and how it could impact the research process.

Here I was, educated in the traditional, mainstream public education system; a mother of a young son, on the verge of commencing her child on a similar educational trajectory, but with many apprehensions about an education system that worked for me. This 'doubt' sets the foundations for critical inquiry as it facilitates an inherent and constant scrutinizing, allowing for theory generation through questioning (Charmaz, 2014, 2017). This chapter, purposefully positioned, explores the underlying paradigms that organize CGT, its predecessors, influencers, and critics. Further, the chapter expands on CGT as a suitable method for theorizing on home-schooling in a Trinidadian context

and the guidelines for its methodological usage. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of specific methods and procedures employed using the common characteristics of GT in a CGT context.

2.2 'Grounding' CGT

Generally, the GT methodological approach is about theory development (Clayton, 2014; Mills et al., 2006b; Ramalho et al., 2015). It does not assume a grand theory; however, through an iterative process and data comparison, ideas related to the phenomenon are conceptualized to formulate a meta-theory. The medical and nursing fields predominantly utilize the GT approach to research. This trend is not surprising, given that the founding fathers based the traditional or classic GT on research within these fields (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), i.e. nursing research (Markey et al., 2014; Mills et al., 2006a, 2006b; Priya, 2019). However, more researchers in the field of education have begun venturing into the GT methodology, with most relegated to dissertations (Clayton, 2014; Hansen, 2014; Nelson, 2015).

However, many seem aligned to the classical GT approach (Lichtman, 2011), or draw portions of their methodology from various strands of GT; a major critique meted against those claiming GT methodology (Markey et al., 2014). There is some benefit, however, of merging aspects of various approaches as a natural methodology growth. It is argued, however, that though the major concepts of traditional GT remained the same, there are core philosophical differences from the traditions that researchers must examine and clarify from the onset (Kenny & Fourie, 2015; Markey et al., 2014; Prigol & Behrens, 2019). Nevertheless, many either aligned to the traditional GT approach or adapted elements of GT from all schools of thought.

GT is one of those appealing approaches, but many researchers have been criticized for romanticizing it and claiming use in their research with significant gaps (Markey et al., 2014). While some argued that the variability and multitude of applications of the GT approach are challenging to align to one school of thought, later on in this thesis, I argue and justify how the application

of a CGT approach is most appropriate to this home-school study. A discussion of CGT as a method of inquiry without recognizing its foundations would be remiss, as some are still upheld in its application today. Despite the shift in CGT's epistemologies and ontologies, they are still its foundation. For this reason, I discuss these to demonstrate the route this research agenda assumed in applying a CGT approach.

There are three general models referenced in GT methodology: traditional (Glaser & Strauss, year 1967), classic (Straus & Corbin, 1990) and constructivist (Charmaz, 2014, cited in Clarke, 2019; Deering & Williams, 2020; Ramalho et al., 2015). Each model presents fundamental epistemological and ontological foundations, distinguishing the approach and development, including the critiquing theory construction. GT, at its onset, presented a turning point in the qualitative tradition of social inquiry. Not only did it present a direct counter-argument to the positivist paradigm that dominated social science research, but it also gave credibility and rigor to qualitative inquiry; it gave life, order and analytical structure to qualitative analysis (Clarke, 2019).

Almost disrupting the haphazard, descriptive critiques faced by the Chicago School and many of its early proponents, it provided a revival for qualitative research. GT is rooted in theory generation. As an inductive approach to inquiry, it uses rich data to formulate theoretical explanations of a studied experience. Thus, for GT, all data are sources of theory generation, and any explanations of a given phenomenon commence at the point of and throughout data collection (Glaser, 2007). When most hear the term theory, the immediate mindset is a grand, meta or formalized conceptualization of a phenomenon. The idea of theory formulation in GT is akin to an analytic strategy for explaining a phenomenon as opposed to deriving a cohesive explanation (Denzin, 2007). It is more about theorizing through data than deriving a theory per se.

As such, the strategies of GT provide a structured way to analyze the data. Denzin (2007) acknowledged this misnomer, stating that it should be referred to as "Grounded Interpretation" to truly reflect the process at play (p.

450). Regardless of the label, the essence of GT is to utilize the data to provide explanations of a phenomenon. Denzin (2018) spoke passionately about the "politics of evidence", recognizing the longstanding discord between the positivist and interpretivist paradigms (p. 37). GT was a trailblazer, bringing a systematic, procedural way to conduct and analyze qualitative data to the forefront. Simultaneously, it stripped away the hierarchical approach to theory creation that positioned only specific types of knowledge capable of theory generation and arguably changed our understanding of what constituted theory (Clarke, 2019).

Based on scientific assumptions, the positivist paradigm viewed social reality as absolute truths, i.e. external realities that exist and are waiting to be discovered. Unlike Plato's recognition that the physical world is not an unchangeable entity, the positivist paradigm operates from the premise that absolute truths are waiting to be discovered (Huard, 2007). It presents an objective reality that is situated outside of the individuals who experience them. Therefore, a phenomenon can be understood and explained numerically and through experimentation. However, the 'anti-scientific' sentiments of the Chicago School of Sociology and its proponents echoed a contested understanding of social reality that recognized multiple truths embedded in discursive practice and presented a form of social inquiry that shed light on the subjective realities of the social world (Becker, 1999).

Although this method of inquiry opened new doors for research, the fundamental philosophical challenges with this approach exposed fields like ethnomethodology to scrutiny, ranging from lacking rigor to its hierarchical approach to data gathering and analysis. While honoring multiplicities and subjectivities, it was argued that the methods of inquiry often served to 'other' the participants, rather than empower them through their voices (Clarke, 2019). Glaserian, Straussian and Charmaz's GT models abide by the fundamental foundations of GT; each is situated within diverse approaches to these foundations. As such, their philosophical assumptions and strategies toward theory generation are distinct (Charmaz, 2014; Dunne, 2011; Kenny & Fourie, 2015). For all its presumptions, distance and anti-positivist sentiments,

traditional or Glaserian GT and, to some extent, classical GT has been criticized for their underlying positivist sentiments (Alemu et al., 2017; Charmaz, 2014; Deering & Williams, 2020). GT provides many qualitative researchers a systematic methodology that helps them move from data collection to analysis; and, ultimately, theory creation (McKay, 2013).

The various criticisms meted out to the Chicago School, and other qualitative predecessors, made it almost impossible for theory to emerge from data. It was felt that much of the analysis was purely narrative. GT gave credence not only to the fact that pure scientific methods produced theory but extended the possibilities of qualitative inquiry (Clarke, 2019). Despite collecting subjective data to formulate theories, Glaserian GT has been heavily critiqued and often used because of its underlying objectivist outlook, from its researcher as 'carte blanche' to the idea that data are 'discoverable' (Glaser, 2007; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The language of discoverability was most rejected in this study of home-schooling. Suppose there is a singular theory of home-schooling in T&T; there is an assumption of objectivity and neglect that all data are value-laden and contextual to both the participants and researcher.

It is in this manner that CGT is built on constructivism, beyond an interpretivist foundation, which rejects the discoverability of data to generate theory in favor of a process of co-construction between researcher and participants working together to create theory (Charmaz, 2014, 2017; Prigol & Behrens, 2019; Ramalho et al., 2015). Glaser's (2007) greatest critique of Charmaz's CGT was its presumed constructivist dimension to GT. He defended his objectivist ontological assumptions by asserting that data must be free from people, time, and space. Furthermore, when researchers attempt to interpret data, it is an "intrusion" because the participants have already revealed what they want the researcher to know (Glaser, 2007, p. 95).

According to Glaser (2007), interpretation presents more description than conceptualization: a critique given to early qualitative researchers. For this reason, 'data' in this home-schooling study refer to the intimate stories of home-schooling parents. I argue that a practice embedded with its values and existing

within a dominant mainstream system should not, or rather cannot be, distanced from these realities in the conceptualization and analysis process. The participants and the researcher make the data themselves active, alive, and not passive, as assumed by the traditional Glaserian model of GT. This notion of living theory, explored by Whitehead (2009), should be mentioned in this vein, as he understands reality as dynamic and not fixed, emphasizing the reflective and co-constructive research space.

However, this is not interpretive but rather a process of co-conspiring with the parents of the research to develop and articulate a contextual explanation of home-schooling. Some prior knowledge and the researcher's subjectivity are essential for the research process. Complex coding levels may ensure objectivity is maintained, despite these potential biases (Belgrave & Seide, 2019; Charmaz, 2014). Nevertheless, Charmaz (2014, 2015, 2017) believed this is not possible; researchers validate the theory by clarifying and defining positionality, reflexivity, and context throughout the research rather than attempting to separate themselves from it. Hence, she posited that this makes a CGT approach most relevant.

To adopt a qualitative, specifically a CGT, approach is to possess a core set of beliefs guiding the research process. Operating from the premise that the research questions should guide the approach, this home-school investigation and its overarching research questions determined the approach. This study operated from the premise that there is no absolute truth but that reality is multiple, conditional, and varied depending on circumstances (see Prigol & Behrens, 2019; Ramalho et al., 2015). Beyond the variation of the home-school parents in this study was a continuous recognition of my subjectivities that undergird the study in general. CGT prioritizes and places the researcher's positionality as central to the co-construction of knowledge and ultimate theory generation (Mills et al., 2006a; Mruck & Mey, 2019).

Thus, the process of data collection and analysis, the research process in general, was a balancing act of co-mingling subjectivities between the home-schooling parents and myself; it was making sense of what was emerging as

we interacted with each other. Although Glaser (2007) critiqued the lengthy interview approach, lengthy interviews provide insight and opportunity. Nevertheless, I agreed with Glaser that perhaps these types of interviews are better suited to certain types of research. A brief interview cannot garner an attempt to understand an educational choice but through lengthy discourse, it can unravel the surrounding elements of their home-school journey. CGT emphasizes constructing rather than the discovery of theory, positioning me as the researcher critical to this construction process, as a storyteller, not merely narrating but building a theory, which is essential to the participants' home-school journeys.

Operating within a constructivist worldview asserts that individuals develop subjective meanings of the world around them, and it is the role of the researcher to interpret these meanings through dialogue (Charmaz, 2017; Salvador et al., 2020). Furthermore, such interpretations must be understood within the contextual realities of both researcher and participant (Creswell, 2009). A constructivist epistemological stance, specifically that employed by Charmaz (2015), presupposes that research consists of a process of co-construction between researcher and participants. Conversely, post-positivist and positivist paradigms claim objectivity (Creswell, 2009); however, critics argue that these approaches fail to produce "truthful knowledge about the world" (Hammersley, 2008, cited in Denzin, 2018, p.10). Thus, I agree with Denzin's (2018) claim that "all facts are value and theory-laden" (p. 23).

Charmaz (2015) clarified her constructivism, stressing that it involves subjectivity and the researcher's involvement in data construction and interpretation. For her, there is no neutrality to social life; people are subjective beings, and all social life is subjective (as cited in Alemu et al., 2017; Charmaz, 2015). As such, the entire research process is wrought with values, from that of the researcher, inclusive of the subject matter under study. Despite this, Glaser (2007) argued that there is no such concept as CGT because he believed "all is data" (p.93). By using a constructivist lens, I was able to identify my position entering the field. As an educator and mother to a young child, who recently

commenced primary school, it positioned me in an education system that home-schoolers refused and seemingly rejected.

Harding (1991) encouraged researchers to look at themselves from the participant's standpoint and to further look at the specific research context. Denzin (2018) supported this claim by asserting that interpretive researchers must situate their work within the moral and historical point in time. Coincidence or not, the data collection of this study commenced and continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, one that has had significant impacts on education globally. Ignoring its existence within the context of a home-school research project would render this study problematic and not in keeping with the essence of CGT.

2.3 CGT Design for Home-schooling

Essentially, CGT is a set of strategies employed for generating and examining data to produce a theory (Salvador et al., 2020). Under the CGT umbrella, theory represents a phenomenon, showing relationships, nuances, connections and disconnections between concepts within a bounded context (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). In this instance, CGT is used to explain home-schooling choices, experiences and practices within a Trinidadian context as told by home-schooling parents. From the onset, a CGT undertaking requires a reflexive approach, a mindful and heightened awareness that must be upheld at every juncture. This mindset requires that the CGT researcher remain critical, curious, and present throughout their research undertaking. Every decision, thought, assumption, and interpretation must be deeply examined as the researcher navigates the CGT journey, exploring questions of position, privilege, and taken-for-granted assumptions.

Charmaz (2020) described the process as the "methodological self-consciousness" (p. 167); it encourages CGT researchers to be responsive in the field, to scrutinize and dissect every element of the journey from both the researcher and participants' perspectives. Through this process, researchers own the subjectivity, placed at the forefront, and expose it to constant

inspection and introspection. This subjective transparency is a critical component of CGT and provides it with methodological merit. It has often been argued that researchers claim CGT but cannot aptly show how they utilized the approach to have the theoretical outcomes they claim.

The subsequent sections of this chapter speak to the strategies used in undertaking a CGT approach to understanding home-schooling in T&T and illuminate how methodological consciousness played a crucial role throughout the design and analysis process. Bryant and Charmaz (2019) stated that research questions are the foundation of a CGT undertaking. Despite its inclusion, researchers must be aware of how these questions dictate the research instead of being a starting point or guide. Two overarching research questions provided the basis for this research:

> **RQ1:** Why are parents choosing to home-school in T&T?

> **RQ2:** What does this say about the education system in Trinidad and Tobago?

These questions were constantly scrutinized throughout the research, recognizing the inherent assumptions under their framing.

2.4 Treating the Literature in a CGT Study

I commenced with a discussion of the literature review intentionally, because in traditional undertakings, the need for and position of a literature review is clear-contextualizing for the research. Familiarity with existing studies and, as such, its early introduction and completion is normalized in research (Creswell, 2009). However, in GT discourse, the use and place of the literature review are contested. There are several demarcation points between the three GT models; each model utilizes the key characteristics of a GT approach, but there is much deviation in the approaches and discourse on where the literature review fits in a GT study. There is more than just ideological disagreement surrounding the use of existing literature in GT research (Dunne, 2011).

Although GT's general characteristics and ethos resonate throughout all the models, the varying demarcation points make several elements of the approach contestable. The literature review is a challenged and contested area of conducting GT research. It is critical to note that the essence of the argument lies between the 'when' and 'how' of a literature review rather than the 'whether'. In a GT study, where data generate theory, it is critical to reflect on when a literature review is used and the extent and purpose of its usage. Classic GT, sometimes called a purist approach, advocates a tabula rasa approach, where no literature review is conducted early (Dunne, 2011; Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2010). In keeping with its 'discoverability' sentiments, the justification lies in ensuring that the researcher is not tainting the data with prior knowledge, preconceived ideas, and pre-determined concepts.

However, this ideological stance in the literature review is heavily critiqued; it was argued that the refusal to introduce established theories at early stages could result in "loss of knowledge" and "knowledge isolation" (Goldkuhl & Cronholm, 2018, p. 188). The idea that the researcher enters the field with limited to no knowledge of what is being investigated seems like a far-reaching task. Carmichael and Cunningham (2017) stated that this notion had been criticized for its absurdity in fathoming that any researcher is a "theoretical virgin" (p. 63). Furthermore, it is argued from the relativist assumptions of CGT that all research is value-laden, and all aspects of the research are value-oriented; it is inherent that the researcher enters with some knowledge of the subject under study.

Beyond this, it is the idea that acknowledging the value of the literature review allows for the researcher to further engage in reflexivity, noting the extant literature can be challenged and consistently problematized throughout the research process, as opposed to given truths to apply. According to Charmaz (2014), the argument should not be about when and if to conduct a literature review, but how and at what point the literature is used in generating theory. It is about literature review placement as opposed to existing without it. As an outsider to home-schooling, my unfamiliarity aided in deciding how the literature on the subject would be used throughout the study. Moreover, the

research proposal stage required a literature section; this fact is essential, especially when conducting academic research (Dunne, 2011). It provided an opportunity to have a cursory understanding of home-schooling through existing studies and debates to further frame and guide me in the data collection and, ultimately, the interviewing process.

Scholars acknowledged this proposal requirement and rationale for having a literature review at an early stage (Dunne, 2011). Notably, the literature provided a home-schooling context, but required further refinement and deeper reading as the data collection commenced. According to Goldkuhl and Cronholm (2010), to 'ground' is to provide a reason or justification. This understanding recognizes that other knowledge sources are needed to explain the phenomenon comprehensively. In this instance, a broad idea of home-schooling provided a helpful gauge to determine how, if, and whether the data spoke to what exists. Early literature allowed initial interviews to be read through and related to the literature.

Furthermore, as new categories emerged from the data, the literature review adopted an inductive quality; it developed, changed, ebbed, and flowed with the data collection and analysis. Acknowledging the importance of extant literature expands the notion and possibilities of theory development and keeps within the contextual premise of CGT. Even the development of theory does not occur in isolation, but that co-construction occurs throughout the writing and analysis process. Reading data through literature and vice versa enhances the co-construction process and deepens the analytical capability and ultimate theory generation.

I applied the literature review stages as espoused by Deering and Williams (2020): preliminary (to be aware of the phenomenon), integrative (to develop theoretical sensitivity), and validation (to contextualize through further and deeper comparison). As such, the initial broad reading of the home-schooling literature allowed for familiarity with key terms and practices around home-schooling; this was helpful preparation for effective interviewing, as will be discussed later. Suffice to say, the literature existed on a continuum from

commencement to theory development. Data analysis processes carved a path possible for new directions or greater depths and breadths of literature that should be engaged. This analysis highlighted the ongoing reflexivity and criticality employed throughout the research. Theoretical saturation, discussed later on, determined the readiness for a detailed literature review.

2.5 Selecting Participants

Charmaz (2014) refers to the first step in CGT as initial sampling. It is intended to provide a point of departure for the study, allowing for criteria to be defined. Sampling occurs before entering the field but not as a guide for the research. For this phase, I employed a purposive sampling approach. This sampling assumes that researchers must select the most suitable population to understand and gain insight into the investigated phenomenon (Creswell, 2009; Kvale, 2012). Selecting the best-fit sample allows the researcher to question which participants or sites would enable the best understanding. In my study, the criteria for participant selection were parents or guardians with at least one child home-schooling. No specific length of home-schooling timeframe was stipulated due to: (a) the limited discourse on the practice of home-schooling in T&T; and (b) a desire to gather as much information on both seasoned and new home-schoolers.

Choosing the parents/guardians as the participants, not the children, emerged from the overarching question of determining home-schooling parents' reasons for home-schooling and their experiences. The ultimate choice of participants was carefully considered, especially in the context of the implications for the final results. Because home-schooling was considered the 'other' educational choice in T&T, there is a notable absence of several home-schooling groups from which to select. Because home-schooling in T&T was not the norm, I approached HATT, the only recognized and legitimized home-schooling organization in T&T, for study participants. Prior readings on home-schooling families helped me appreciate what Brewer and Lubienski (2017) referred to as a private and sensitive practice. Although, there may have been home-schooling families external to HATT's listing, I determined that the

participants would be sourced from the Association because the level of buy-in and trust may be greater from an organizational-endorsed standpoint.

It was important to gain the HATT Board's trust, so one of its executive members acted as the gatekeeper. A written request was submitted to HATT's Executive and was ultimately approved. The approval meant that I was given access to a contact list of parents of the Association who expressed interest in participating in the study. I noted that this hand selection of home-schooling families needed to be considered as I would have access to specific 'approved' home-schooling families chosen by the organization as pseudo-representatives. This access to data provided me with contacts of fifteen (15) home-schooling families; eleven (11) ultimately participated in the study. This initial sampling phase sets the stage for the subsequent phases, including data collection, coding, and theory generation - the three inextricably linked stages of GT research (Kenny & Fourie, 2015; Mills et al., 2006b).

2.6 Collecting and Analyzing Data

A purposive sample lends itself to an equally purposive method. Although data can be derived through varying methods, interviewing was the method of choice for this home-schooling study. In keeping with the architectural underpinnings of the research endeavor, interviewing was considered the most suitable method due to its nature and processes. The parents of this study were selected because of their knowledge and experience with home-schooling. This criterion enabled interviewing to yield the kind of interaction and space for generating focused data to ultimately inform categories (Charmaz, 2014). Interviews establish the stage for the first step in the CGT's analytic process. Charmaz (2014) refers to this as "intensive interviewing" (p. 56). The very nature of the interview process delineates a space where both researcher and participant can "claim, explain, maintain, constrain viewpoints and actions… or reconstruct… to make sense of their situation" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 85).

The interview in CGT is positioned as more than a research instrument; it is a "social practice," mediating interaction between researcher and participant (Kvale, 2012, p. 8). It allows for the development of a relationship between participant and interviewer, recognizing the interview space as one that enables a give and take between two parties, thus making it a co-construction site (Mills et al., 2006). A significant part of the interviewing practice was my ability as a researcher to be continuously aware of my values and beliefs. Furthermore, its flexible, semi-structured design made it apt for CGT's emergence. As I endeavored to represent the home-schooling parents' stories, it was not a theory that was waiting to be discovered, but an understanding of the nuances and contexts within which they operate while acknowledging and unearthing my contexts and thoughts on the subject (see Brinkmann & Kvale, 2020).

Brinkman and Kvale (2018) encourage researchers to think carefully about how they define themselves as an interviewer. I consider myself the 'interviewer-traveler'. This interviewer moves beyond knowledge collection into the realm of knowledge creation. The interview for the interviewer-traveler is akin to a journey. Like most journeys, there is the possibility of changed paths, reflection, and discovery. Interviews allow this emergence to occur. Taking ownership of my stranger to home-school status positions the parents as more experts. The perceived interviewer-participant hierarchy is addressed, as the researcher ignorance empowers the participants. As a traveler, the interview path is never clear-cut; it is in itself an evaluative space. It is during several interviews that I was able to recognize that while I was in fact unfamiliar with home schooling, I was no stranger to parenting. It was at times, during interviews, where the disclosure of my motherhood assisted the process. Researchers grapple with the tension between involvement and detachment between researcher and researched (Berger, 2015). Making the decision to reveal about yourself is in itself reflexive. It is during the interview process where internal dialogue guides the decision and facilitates the co-construction. One parent, for instance when asked about her choice to home school, in explaining her process, paused to ask whether I had children. It was at that moment where my position as a parent served as a useful tool in the journey.

The relational dynamic encouraged a dialogue that was built on sharing as two parents as opposed to the perceived mainstreamer versus home-schooler construct. In other instances, the interviewing path required a change. For example, in earlier interviews there were several questions about the mainstream education system. However, what was revealed in the conduct of the interview proved that mainstream education organically arose from the discussion and did not require specific questions, but perhaps prompts. It turns out that mainstream education was their backdrop, to some extent their yardstick, upon which their home-schooling narrative lay.

My lengthy discourse with the 11 home-schooling parents served two purposes: attending to their lived home-school experiences, while constructing a theoretical analysis of home-schooling. Though 15 contacts were initially provided, 11 parents ultimately agreed to be interviewed as three others were unavailable (understandable, owing to the timing of the interviews at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic), and one parent indicated they were no longer home-schooling.

Initially planned as conventional face-to-face interviews, this was changed to online interviews owing to the drastically changed context at the commencement of data collection. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the T&T Government enforced lockdown restrictions and curfews; I had no choice but to deviate from the original data collection plan. Much has been written on emerging digital technologies in qualitative research. In particular, studies have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of synchronous communication like Skype, VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) and Zoom (Archibald et al., 2019). All interviews with home-schooling parents took place over a Zoom interface, a collaborative cloud-based videoconference service that offers online meetings (Antonelli, 2020). One of the main advantages of this video conferencing platform was its ability to record these interviews securely without third-party interference.

In advance of the meetings, parents were sent all consent documentation (see Appendices A & B) these were signed and returned. I also

informed the parents that the sessions would be recorded, and only upon agreement did I proceed with the recording. All recordings were stored in an encrypted space on a personal computer with a password only known to the researcher. A free Zoom account allowed for unlimited meetings between two persons. Archibald et al. (2019) argued that digital technologies like Zoom could replicate, complement and improve traditional methods. Although several face-to-face interviews were scheduled, the parents stressed how busy their days were and seemed more inclined and flexible with the Zoom interviews. Nevertheless, these advantages of time, flexibility and convenience are notwithstanding the everyday challenges of technology, such as connectivity and quality issues. I completed memos following each interview. In the CGT process, memos allow the researcher to write their initial thoughts, akin to journaling (Charmaz, 2014). These memos are factored in as the researcher moves through the various interviews as well as the analytical stage.

The interviewing process does not stand alone but is intertwined between coding, constant comparison and theoretical sampling (Kolb, 2012). GT has improved the rigor of qualitative analysis through its presentation of systematic strategies (Clarke, 2019), guiding researchers as they navigate their research. The CGT research process is iterative and emergent; it calls for a toing and froing between several stages. These methodical elements are not approached linearly; the emergent nature of CGT requires a repetitive, interlinked process of data collection and analysis that enables the ebb and flow between interviewing, coding, and developing theory. Several processes intertwine in applying this approach, and the journey to understanding home-schooling proved no different in this respect.

Interviews provide the first site where the analytical process begins. The stories, descriptions, thoughts, feelings, and sentiments of the participants give way to unfolding categories. The interviewing process is integral to CGT and incorporates processes such as theoretical sampling, constant comparison and memo-writing that work together to make sense of the data. The interview may be described as a dance between the researcher and participant; the research process is akin to methodical meandering between data collection, coding, and,

ultimately, theoretical formulation. These processes help to unearth the explanation of home-schooling within this context. Simply put, this home-schooling study incorporated an iterative process of interviewing, memo-writing, creating rough transcripts, comparing data, forming categories and a return to interviews and coding. The entire CGT analytic process is emergent. These processes allowed me to make sense of the data by continuously asking questions.

I entered my discussions with the home-schooling parents with open-ended questions (see Appendix C) that were a consolidation of my prior readings on the phenomenon and research questions. My initial set of broad categories was established from this union. I began my interviewing with prior codes drawn from the overarching research questions and early readings on home-schooling. These categories provided the starting point from which to undertake the theoretical sampling process. These early categories provided a loose but guided foundation from which to operate. Theoretical sampling refers to "seeking and collecting pertinent data to elaborate and refine categories in your emerging theory" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 192). Not to be confused with the initial sampling phase, theoretical sampling serves a critical purpose in helping to explore the depths and breadths of categories and further determine whether new lines of inquiry should be explored to further flesh out these categories. Glaser (1967) and Strauss (1967) explained this as an evolving process, where the sample develops as new categories emerge (as cited in Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

The process of theoretical sampling enables the GT researcher to engage in a systematic process of checks and balances until data saturation. A discussion of saturation has led many to question the ideal sample size for undertaking CGT research (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017; Charmaz, 2014). The idea of saturation occurs when the researcher feels they have reached the pinnacle, have fleshed out and explored every possible avenue with no new information emerging. Charmaz (2014) claims that a small sample can yield quality analysis depending on the interviewing strategies employed. In their CGT research, Carmichael and Cunningham (2017) explored the varying

arguments around the sample size and saturation. They unveiled that several factors impact saturation, such as interview expertise and appropriately selected participants; both present in this home-schooling study. Throughout this research, using theoretical sampling techniques, these categories were defined, redefined, and others included as the data from the interviews emerged.

The rigor of the theoretical sampling process injects the validity of this type of research. Theoretical sampling acts as a check and balance tool for ensuring that categories are constantly examined and expounded to their core until nothing new emerges. Although it is argued that part of this technique requires knowing when to collect more data from previous participants or engage new participants, the underlying quest is to determine whether new lines of inquiry need to be explored to reach the point of saturation (Charmaz, 2015). I employed theoretical sampling as I constantly reframed interview questions as the need for answers to unresolved data became apparent. Theoretical sampling techniques were also used throughout the interviewing stage as I continuously questioned what was emerging from the data to determine whether new categories needed to be established or fleshed out through revised 'lines of inquiry'. The memo-writing process allowed me to document my questions and thoughts after each interview.

Researchers have advocated using a reflexivity sheet after each interview (e.g. Salvador et al., 2020). From the onset, I dedicated a notebook solely to journal my thoughts throughout the research. Thoughts captured were not limited to those after interviews, but questions that plagued me regarding the topic. The lengthy duration of the interviews, 2 hours in most instances, allowed for a return to questions and probing as necessary to make sense of the home-schooling parents' stories. Lengthy interviews allowed for focusing on questions where deemed necessary. The memo-writing process enhanced the sampling process as I could document initial reactions and questions, noting unresolved data that became lingering questions. The memos permitted an informal analysis of sorts. They created a space for what Nelson (2015) described as "conversing with myself" (p. 19), i.e. what I was exposed to in my

data. My early interviews led to rough transcriptions, a re-evaluation of the initial categories and the development of new categories. This led to a revision/inclusion of subsequent questions for later interviews that would help unearth variations in the categories. This process occurred throughout the interviewing process.

Working in tandem with theoretical sampling is a constant comparison method. It encourages comparison within the same or with other data sources and continues throughout the data collection and analysis process. The constant comparison allows the researcher to unearth distinctions through a layered and continuous comparison method (Charmaz, 2014; Kolb, 2012). Glaser and Strauss (1967) pinpoint four stages in the process: (1) comparing incidents to categories; (2) integrating categories; (3) delimiting theory; and (4) writing theory (as cited in Kolb, 2012). The task is to consistently dissect the data through the process so that analytical distinctions can be made towards theory. Owning your ideas, helps situate your insights as representations instead of truths. This scrutiny allows the researcher to position themselves within the research and not aside from it. Charmaz (2014, 2020) stressed that a CGT approach must consider the researcher's thoughts and observations as crucial to this development process.

In this study, constant comparison in the early stages led to comparing incidents described by the home-schooling parents against their accounts and that of their fellow home-schoolers. It established early analytic notes pertinent to the emerging categories. By looking for similarities, differences, and nuances in the home-schooling parents' stories on their own and with others, I dissected and operationalized categories that made way for subsequent stages in the process. Initially, interviews were not fully transcribed; instead, I undertook the process of post-interview listening to each recording and made notes and observation statements. Full transcriptions of the recordings were later completed and uploaded to Atlas.ti, a computer program used primarily for qualitative data analysis. This program was primarily used to manage the data in the early stages, which Charmaz (2014) identified as the first coding stage.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show an example of one of the coding interviews and the establishment of initial categories.
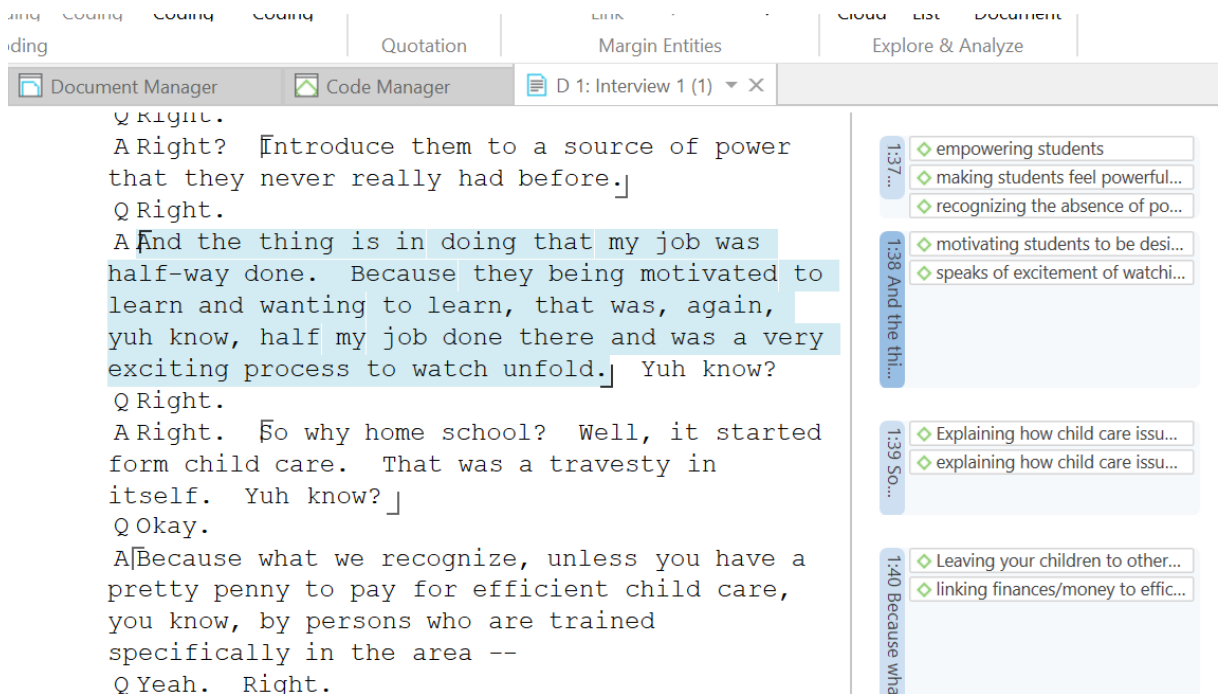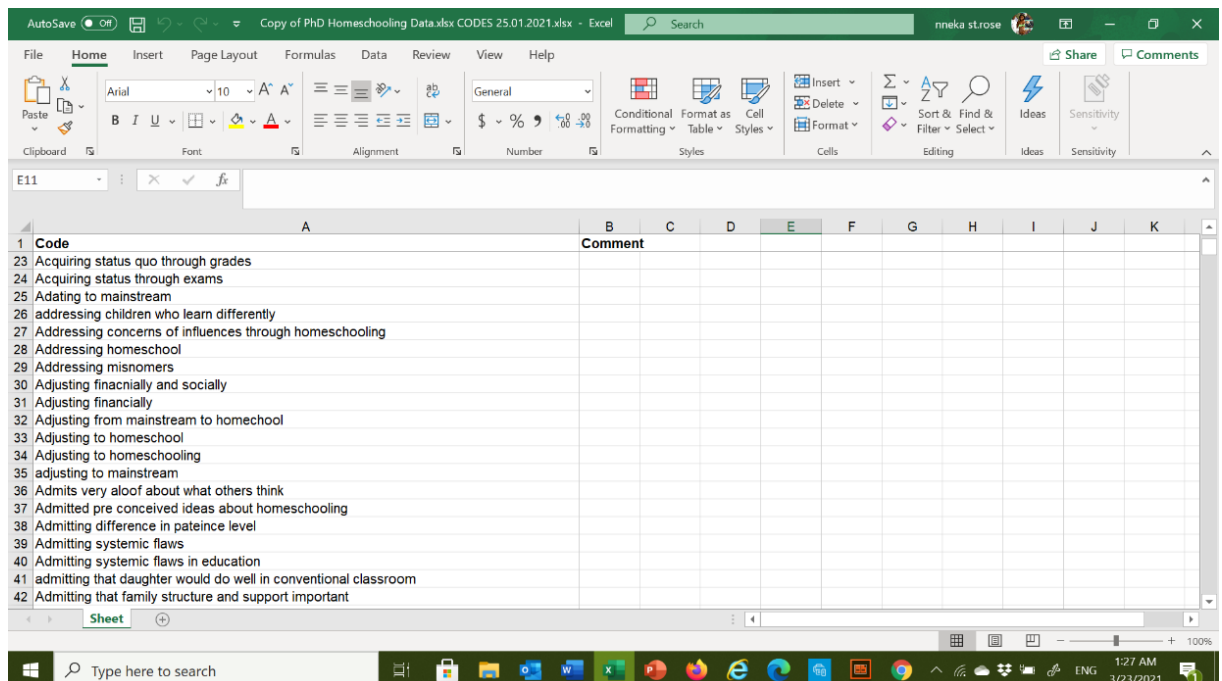

Figure 2.1 Intial Coding for Gerunds

Figure 2.2 List of Emerging Categories

Coding practices and rationales have differed across GT traditions. Glaserian GT introduces a complex coding process, while Straussian is procedural (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Charmaz (2014) emphasized that the coding process need not be complex, citing two approaches/stages of coding, initial and focused. The coding process converges the data collection and theory development stages. It is the process of labelling pieces of data in a way that not only names the data, but also accounts for them by examining how each fragment of data is connected to others guiding the research. It allows for a closer examination of the data and categories to define what is happening, implicitly or explicitly. Grappling with the data continues as analysts try to understand what it means and break it into smaller fragments. In using the Atlas.ti software, I undertook the initial coding process of line-by-line coding, a strategy recommended for CGT researchers. This initial coding enables the researcher to develop an intimate relationship with the data; it allows code construction based on what analysts deem is happening and significant (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Critical to this stage is how the coding process takes place.

Charmaz (2014) stressed that researchers should code for action and processes rather than themes. Themes stifle the possibilities of exploring the varying layers of what the participant accounts may unveil. This 'coding for action' is also a strategy that deters researchers from relying on pre-existing ideas; they instead derive the theory purely from the data. It ensures that the researcher focuses on extracting the processes at play. Charmaz (2014) described it as coding with gerunds and considered it an analytical tool that keeps the researcher on course using the data; it preserves the dynamism of the participant experiences. It is coding using action words that elicits processes, not merely using simple descriptive terms. This approach enabled a close examination of the stories provided by the parents. Moreover, it allowed me to explore the processes in what was said and all reactions.

The co-constructive process requires that researchers continuously ask "what is going on here?" (Foley et al., 2021). It is an interrogation of relationships between concepts. However, it is the researcher's responsibility to derive knowledge and insight, make sense of concepts and steer the course of

inquiry-a process that can implicate both researcher and participant. Charmaz's "code for action" strategy proved a useful tool to paint a picture of homeschooling in context, steered by me, but giving credence to the parents of the study. Early coding processes saw the emergence of grouped categories, presenting a preliminary illustration of homeschooling. However, it was only representing static accounts of homeschooling and not thoroughly capturing the nuances of the stories parents revealed through their discourse. The static themes, though indicative of a homeschool story, did not sufficiently capture the homeschool journey. Charmaz (2014) gives researchers freedom and flexibility to elevate the analytical level of codes/categories when the data calls for it. The process at play, as I further probed through memos, transcripts and reviewed interviews, were not merely accounts of how parents came to and ultimately navigated homeschool. Attending to what I heard was much deeper, critical and reflective. Parents were in fact questioning themselves, their decisions and their practices as a course of accounting for their homeschool journey. This recognition moved the analysis in a theoretical direction, further providing coherence through four (4) questions discussed in the next chapter. Presenting open-ended questions aligned with the emergent nature of CGT; the nature of the questions allowed for both internal and external interrogation with the data and extant literature on the subject.

Though beneficial to the constructivist philosophy, line-by-line coding proved to be a notably lengthy process that other GT researchers have identified could lead to fractured data and perhaps coding confusion (Markey et al., 2014). Each interview was coded line-by-line to elicit the processes at play while continuing to compare some of the codes that were emerging, aligned to the pre-existing categories, but were also creating categories on their own. With hundreds of initial codes in the first few interviews, I decided to do response-by-response coding as opposed to line-by-line. The main difference is that each question, answer, and discussion point was grouped as a category on its own, as opposed to each line per se. A second level of focused coding followed to assess and group categories (see Karpouza & Emvalotis, 2019). With a list of codes, I continued with the constant comparison method to draw out more focused areas from the existing codes; this included grouping and naming the

coded group. Using Microsoft Excel (Figure 2.3) gave way for more focused coding, where data were further aligned, bringing me one step closer to analysis and presentation of a theory on home-schooling in T&T.
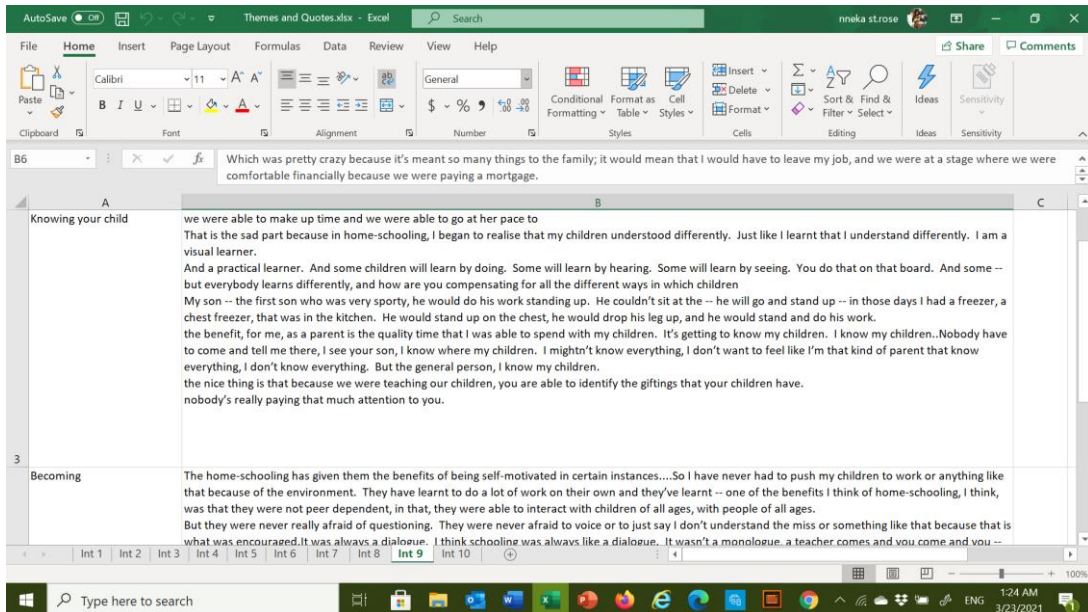
Figure 2.3 Creating Codes/Grouping Categories

2.7 Considering the Ethics

Hammersley and Traianou (2012) stated that qualitative research is "research that employs relatively unstructured forms of data" (as cited in Carpenter, 2018, p. 3). Generally, ethical considerations require that researchers scrutinize the research methods and the process in general. While quantitative research, due to its objective nature, allows this scrutiny to occur in advance, the nature of qualitative research makes a consideration of ethics a bit differently. The iterative and fluid nature of qualitative research lends itself to ethical considerations that must align to its core foundations. This includes an exploration of motives and intentions and continuous reflection throughout the research process (Carpenter, 2018). The constructivist approach of this home-schooling study required a continued consciousness and application of ethical underpinnings and practices. Presenting stories of home-schooling parents

through analytic lenses encouraged a plethora of ethical questions and considerations throughout this research journey.

CGT researchers are encouraged to consider the emergent nature of the approach. My discussion of ethics centers on the two intertwined ethical contexts of GT research; external and internal (Floyd & Arthur, 2012). The external context focusses on the general values surrounding all research. This dimension is akin to what has been described as basic ethical conventions or principles of research. Included in the external context is the issue of autonomy, which speaks to participant consent. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approvals oftentimes require that researchers outline the process of gaining informed consent by participants. This type of consent means that participants are told in advance what the research is about, prior to giving approval.

However, as Denzin (2007) highlights, the 'ground' is shifting and not solid. As such, though home-schooling parents were provided with a general overview of the research, the true purpose and ultimate analysis of the phenomenon was subject to change, revised and evolved with the research. To treat this dilemma, it has been suggested that researchers engaging in this kind of inductive research utilize a process consent, where consent occurs throughout the research process (Klykken, 2021). As a mid-range solution, I chose to provide my home-school parents with a general overview of the research undertaking. Their decision to participate was based on my goal to better understand home-schooling from their perspectives and not a specific area or aspect of home-schooling. I was critical, however, and viewed the participants as collaborators as opposed to data sources, especially as I wrote, being mindful of how they are being written about.

The second element of the external context is the notion of justice. This element relates to the understanding that researchers must be mindful of the anticipated results stemming from biases and preconceived ideas of the phenomenon. The strategy is to declare the presumed answers in advance. The continuous reflexivity of the CGT approach manages this possible challenge. In CGT, the reflexive process is about owning assumptions and

questions; being aware of them throughout the research process. Mindful and continuous reflexivity thus affects every element of the research as it asserts the researcher's influence in the process (Mruck & Mey, 2019). In this way, subjectivity is transformed in research from problem to opportunity. In CGT, it is an opportunity to be open and honest about the researcher's potential biases and situate it within the stories being represented, as the researcher too is not ahistorical, but positioned within their own socio-cultural realities.

It creates transparency and validity to the data to own the subjective element present in the research. It is about accounting for the assumptions and presumptions throughout the research process. Further supporting this is the memo-writing process, where I questioned what was emerging alongside my assumptions. Although the participant's voice is prioritized, it is not about silencing that of the researcher in the co-construction process. My interest in exploring home-schooling aligned with my challenges with the existing education system, a claim I felt home-school parents would support. It was my very early belief that a discussion with home-schoolers would share my thoughts and emphasize these inadequacies of the mainstream education system as I rationalized findings. By recognizing this and owning it throughout the research process, I moved past and even explored deeper levels of these assumptions and rejected them when needed. This reflexivity created transparency and a full commitment to research justice, not just an agenda rooted in my perceptions.

I was also extremely mindful of the language of my participants and representing their voices, recognizing them as subject matter experts, with knowledge and experience to support their practices (see McLeod et al., 2018). Though some researchers have spoken of challenges experienced in the field owing to different languages, my language experience was specific to the group with which I was interacting. Though we all spoke the same language, being from the same country, it was obvious that the terminology of the home-school community might be one that I was not familiar with, given my outsider status. Pre-reading the subject matter aided with this dilemma. In addition, the lengthy

interviews provided me with opportunities to clarify terms when used by participants and verify terms I may have used in my line of questioning.

The internal context of ethical issues relates to the construction of the study. In the first instance, it explores areas of anonymity and confidentiality of participants. McLeod et al. (2018) described anonymity as legal identifiers, such as a name, and other indicators that can reveal participants' identities, such as geographical markers. I recognized this area of contention early in my research as I considered my sample. In declaring HATT as my research site, I was inevitably narrowing the possible participants and bringing life to the possibility of identifiability. However, given that my sample only represents a small number of the organization's members, it may not be as easy to identify the participants from the statements provided. Anonymity addresses the issue of sharing identifiable information with others. I clearly stated that participants' names would be removed even in the transcription process, and all data would be stored in an encrypted space on a personal password-protected computer.

Beyond anonymity and confidentiality is recognizing the power differentials between the home-schooling parents and me as the researcher. Glaser (2007), in his critique of CGT, questioned notions of power as researchers write and determine interview questions. However, I argue that the relationships researchers develop with participants serve to balance power. This belief does not withstand that, as the researcher, we select the topic and design the study, creating a seemingly unbalanced participant-researcher power structure. Nevertheless, in the context of this home-schooling study, the use of the narrative approach provided an opportunity to bridge the power gap. CGT methodology allows for what Polkinghorne (1995) referred to as the analysis of narrative approach, where stories are used as data to analyze the narratives of home-school parents. In essence, narratives provided a way of making sense of and accounting for the parents' actions and views.

These narratives are situated within the interview process where researcher and participant operate in a shared co-existence and construction through these interactions and discourse (Charmaz, 2014). Thus, I questioned

whether and to what extent I accurately represented these home-schooling parents. The question was less about whether it was accurately presented and more about whether the painted picture demonstrated the authenticity of home-schoolers' voices. In the process of co-construction, it is easy for the participant's voice to become blurred as the participant's voice and researcher's interpretation and analysis intersect. The constant comparison method ensures that their voices are captured directly through quotation. As I kept track of data and aligned them to categories and codes, every interpretation or representation of the parents' voices was supported by what was said. This representation is even more accurate since the data provided for the analysis.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a roadmap for adapting the CGT approach in this home-schooling study in T&T. It outlined the philosophical and epistemological considerations of a grounded study and zoned in on the specifics of the CGT approach and how it was employed. The following chapter synthesizes the stories from the field as told by the parents of the study. The process of theory building continues throughout, and elements of the emerging theory begin to take shape.

Chapter 3: Results - The Home-school Journey: Stories from the Field

> I entered the home-school research journey, not carte blanche, as I had a general idea about home-schooling. As a mother to a young son, dealing with her own schooling challenges during a global pandemic, I was and am still convinced that I cannot home-school. But, after each interview thus far, I stood in awe of these parents, each with a unique perspective/experience, but still shared in some way (Field Memo #1).

Figure 2.1 Field Memo #1

3.1 Chapter Introduction

The coding process described in the previous chapter gave way to the emergence of key themes supported by four (4) reflective questions that anchor the home-schooling theory discussed in later chapters. Dewey (1997) purports reflection involves "consecutive ordering that each determines the next as its proper outcome" (p. 2). The basis for a belief is deliberately sought, and its adequacy to support the belief examined (Charmaz, 2014). From the data gathered in this study, the decision to home-school is undergirded by a series of interconnected ways of thinking and acting that when put together like puzzle pieces, explain the educational choice. The discourse about home-schooling meandered through a reflective journey of choice and discovery about themselves, their child/ren, and their families. The parents presented home schooling as a cognitive process encased by experiences, emotions, and decisions. These key areas, presented through the parents' authentic voices, demonstrate a form of telling about home-schooling that, though varied by experiences and individual circumstances, reveal common threads.

The following reflective questions are interwoven as the themes are discussed through the participants' voices. It is these questions that form the basis of the home-schooling theory that I will elucidate further in Chapter 5.

1. Who is my child?
2. What does he/she need?
3. How can I fulfil that need?
4. What kind of person am I educating towards?

Below, I introduce the parents of the study, providing background on each. I note that while five (5) parents were educators, the other parents were not. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of these parents, who undoubtedly brought a very private decision to a public space.

Participant	Pseudonym	Profile	Educators
Participant #1	Mrs. J.	Three children, ages 6-10 years; 6 years home-schooling.	Former Teacher in Vocational School
Participant #2	Mrs. B.	Five children; ages 13-24; 19 years home-schooling.	
Participant #3	Mrs. M.	One child, age 9; 9 years home-schooling.	Former Primary School Teacher
Participant #4	Mrs. A.	Three children, ages 6-19; 6 years home-schooling.	
Participant #5	Mrs. S.	One child, age 3.5; 3.5 years home-schooling.	
Participant #6	Mrs. F.	Two children, ages 6-11; 9 years home-schooling.	Former Secondary School Teacher, Presently Tertiary Educator (University)
Participant #7	Mrs. T.	Two children, ages 4-7; 2.5	

Participant	Pseudonym	Profile	Educators
		years home-schooling.	
Participant #8	Mrs. N.	Eight children, ages 4-20; 11 years home-schooling.	Former Secondary School Teacher
Participant #9	Mrs. C.	Four children, ages 15-25; 12 years home-schooling.	
Participants #10& 11	Mr. & Mrs.K.	Two children, ages 7 and 9; 4 years home-schooling.	University Educator (Mr. K.)

Table 3.1 List of Study Participants with Their Pseudonyms and Profile

3.2 Who is My Child?

3.2.1 Understanding the Child/ren

Consistent among all parents was recognizing their child/ren as individuals. The home-school process showed how parents assessed their child's specific needs in making the decision. Although parents spoke about the uniqueness of their child/ren, whether based on academic ability, special or even medical specificities, it was discerned that parents understood that, in some way, individual needs were not or could not be met in the formal education system. In many instances, their evaluation of these needs was situated within their experiences with the mainstream system. In an interview, Mrs. B. highlighted that because of the speed at which her daughter was completing the curriculum, she understood that the system was not designed to accommodate her and ultimately chose the home-school route:

Although this particular child, by the time she was finished her first year there, she was complaining that she was bored, and that they weren't

doing anything in school. But to her, she knew it already. She was ready to move on, and, of course, they have a class of maybe 25 children who are not ready to move on. (Mrs. B.)

In a similar vein, Mrs. F. spoke of her daughter's abilities being misaligned with the school:

And I realized there were times when I would… have to remove her because she was either, I wouldn't say bored, but where they were was not where she was. And I mean, if we have like gifted programs here, I would consider taking her like one or two days a week. If somebody who could work with her like that. So I am grateful because I can't see what primary school she can fit in.

The ability of the parents to recognize that there was no way the school could accommodate the requirements of their children solidified their decisions to home-school.

Additionally, it gave insight into the tailored approaches they needed to adopt to help their children on their path to education and learning. Sometimes, the requirements transcended the gifted needs as described by the parents above and included special and medical needs that prevented their children from either being able to attend school fully or not at all. Mrs. C. spoke of her daughter's illness, who saw many missed days of school and how home-school provides the necessary flexibility to bridge the gap:

I had two of my children were diagnosed with sickle cell disease and one in particular, which is my second daughter… So my second daughter her presentation of the disease was much more severe... So she would've had a lot of painful crisis, and so it would've been a challenge; she had strokes. And so only in hindsight, I realized that it was beneficial for us to home-school.

In the case of Mrs. B., the special needs of her two boys drove her continued journey through home schooling even after she home-schooled her eldest daughter. She describes the developmental challenges that her boys faced that prevented them from even accessing formal schooling. For her family, home schooling was not only a choice but the only option.

He was special needs… he couldn't hold a pencil… he dribbled on himself. He had no speech… he couldn't communicate either verbally or written… and body functions were not all there… they had language disabilities. One was a very low processor, and so he could not decode language at age nine in a way that you can read a paragraph and understand what you read, and so I had to then find the way to help him. And then the other one was what you called a classic dyslexic… but he had the body issue... language issues… speech issues… writing issues… and just occupational therapy because his body was not cooperating with him, he couldn't feel hot or cold, and he couldn't feel pain, poor muscle tone. So for those two boys, I had to eventually get them assessed by a neurodevelopmental specialist who would've then - because I was home-schooling - really bless our household by teaching me the therapies that they needed to do. And so for a bit, their school was therapy. (Mrs. B.)

Mrs. T., whose son was diagnosed with autism at age two, recalled her decision to home-school. As seen from Mrs. T.'s accounts, she, like Mrs. C., attempted the mainstream schooling experience, but the missed school sessions proved to be challenging to maintain the necessary hours required at school:

He would do a bit of pre-school, and on two days a week, he would have some therapy session. And it didn't make sense to pull him out of school for therapy because he wouldn't be getting many hours in school… we would do a mix of therapy and home-schooling. So what I did was to purchase all the textbooks that his pre-school would use, have them at home, as well, and kind of do the same thing they were doing so he didn't miss out. And that's how we began the journey of home-schooling. (Mrs. T.)

Thus, home-schooling was not only academic for these three parents but included therapy and medical assistance. The reflection of the medical and special circumstances that impeded their children's ability to function in a mainstream setting revealed to these parents that they needed an individualized approach to education.

The parents' abilities to assess the specific needs of their child/ren to determine which educational environment would best suit them was critical. The idea of knowing the child was not only specific to their special or medical needs but recognizing and differentiating between children. In one case, Mrs. J. admits her daughter was a neurotypical learner and would *"thrive"* in a mainstream setting. She further explained what was meant by 'thrive', explaining that the idea of thriving was in keeping with what was defined as successful within the mainstream system, a belief she did not share. Mrs. J. aligns her daughter's abilities to what the formal system requires for flourishing:

> Thrive as in… Aye! Yeah she probably would've passed for a real good school at SEA of whatever. Which is something I do believe in… so thrive in the sense that she would've had the ability to pass test because she has a good memory.

She makes the comparison between her daughter and son, the opposite, whom she notes may not have functioned optimally, stating, "my other two, I don't know that they would have been as fortunate or unfortunate as I see it. … My son, I mean, he's much layered, you know? ''

Mrs. J. is not alone in comparing children, even as they think through the home-schooling process. As was noted above, Mrs. B. did it with her sons and daughter. This comparison showed that even in the choice to home-school, parents understood that they must be cognizant of the differences between their children and how the home-school journey may differ for each child. As such, it was revealed that even within the same household, having multiple children required a complete understanding of each child to devise a home-school plan that catered to their individual needs:

> And especially my second daughter, she falls into so many categories that describe the gifted child. So sometimes, like, I remember when she was younger, she really was not interested in any kind of formal learning. She just wanted to play and build things. (Mrs. F.)

The parents who were home-schooling for lengthier periods spoke about truly observing and assessing their children over time to understand them and their needs better. From the dialogue above, this early assessment was a major factor in influencing the home-school choice for some of the parents. It was a

major influencing factor for at least five of the 11 parents. For others, getting to know their children was an outcome of the home-schooling experience instead of the deciding factor. For example, Mrs. J. spoke with pride, "actually knowing your child. And it's good and it's bad, but, I mean, I can tell you that I know my children." It was about genuinely knowing her children as a result of home-schooling.

3.3 What Does He/She Need?

3.3.1 Experiencing Mainstream Education

Intricately interwoven into many of the parents' narratives was a discussion of the experiences they encountered with mainstream education. In some instances, these provided the impetus for home-schooling. For others, it was a way of thinking through the education system and determining what they wanted and did not want for their children. Talking through their own educational experiences and that of their children, both positive and negative, gave a gauge upon which the decisions were founded. For all parents, however, experiencing mainstream education provided an opportunity to compare educational settings, further validating the home-school choice. Discussing the educational experiences provided a window into how these impacted the decisions. Experiencing mainstream was not relegated to the child, as many parents spoke of their own experiences. Several parents, with roles as educators at various levels in the education system, served almost as lessons and guiding lights to their home-school decisions.

Although few out rightly stated that these experiences drove their decisions, some operated in an almost nostalgic remembering of their own experiences and how, despite that, they wanted an alternative educational experience for their child/ren. At least six parents raised experiences that either they or their child had in formal schooling that impacted the home-schooling choice and overall experiences. Although the experiences were negative, for some, these experiences served as eye-openers and discoveries that led them to the path of teaching their child/ren at home. Mrs. J. spoke at length about working with at-risk boys and the way that impacted her parenting and overall thoughts about education and learning:

Well, the thing is, I've always taught at-risk schools, yuh [you] know?...
the children there didn't just teach me how to teach. They also taught me
how to parent. Being in the classroom with them, you learn what not to
do.

Three parents, all educators, stood out. They reflected on their teaching
experience. For Mrs. J., although in her own experience as a student she
witnessed teaching and learning processes that disadvantaged students, she
spoke with pride about her time teaching at-risk boys. In the statement that
follows, she spoke of how she understood education during this time. She
discusses them having "case" every Monday morning, alluding to the fact that
many of them had to appear in court. As a result, their challenges went well
beyond academic matters and included other dimensions. She considered this
information pertinent to her approach:

…but in - being in the classroom with them, you learn what not to do.
Because - yeah, I started off very traditional as in, yuh know, we teach
the way that we were taught… Right? But, yes, it wasn't no working with
them fellas. Yuh know, them fellas have case every Monday morning.
Yuh know? (Mrs. J.)

Much of her discussion alluded that during her tenure as a teacher, she
recognized the extenuating psychosocial circumstances that faced the students
that impacted her approach to teaching. In her statement, "okay, miss, my
father is ah alcoholic. So does that mean I'll become an alcoholic too?" Mrs. J.
provided an example of one of her students' circumstances. She recognized
that it was not merely content delivery but connecting with the students and
understanding their unique circumstances. Her approach with the boys she
taught apparently trickled into her home-schooling approach. Similarly to Mrs. J.
recognizing her children as individuals, as an educator, she already
emphasized individuality as critical to the teaching and learning process.

The parents not only spoke of their experiences as educators, but
reminisced on their time as students. Mrs. J. reminisced about her own time as
a student and how her disagreement with the practices within the education
system served as encouragement to approach educating differently as a
teacher. As Mrs. J. spoke of her experience as a student, she recounted

specific elements of the teaching process that she objected to. Not only did she do differently as a teacher, but this also helped her to recognize how she needed to do differently with her children:

> I mean, my own experience in school, the teacher had use to put all the high-performing children to the front. Yuh know? Those who come in the top 10. And then everybody else, yuh know, they scattered behind. And that is not the way. The persons who are non-performing, you hold on to those, and you keep them close to you. (Mrs. J.)

Interestingly, despite her powerful thoughts about the inadequacies of the education system, she enrolled her daughter in a private school setting as a 'social experiment'. This statement alluded to the fact that affixed in her mind, perhaps based on her teacher and personal experience, were pre-conceived notions of formal schooling that she knew would exist and manifest themselves in her daughter's experience. The normalization of school enrolment in this context may have led to her choice, but still with an idea of what to expect.

> My 10-year-old, when she was around four, we did a social experiment; she attended a private primary school… and - well, that produced the expected outcomes. You know? There're these tabletop signs that say "silence", yuh know? Sometimes you have the children holding their mouths together. (Mrs. J.)

However, not all parents had a negative personal school experience. Mrs. S. reminisced on her time at school, questioning where all the fun elements of learning had gone, recounting, "when I was in first-year, second-year, I distinctly remember they had the poster paints, and you have your li'l [little] apron, and we had a ochro [Okra]. We can make these designs with the ochro and the potato. " Mrs. F. also highlighted her education positively as she stated:

> I would say that I would've had, like, the best education in Trinidad. I believe so. The best education Trinidad and Tobago could offer. I went a decent primary school. I went to St. Joseph Convent, and then I went to UWI [University of the West Indies], and I did all my degrees there, and I got a scholarship to do my PhD. So I wouldn't say it's the average education. I think it was a good Trinidadian education. But I do feel as

though there were gaps in that education that I would've liked to see filled for my children.

However, I noted that her experience as an educator solidified and confirmed for her the gaps that she mentioned above. In the quote that follows, she highlighted several of the deficiencies that she noted emanating from the school system that she did not want for her children. She recalled the moment in her experience when she felt the urge to teach her children:

> So, I think my experience as a teacher… At the secondary school level and the tertiary level... influence my decision to home-school... this aversion to reading that worried me, because I understand the importance of reading. Not literate but of reading and having a thirst of knowledge wanting to understand things… in one of my classes, when I started to teach at university, I thought, I need to teach my own children. I remember that's distinctly going through my head… The attraction for me really was the need to be able to present what I felt might have been a more balanced type of education for my children. (Mrs. F.)

Before becoming a mother, Mrs. M., a primary school teacher, stated that one of her major deciding factors was the potential negative influences of peers. In an interview, she highlighted the improper manners of speech and the negative language that are introduced to children in the school environment. This awareness of the negative influences in mainstream schooling solidified her home-school choice. Home-schooling, in this case, provided an opportunity to manage the exposure of their child/ren:

> I taught in some very good schools but the influences of the other children was - a personal thing that I had an issue with. But the school environment, the children, what they come, the interactions, the - what the children learn, and then I've heard people say their kids speak so properly when they are at home, and then when they reach pre-school, they learn to curse; they learn to use the middle-finger. (Mrs. M.)

Her son never attended a formal school but having experience in the system as a former teacher and a student herself, she was aware of the kind of education he would be exposed to. She spoke hypothetically but knowingly of what the experience for him would have been. Even as she spoke of this, she

referenced her experience as a student to concretize her point and why she decided to pursue home-schooling:

>…if I was teaching and my son was in the system, we would be flying through the curriculum, and there would be no critical thinking I remember as a young girl in standard five, we didn't have time - Because standard five was just so much... Yeah. (Mrs. M.)

Mrs. N. also spoke positively about her school experience, reveling in this experience. However, with her eldest two children, the increasing tuition fees coupled with the examination-focused curriculum led them to consider a different path:

>We both went to 'prestigious schools. ' We both went through the regular public system – the conventional system. Well, for me it was pretty cool because I was a cool kid. I was one of the popular ones, so it wasn't bad for me. I can't say that I had a bad experience in school; I really, really can't. I had favor with friends, I had favor with teachers, and so it was okay for me. (Mrs. N.)

Thus, these parent-educators' abilities to experience the formal school setting allowed them to clearly distinguish between what the system was facilitating and how their thinking led to an alternative approach. As parents spoke of their experiences and what their children would be exposed to, there is evidence of an understanding of what education should be. I discuss this understanding later in this chapter.

Nine of the parents initially had their child/ren enrolled in a formal school before ultimately choosing the home-school route. Though the discourse around the pedagogical approach in the mainstream system was similar across the families, and each problematized the rigid examination-focused system structure, each had different perspectives on their child/ren's experience with the formal system. For some, it was the negative experiences, as was the case of Mrs. A., who discussed the negative experience she encountered with her sons in mainstream school. In one incident, the teacher forgot her son in the bathroom. In the second incident with her other son, he was left in the sick bay without contacting the parents. For her, the negligence and the inability of the school to adequately care for each child in a way that a parent can ultimately

influenced her decision to "educate our own children". Particularly noteworthy is that Mrs. A. was the only parent who had been home-schooled as a child:

> After getting to the classroom, they couldn't find my son—a small building. And the teacher who took them to the bathroom said, "Wait a minute! Let me go check back in the bathroom." Only to find my son sitting there in the toilet and singing to himself because they forgot him. Nobody contacted me. He was running a fever, and they knew it. I said, "Let me go and pick him up." And when I went to pick him up, they were like, "Oh! Yuh know, he is not feeling well." He had been in that sick room, no lunch, nobody attended to him, nobody checked on him, not a glass of water, nobody contacted me as the parent those who are looking over your children can be very - how to put it? They can have a lackadaisical way of doing things sometimes.

Not all experiences were purely negative. Mrs. B. presents a very mixed review of her daughter's experience in pre and primary school. She lauded the teacher but recognized the exposure and negative values she was exposed to in the system, similar to the concerns raised by Mrs. M. As discussed earlier, the final decision to home-school arose with the recognition that her daughter was surpassing the curriculum. It is essential to note the other experiences that she encountered that may have led to her home-school decision as she speaks of her experience with her daughter in a mainstream setting:

> Then she would have gone into pre-school, she had - it was a lovely little pre-school - run by a lady… who would teach your child and insist on the manners and the - so all this was good… and then we got her into a very good private primary school… we found very quickly was that every day she came home, and you had to be unpacking garbage. "No, no, you don't speak like that. " "No. Not this. " "Not like that."

Additionally, several parents raised the idea of wanting to partner with the mainstream school. Partnering may have taken different forms, depending on the family. It may have been through periodic re-entry into the mainstream setting for examination, as evidenced by Mrs. N.; she described her boys' re-entry into secondary school to sit the Caribbean Secondary Examinations Council (CSEC) examinations. They were easily able to reintegrate after having

been home-schooled and excelling; "We did put [child's name], as I said, back in the system. He ended up graduating, so he did CSEC; he got eight ones –- actually, he ending up getting 10. " (Mrs. N.)

Though some parents had not yet decided if they would home-school throughout secondary schooling, two parents, Mrs. B. and Mrs. C., home-schooled throughout primary schooling and then enrolled their children in private secondary schools. Mrs. B. stated that her family found a secondary school aligned with their family's belief systems. During her son's tenure at the private secondary school, she spoke of being heavily involved in her son's education, especially knowing her child's needs; she was able to guide teachers and the school allowed for this type of partnership:

> …the teachers at the school love me because they will say, "Mrs. F. (surname stated), you know I like you. You know your children. You doh [do not] come here to fight me down for your child. You know your child. You telling me what wrong with your child." You're seeing this, sir, you seeing that sir, this is what to do with them. Equipping me to help your child. (Mrs. B.)

Not all attempts at partnering with schools yielded the intended results. Mr. and Mrs. K. admitted that, initially, they were desirous of partnering with a school that aligned with their values and ethos of education. They discussed their tireless efforts in attempting to find a school where they could partner with them to execute a comfortable learning experience. Although they enrolled their daughter in a school that they felt met their expectations, they quickly identified challenges with the approach that ultimately led to their home-school decision:

> We actually went around to about seven schools… interviewing them in a kind of way… meeting with the principals and at the time, our mindset was… okay, if we are not gonna [going to] home-school, we're gonna go into the private school or public school… we want to partner with the teacher, partner with the principal because we want to be involved in the development of our children.
>
> In the school we eventually decided to send our daughter, the teacher was excellent, that teacher was really... excellent. So the teacher is excellent, the teacher knows good pedagogy, the teacher was superb,

but the system is just too huge. Those imposing facts derail the attempts of good teachers. (Mrs. K.)

In the statement above, Mrs. K. speaks about children being required to master creative writing at 7 years old and limiting play.

All parents, whether their child/ren experienced formal schooling or not, problematized the structure of the education system and the entire teaching and learning process. Notably, the emphasis that many of the primary schools had on the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA). The rigorous examination-focused education system structure did not resonate well with many parents and validated their home-school choice. For many of them, the challenge of the mainstream system was at the pre and primary school levels as the emphasis was on preparation for this examination. Mrs. N. spoke about the SEA challenge, and although their family with their first two children were desirous of finding a school that aligned with their values, she pinpointed that:

But they were the same way; they were very SEA-driven schools - and we didn't want that. So we decided to take them out. Before we did that, we looked at several other schools because we thought the problem was with this particular school, but then we realize it's all the schools were, basically, the same thing. Just SEA preparation, there was no real holistic learning, no catering to the child as a whole individual. You see SEA impacts on the whole system… high stake exam that children do at 10, 11 plus for their entry into a secondary school and the same pressure. Because everyone is working towards that SEA (Mrs. N.)

For Mr. and Mrs. K., the examination-focused curriculum also posed a problem. When they reminisced about their experiences as students with the examination, they stressed that during their time, the experience was not as stressful as it currently is:

The flows of the education system… pushed me to making the decision to home-school… I don't remember having a particularly stressful experience … I remember being sad not passing for my first choice… but I don't remember being stressed out in standard five, but even before children, we always said this activity around SEA went against so many

of the values we had around education and around primary school education. (Mrs. K.)

Even Mrs. S., who had the youngest child in the group at just 3 years, openly expressed her family's sentiments about the mainstream system. She expressed that she did not intend to enroll him in a formal school setting because:

> I find our school system is such a pressure cooker. It seems to be this big race to get to secondary school… SEA seems to be the finish line, and not so much that you enjoy learning and have time to be a child. (Mrs. S.)

As parents revealed both their experiences and insights about mainstream education, what was evident across all families was a recognition, that how education was done in the mainstream setting did not align with how they wanted their children to be educated. Clearly, their philosophy of education was at opposing ends of that of the mainstream system, and this propelled the home-school choice and, ultimately, how they home-schooled. Later, I present how these differentiated educational mindsets influenced their home-school practice. As indicated, the formal education system, whether by experience or perception, provided a glimpse into an educational approach they did not agree with and knew they wanted to do differently for their child/ren.

3.4 How Can I Fulfil That Need?

3.4.1 Valuing

The intersection of values and the importance it held for each family's journey was very pronounced in the discussion. This finding was evidenced; even as they spoke about their mainstream experience. Each spoke of specified belief systems that charted their path before and during their home-school processes. A critical point to note is the realization that the value systems that represented their families, in some cases, seemed to stand in

opposition to what existed in the education system. Furthermore, the parents' discussion of values showed how their beliefs, even before becoming parents, influenced their home-schooling choice. The most prominent values were educational, religious/spiritual and parenting.

3.4.2 Education

Parents either alluded to or openly raised the educational values, undergirding much of the discussions. Specifically, parents spoke of their vision of education and learning. In some instances, it was raised as a form of comparing what existed in the education system versus what kind of education they envisioned for their child/ren. Importantly, these ideals were not merely thought processes about education but manifested in how they practiced home-schooling. A comparison between formalized educational spaces served as the pivot to explore their ideas about what education is, should be, and how home-schooling manifests those ideals. They did not only explore the processes of teaching and learning but the more profound ideas around what education ought to be. Much of the educational values were also intertwined with some of their religious and parenting values.

Statements from four seasoned home-school parents elucidate the reflective process of home schooling that encouraged a continuous questioning of education and learning. They provide insight into how educational values are derived through the home-schooling journey:

> So, I also think the philosophical foundation of our education system is also slightly floored as well. Home-schoolers are constantly challenged to look at their philosophy of education. What is the purpose of education? What are you trying to do with your child? And it's something you battle with (Mrs. F.)

> And there are parents I talk to, and when I talk to them, it's just so clear to me that you would make a really good home-schooler because the way that they question things, and the way that they see their children, you can see that they really want something more. (Mrs. B.)

Sadly enough, I believe - the reason for learning has been lost. Why are you learning? You're learning so that you can gain knowledge for a purpose. So I think the purpose has been lost. We are just a people who are seeking to gain knowledge for knowledge sake. And the understanding behind why we are gaining knowledge, it is. Why am I learning this? I am learning this so that it will be of benefit to me or the wider community somewhere. So if it is not going to be of benefit, then why am I learning it? Why am I doing what I am doing? The motive behind what I'm doing is equally as important to what I am doing. (Mrs C.)

…we're able to see school and learning as way more than just sitting at a table doing work. Typically, I have branched off from that mode of thinking. (Mrs. T.)

The resounding emphasis of the parents was their belief that education is life. This mantra filtered into how each spoke of valuing the learning process as a holistic undertaking that must develop the whole child. Statements reflected these ideals and provided a foundation to discuss further, how this overarching educational ethos guided their home-school journey:

…but then we realize it's all the schools were, basically, the same thing. Just SEA preparation, there was no real holistic learning, no catering to the child as a whole individual. It was just academics, academics, academics. And so we wanted a li'l [little] bit better for them – a lot better for them actually. It was my opportunity to teach to them, life. Life skills, to give them opportunities that they would not normally and ordinarily get in the classroom. (Mrs. N.)

Education is not - I keep saying this - is not relegated to the pages of a textbook. Education is life. Life has become our classroom, and it has been for a long time now. And we allow them that freedom because that is part of life… So it's all about life being a part of their learning and catering not just to their academic or academic needs or their mental needs and so forth, but also to the emotional and physical need. So making sure they get enough time to go outside and run and play. So

education, as I said, it's holistic; it caters to the entire being of the child. Not just their academic mind and prowess, but their emotional, their spiritual and so forth. (Mrs. N.)

I found; schooling is life. Education is life. I think we like to narrow it down as to academic, but I always tell my children that I'm teaching you not just academic, but it's life skills. I think we have separated academics and life, and when it is - it makes no sense. You see, this is why I teach concept because a lot of things mesh into life. (Mrs. C.)

"Being at home with an education mindset" (Mrs. F.)

Hence, they conceptualized and educated in a manner that was meant to develop all facets of the child beyond academic matters, rather than just academic matters which they stressed were overemphasized in the mainstream system.

The process of learning, therefore, was about shifting the status quo and creating an alternative learning environment that stood in opposition to all they perceived to be the guiding philosophies of mainstream education. A point that frequently appeared in the discussion was the purpose of education and how it was reduced to a provision of status. While Mrs. F. admitted that she had no issue with education as a means of taking care of oneself, she felt that this overemphasis on status removed the true essence of what education stood for. Both Mrs. A. and Mrs. S. also aligned the public perception of education to a job and socioeconomic status:

I would ask my students that: why are you here? Many of them would say they're here to get a good education. Further their education. So I'd asked them, well, what does that mean? And some of them would say well you know I am here to get skills to be able to get a good job, to make money. A few would say I am here to learn or to gain knowledge. And I don't think anything is necessarily wrong with wanting to be educated to be able to take care of yourself and those kinds of things, I think that's important. I just think it is too limited a view of education. (Mrs. F.)

I think generally the broad public view of education may be more geared towards job acquisition, education for the marketplace, so you want your children to get an education, so they can have a good job and make money and be comfortable, take care of themselves, take care needs if needs be. (Mrs. A.)

Public perception of education pre-Covid is one of status. I believe that's what it all boils [reduces] down to. You have the ability to hold a good government job. You are part of the manufacturing factory type of age where you can hold a certain position. It's status. (Mrs. A.)

But we just seem so more intent on, I guess, the status of the job and the money and not so much on how society going, and how we care for other people, and it just feels so focused on... Like your whole life defined by this one exam. (Mrs. S.)

The status quo around education in the mainstream system was not only reduced to the outcome of education but how the education system was structured, creating a hierarchy of schools, subjects, and student performance. Mrs. N. compared the delineation of schools to a caste system. She was very concerned about the labels attributed to schools that then serve to maintain a hierarchical ordering, positioning academics as superior to vocational subjects:

We still have a kind of caste system, I think, locally. It's exciting. I want to see us moving away from the SEA route. I want to see us moving away from the prestige and none prestige schools. I want to see us looking at education is more holistic and not just academically driven. I want to see us and embracing vocational learning, not just in the junior secondary schools but in the — again, if you move away from the "prestige schools, "right? It should be all-encompassing, and it should all be a part of education. (Mrs. N.)

Mrs. F. also highlighted the importance given to certain subjects over others. Moreover, in ordering subjects against each other, students are frequently streamlined into areas with little to no connection:

Okay, well, you are a science student, and that's all you are, a literature student or… a history student, and in our society, we, sort of, already pit certain areas against each other or we have a hierarchy. I didn't want them to grow up with that like, at secondary school level, when you reach form three, they then start to put you in these lanes, we have subjects in silos, and we don't make enough connections. So we're not able to make connections between history and economics or business or language and medicine or education; we're not able to take those subjects and translate them into life.

…We will not see somebody who's interested in science or interested in mechanics or interested in cooking as less than as somebody who's interested in law.

…So this whole concept we may have of some children duncy [a colloquial term used locally to describe low levels of intelligence], some children bright, and we label children who may be vocational, or skills oriented or trade oriented as duncy We really need to work on that. (Mrs. F.)

The ranking system was not only relegated to fields of study but transcended to the students for some parents, as evidenced by a statement above. These rankings created labels for children within the system, which were counterproductive to the education process for these parents. Mrs. B. discussed her daughter's experience with performance placement and her thoughts on this practice. For her, the ranking system was aligned with the competitive nature of the school:

The little time that my daughter was in school, the particular school was a very competitive school, they did make top 10 and this kind of stuff in SEA, and so they were very proud of that, but my daughter was an A student, but – they used to put the place. First, second, third, and she was always in the top five and – if you know – "mommy, I came second. "– I say "No, no, I don't care about that. What grade did you get? An 'A' okay. Good. Let's see, how are you different subjects? – Okay. You did really well in this. " I don't care. I purposely avoided that number thing. Everybody cannot come first. (Mrs. B.)

The home environment created an opportunity to undo and sometimes create a learning space that did not align with the mainstream system's existing status quo. Consistent across the narratives was the emphasis that learning must be enjoyable. Ensuring that learning was 'fun' for them allowed all development elements to occur. If their child/ren enjoyed learning, it did not seem daunting and task-oriented. Learning became a part of who they were as individuals, and a thirst for knowledge was more than getting a job or being placed first in a test; but a part of life. Prioritizing learning as an enjoyable process ensured that every aspect of the home-schooling journey connected to this idea. As Mrs. N. said, "Because they have a love for learning, they have a love for researching on getting to the bottom of things and doing the due diligence, you doh have to be on them all time."

The emphasis on the love of learning as crucial to the education process was further exemplified in this statement:

> Because of the mindset in our house, learning is fun. So it's something to do, so I get to do what I want to do, not what you want me to learn; I can learn whatever I want to learn. (Mrs. B.)

Mrs. B. further lauded her son's enjoyment of university, attributing it to the mindset created in her household throughout the home-schooling process. Further, she recognized how the mainstream system could have led to a different outcome:

> I never see a child going to university coming home saying I had a good time… When you can do that for a child that would have hated school because he would've been in the student getting Ds, being called 'stupid,' 'duncy,' 'miserable' 'cah [cannot] sit down.' Being at home with an education mindset, you find it just changes every - Mainstream, really, sadly, has evolved into learn to test. And to me, that is not education. Why are we torturing our children? And so, to me, you are sucking the love of learning outside of our children, and that's not what education is about. (Mrs. B.)

Making learning an enjoyable process is one of the elements that other parents also noted as missing in the mainstream system. For them, a seamless, flexible learning environment was the key to education:

He's always learning, and that's what home-school is... He's interested in numbers, and he's interested in certain things, and once you work along with them and you pull on that interest - then you find that their learning is exponential, if you want to put it like that. They're learning for fun. (Mrs. A.)

…that you want to develop a love for learning in your child. If the child does not have a genuine love for learning, that will translate in many areas of their life. I feel like it's way more important to give your children a love for reading, a love for learning, a love for asking questions, a love for demanding answers. But once you do have a love for learning and a curiosity that most times has to be given up by a parent, one thing about that, you could feel a li'l bit more comfortable that they will find a useful way to learn, or a useful way to earn as they get older. (Mrs. T.)

…but is such a rush we have to get through this curriculum that, if you don't learn how it taught well, that's about it. That you can tailor what you teach to how the child learns because clearly everybody doesn't learn the same, and, I guess, in a mainstream setting, if you don't learn like everyone else is that you'll get labelled easily. I mean, you could slow down, you could go faster, you could stop at - because you might be interested in learning more about something. (Mrs. S.)

The parents spoke of the rigidity of the structure in the mainstream system, exacerbated by an examination. As Mrs. F. stated, "I also think our philosophy of education is heavily exam centred", speaking of the mainstream system. As such, their creation of a learning environment that was not dependent on an examination was ideal for their educational processes: "… for me really was the need to be able to present what I felt might have been a more balanced type of education for my children that would not limit them " (Mrs. F.).

All parents discussed the SEA as the major stressor of the education system. It is the benchmark upon which all success is based and as such is used as the guideline with the curriculum designed to meet the examination standards. For example, Mrs. F. stated, "… your primary school education

becomes preparation for that exam. " Meeting curriculum needs becomes the defining feature of primary education, and all learning is geared towards this as Mrs. S. and others discussed:

> … SEA seems to be the finish line, and not so much that you enjoy learning and have time to be a child. We see people talking about lessons from all second year, standard one, and I'm like... Because even at pre-school is, like, this big race to learn to read. (Mrs. S.)

> You still have to gear up yourself as a parent for SEA. Like that is the end goal at that point. And because they focus so much on that… that, I think they lost focused on the fact that education is way more than what the teachers putting into your child for a few hours a day with divided attention. It has to be more holistic than that. Children need way more than being able to pass an exam. (Mrs. T.)

> You know why it's difficult? It is difficult because they have a curriculum to follow. And so there isn't any leeway. They have to follow this; they have to complete this curriculum for this year in this amount of time. When I think about the amount of time a teacher has to teach a particular subject, it's really not much, you know. So there's nothing wrong with that, and we have to get away from downplaying those skill sets, and if somebody is gifted indifferently. Yes. But we teach in a manner that only one type of people are really benefiting. But everybody learns differently, and how are you compensating for all the different ways in which children - and this is natural how children learn? (Mrs. C.)

With genuine learning and an expanding knowledge base as their primary focus, these home-schooling families opt to facilitate a space of limitless learning. It is not tied to an examination; providing the ability to tailor the curriculum to the child/ren's needs to create an environment where every dimension of life is considered learning. There is no limit to their approach's depth and breadth of discovery. Because of their awareness of the boundaries that a rigid curriculum sets to the extent of learning, their approach opposes what they see in the mainstream system.

One way that these home-schooling parents ensure a broadened scope for learning is the emphasis on reading and not simply reading for syllabus but reading broadly. The significance of reading as the core of their educational ideals was revealed through the parents. Reading was a way of encouraging exploration and honing curiosity, which most parents stated must be permitted in the educational process. Mrs. F. spoke of the importance of reading and how she incorporated it, especially in her use of the literature-based curriculum that she selected for her daughters. The choice of curriculum again illuminated their overall values on the learning process and what it should entail. Here, she explains how she understood reading, not simply as literacy but development for a thirst for knowledge:

> …and so I would take her out of the class, and we would spend time reading and doing whatever; I would plan things for her and especially where reading was concerned - and she would read very, very quickly - very quickly for some children this aversion to reading, that worried me because I understand the importance of reading. Not literate but of reading and having a thirst of knowledge wanting to understand things. …And that's a literature approach to education basically looked at the use of live books the teacher children as opposed to what is called a textbook approach to education. And as the parent, you are spending time just reading to your child; you're going to read about artist, you're going to do a lot of reading. Well, the whole literature approach is a very important part of what we do; we always read together. So I read aloud, and we always have our reading time - our reading - our literature time together. (Mrs. F.)

Mrs. N., whose repetitive statement of "education is not relegated to the pages of a textbook", also utilized the same curriculum. Additionally, Mrs. M. expressed that the overemphasis on the mainstream curriculum limited the extent of reading exposed to children:

> …very literature based, where there a lot of learnings through the reading of rich literature text.

…thinking even, like, with their creative writing, they not getting time to read. So what you - yeah. And what end up happening in reality in the system is that they just focus on the exam subjects. (Mrs. M.)

Because reading allowed for greater exposure to a wealth of knowledge, parents found that their children would be taking deep dives into subject areas that transcended what a mainstream curriculum would prescribe for an age group. Their selected curriculum was designed for a deeper reading of the subject matter. The seamless approach did not tie an age to the depth of a subject matter; for them, this was part of how home-schooling broadened the educational experience. Mrs B. proudly stated that much of the subject matter that her children were covering was well beyond what would have been recommended for the age group:

> And, again, that kind of science, when people saw what I was covering with them, they say, "but you doh do that until secondary school? '' But why not? Why wait? If they are interested into it, why wait? Let them learn it; expose them to it. I remember one of my husband's friends he say, "but I didn't learn that until I was in university, '' and I am talking about the primary school curriculum. (Mrs B.)

The parents also presented home-schooling as a two-way learning process, where even they found themselves learning alongside their child/ren. Noteworthy is the fact that the way the learning process occurred was through discussion and dialogue between parents and child/ren. It was not only about the child/ren learning, but the parents were engaging and getting perspectives from the child:

> And I am telling you, I learnt things in that year that I didn't learn all through my years of secondary school. Some of the things I was teaching my five- and six-year-old I never learned it when I was in form two. So the learning is very advanced. Because in their system, they give them opportunity to show and tells and to, really, not just sit down and learn by rote, not just sit down and learn from the pages of a textbook. If you're doing, for example, World History, all the books, the literature, the reading books, the read-aloud, everything would revolve around that particular topic. It's also a learning experience for me, as the

mom, because no matter how many times you teach a particular bit of content, a curriculum because you're teaching it to a different child, they have their own unique perspective, so they might bring something to the fore that you never thought of before. (Mrs N.)

Mrs. C. also spoke of the importance of dialoguing and learning from her children as integral to home-schooling. Essentially, this approach too served to dismantle the hierarchy that existed in the mainstream system where the teacher retains control throughout the learning process:

But they were never really afraid of questioning. They were never afraid to voice or to just say I don't understand the miss or something like that because that is what was encouraged. I think schooling was always like a dialogue. It wasn't a monologue, a teacher comes, and you come and you - there was a lot of questioning I talk a lot. I talk to them a lot. So we had a lot of conversation over the years, and to the point where even now we talk, our family dynamic is that we talk. And we talk a lot, and we talk about issues, and we talk about life, and we talk about marriage, and we talk about all different topics. And I think that part of the home-schooling fostered that because they were always accustom hearing me speak. But not just hearing me speak. I was accustom hearing them. So teaching was more of a dialogue, it was more of a question and answer, it was listening. So I think they learned those skills. So teaching is one impartation to the other. But I think in the learning process, there must be that back and forth where we correct. (Mrs. C.)

As she compares this to the kind of hierarchy that exists in the mainstream setting:

And I think it's the environment that is set up right now, because of the volume of students and the challenges that they have - because - and then children are not taught, let's be real, children are not taught to speak back. They are taught to stay quiet. From the time you enter into the school environment, you're taught to sit still and don't open your mouth. (Mrs. C.)

Her statements align with the experience that Mrs. J. spoke about in the 'social experiment' with her daughter in mainstream education, where she referred to the culture of silencing children in school:

> …that yuh know, there're these tabletop signs that say "silence" yuh know? Sometimes you have the children holding their mouths together. Asking them the question: 'What do you want to learn? ' Introduce them to a source of power that they never really had before. Understanding your students and really giving them that autonomy in the classroom. 'I want to hear what you think. ' (Mrs. J.)

Giving children autonomy over their learning while still facilitating learning was integral to their home-school process. Being the 'guide on the side' as opposed to the 'sage on the stage' analogy quickly came to mind as I heard them speak to this:

> …and you allow them to lead. And when you do that, you will be shocked. If you force them in a direction, then that's where everything can go a little bit off. But when you allow them to lead - allowing them to lead means that you are an observant parent, right? (Mrs. A.)

By integrating the love of learning with the parents' seamless approach to education, they engineered minds that saw learning as a continuous and ongoing process. A large part of the learning process was encouraging their child/ren to explore their passions and interests. Sometimes, this enhanced the learning of a particular subject matter, while other times, it gave the children an opportunity to pursue areas that interested them.

In the interviews, Mrs. M. and Mrs. B. explained how the child's interests were integrated into the educational process. Mrs. B. discussed engendering an environment where learning is fun and curiosity is encouraged. They both stated that once their children complete their structured work, they can pursue their interests**:**

> …but once they were finished with their bookwork for me, they had the freedom to explore whatever their passions were. (Mrs. N.)
> She's done. So now she could play, and she can pursue whatever she enjoyed doing or learning about.   So she went on and would do whatever she was interested in; she love to cook and bake at the time,

so she would come in the kitchen with me – This is what you want to teach to, and as you grow with a child, educating the child, you kind of learn where their passions lie, and you teach more of that. While even if you hate math, I still need to expose you to math because in life, you have to do some math, and so I am going to expose you to maths. Same with science, same with history, same languages, you're going to be exposed; it may not be a thing, but let's touch on it. But if this is your passion if science is your passion, then we will take a deep dive, and you doh have to wait until university to learn to do sitting things if you're interested in learning it now. (Mrs. B.)

Two parents referenced external education systems that aligned with their thinking about education. For Mrs. A., the Finnish system exuded many elements of education that she found to be best practices. For Mrs. N. as well, the Finnish system of education aligned with her philosophy of education:

The Finish system. Their classrooms are designed for learning… the classrooms are designed for individual curiosity to be filled - to be educated. So the system designed is really encouraging for children to learn. (Mrs. A.)

It [referring to the mainstream education system] does not lend itself to a lot of creativity and entrepreneurship. And home-schooling allows for a lot of that because, with the creativity, a lot of people tend to sort of blossom in the area - of entrepreneurial exploits as it were. Although the mainstream school allows for it in a certain extent, they may have some programs and so on, but the system is designed to make a worker out of you. (Mrs. A.)

I had subscribed a lot within recent years to the Finnish method of schooling. In Finland schools, they don't believe in really starting formal education until the age of seven. (Mrs. N.)

For Mrs. N., four of her children had thriving businesses, which she attributed to the home-schooling process and its limitless approach to knowledge and discovery that extended beyond a set curriculum.

And so we were able to create opportunities afford them the opportunities to explore their passions. He was thinking about becoming a forensic psychologist, and so that was his inclination, that was his interest, and so he was pursuing that well, again, that is one of the perks of home-schooling, when you unearth the love of learning, and its inculcated into them, the skies the limit. Talents and gifting's, and so we are able to see because we are a spending that much more time with our children, we are able to see what their natural inclinations are. And we can teach them that, we can help them to develop that. So one social studies, economics project I did my daughter - I did with the boys too, M. and A. [mentions children's names] but I also did it with our first girl that evolved into her business Princes Cupcakes. (Mrs. N.)

Learning and the whole educational process for these parents were much more than how they had perceived or experienced them in the mainstream setting. As Mrs. T. stated, "We're able to see school and learning as way more than just sitting at a table doing work.   Typically, I have branched off from that mode of thinking. "

Their inclusion of very practical approaches to teaching and learning was facilitated through the home-schooling process, as it allowed for incorporating life elements. For them, this practical application had greater relevance to the learning process:

…but what I believe in and what I gear my children towards is skills training. Skills, technical and vocational training. So if it that, yuh know, we introduce the children to these things through the very practical methods as opposed to written and textbook - what I do, are authentic assessments… everything is done in the moment and using relevance. So a lot of math takes place in the kitchen - And being able to read the recipe and being able to identify what ' lb" means and - yuh know? (Mrs. J.)

…if I am baking cookies, it's cool. Everything is a learning opportunity. Home-schooling represents in a much better fashion what education is all about than what happens mainstream in our country (Mrs. B.)

So for example, my son really loves cooking, so I make a point of having him in the kitchen with me at least a few times a week. I do look at their specific interests. To just broaden their horizon, are not limit it to a textbook or what you learning from a blackboard. (Mrs. T.)

Some of their values related to education unfolded based on their choice of curriculum for their child. Mrs. M. spoke about the practicality of learning, aligning it to her illness and what she taught her son. Mrs. S. stated that learning exists everywhere; even visits to the market yielded as much as a visit to the library. Mrs. C. aligned learning of fractions with art.

And the formula says, "The time should be spent - one-third of his time should be spent on academics, one-third of his time should be spent on work. So it's a work-study programme… this week if we're learning, if my muscles are hurting, we'll go and - we'd learn on the YouTube all about muscles so we could - I find that it's loaded because I don't even get through with the whole curriculum. (Mrs. M.)

Visit to the library; the library has story time, and everything is something you can learn about. We go to the market; he likes to go to the market. Then the rest of the time, we outside, we digging in the yard, he's in the kitchen with me, so it's very hands-on. (Mrs. S.)

If I'm teaching fractions, I'm teaching fractions in relation to art. My son is doing art, and I'm teaching him proportion. I said, "Okay, if you want to replicate this on this page", ah say, "divide the page into four. " Or say look you baking, I say, okay, this is 1/3, and this is whatever. And you're seeing in action, you're seeing it in life. Okay, this has an application. You learn it – you'll never be able to take that… (Mrs. C.)

3.4.3 Religion/Spirituality

Individual families' religious and spiritual ethos emerged more overtly with some parents than others. Some were very clear about the role religion played in their home-schooling journey. There were mixed responses when

pressed about whether many of the families were religious. However, some parents attributed it to divine intervention that led them to the home-schooling path. For example, Mrs. C. initially hesitantly spoke about how she attributed spirituality to her home-school commencement:

> I know this is going to be weird… Because I know the academics and the spiritual doh really mesh. But it is really for us - it was really - it felt God a lead… it was not something that we had ever thought of ourselves. But as we look back now, we could see in hindsight why God would have led us down this path.

Similarly, as Mrs. N. spoke about her husband's initial hesitation, she alluded to God's early presence in the decision-making process and spoke very openly about trusting God to guide the process:

> My husband was not on board with the idea, initially, and eventually, I left him in God's hands because I figure if it's something that God wanted us to do as a family, as the head of the home, he WILL have to take care of his son. - and I realize that this is not what the Lord had called me to do. This is not what he had called our family to do. He was taking us out of the mainstream, the main way, the traditional conventional way of doing things, to do something different.

The idea that religion was essential to these families highlighted that the process of choosing home-schooling was also a means of maintaining and strengthening religious values. Mrs. B. chose to home-school her children through primary school and enroll them in a Christian-based private school because it aligned with the values of their families. In this way, they felt a sense of comfort that the educational approach would reinforce their belief system:

> …it was a Christian-based school and seemed to go along with what - with our families' values. The first thing we want to do is educate the human being. And, well, our ethos is Christian, so a Christ-centered heart. (Mrs. B.)

Religious instruction was an integral subject even in their curriculum delivery during the home-school process. For example, Mrs. M. stated, "Oh, Yes! Big time. Big time, yeah. The literature I would've read was a book from one our books Adventist Hope. The Seventh Day Adventist - So that's one of

the books I would've read. " Mrs. N. also integrated Christian values into her curriculum, stating

> …cause I'm a Christian - it was my opportunity to teach to them life. Life skills, to give them opportunities that they would not normally and ordinarily get in the classroom. So while we - we don't use the local curriculum, by the way, we use a foreign – actually an American Christian curriculum. It caters to the entire being of the child. Not just their academic mind and prowess, but their emotional, their spiritual and so forth and, again, because we are Christians, So, yeah, I think God worked that out because I had put it in the Lord's hands, I say "Father, you work it out. "

Also, as part of the Seventh Day Adventist faith, Mrs. A.'s faith introduced her home-schooling ideas. In a statement from her interview, she discusses how the values embedded in the faith are very much aligned with the education process. From her perspective, the societal values were eroded, and the mainstream education system was deficient in correcting that:

> Apart from that, in our faith, I grew up as a Seventh Day Adventist, and part of the counsels that were given was home-schooling - Adventist to home-school their kids. And that's where we have our whole value system has eroded, and we do not understand what really is the value of life. I mean, it's all embedded in education; what we see, and what we have, what we currently possess, comes from that. Comes from how we educated our people and all of that. Teaching our children to be able to appreciate what we do have - how to do we show that appreciation? The simple values of life. (Mrs. A.)

Mrs. S. clearly wanted her son to adopt her family's values, and she had little confidence in the ability of external forces to enforce the values that she subscribed to. While she was not naïve in thinking she could shelter her son forever, she was adamant that laying the correct foundation by asserting the role of educator in the early stages provided a solid foundation. So, as she said, her voice remains present throughout his life:

> I know for me that - well, I said before, being his main influence was important because we are Christian I'm not saying they not going to be

out in the world. That's naïve, and that's not going to happen. But you want that, when they are out there, that your voice is the strongest one - in their heads at this time when you have that influence. So that when they do go out on their own it's more likely, I hope, they would remember the stuff that you taught them. As opposed to when you're very young, and you have all these different voices. Because you have your parents one way, yes, but then you have your friends and to some extent teachers because everybody wouldn't have the same value - they spend so much time in school that you have no control over what's being fed to them. (Mrs. S.)

3.4.4 Parenting

Several parents reflected on parenting as they discussed their home-school decision and journey and the way their own beliefs about parenting influenced the decision to home-school:

In addition to we as a family not wanting to be in that stressful environment… I also see… we had these really grand ideas about parenting… I feel as if coming into parenting having read and having all these ideas and then having that in your mind and then being part of an education system that still values… this approach to SEA… it was as if. It was always at loggerheads with what we were coming into parenting with. (Mr. and Mrs. K.)

It appeared that Mrs. B. shared these sentiments as she spoke of entering parenting with a particular mindset that was put into question when her daughter entered the school system: "…we wanted to have a positive parenting style, elevate virtue instead of the suppressing ego, "don't do this, don't do that. ' You wanted to talk about kindness, you wanted to elevate that, and so that's how we began."

Each parent came to that moment through different processes and experiences. For some, the idea and prospect of home-schooling existed well before they were parents:

…and I think it was something that I was drawn to before my husband and I had children… so I would've come into parenthood, sort of, with a

home-schooling mindset. So I wouldn't say that I started at a particular

point because home-schooling was the direction I knew that we wanted

to go in as a family. (Mrs. F.)

3.5 What Kind of Person Am I Educating Towards?

3.5.1 Teaching Character/Becoming

For these parents, education was not simply an academic matter; it was
holistic and life. The parents were very vocal about what kind of child/ren they
wanted to raise and how home-schooling facilitated the space to develop that
whole child adequately. Mrs. B. 's questions illuminated the values that the
parents placed on developing character and ensuring that their children were
equipped with skills that transcended and, according to her, formed the basis
for academic matters:

And I often provoke people to think about what are your goals for your

children? Who do you want them to become? This is what you want to

teach to, and as you grow with a child, educating the child, you kind of

learn where their passions lie, and you teach more of that.

…So education being very holistic. Because our families' view on

education is first character, then academic. We believe if you get the

character right, then the academics will follow. Excellence and

academics follows if character is right. (Mrs. B.)

Mrs. C. also emphasized the importance of character building and being
very conscious of the type of individuals, she was raising. She explained with
pride about witnessing this in her son as he ventured into the world of work:

I wanted to teach my children character, and I believe once they had

character, I say that would filter out into every other aspect of their lives.

So that means that they would've had the discipline to do the academic

part of whatever academic role they would have in their lives.

…Primarily, I wanted to teach them character. And I think that was the

plus for me and teach them character to teach them how to live with

each other. For example, in the early as you would teach them concepts

like forgiveness and repentance and stuff like that, you do your sibling

something - they argue, right? But I wanted to know when my children go out into the world, the impact that they have is a positive impact on their workspace.

…And I've seen that. And at the age of 18, he was working somewhere before, he's working in the bank now, and at 18 the reports that we were getting is that how mature he is, and how well he works, and his work ethic. They kept talking about his work ethic Okay… That's why I'm always amazed at my son. I say they are amazed; these older people are amazed at the work ethic of a 19-year-old boy in the bank. So - every point. And he will go, and he will say, "my mother teach me to work in excellence." That is our word in here. (Mrs. C.)

Furthermore, Mrs. F. spoke of the traits of the home-schooled child, the qualities that policy makers wanted as the outcome in her opinion:

I think that if you were to speak to the technocrats in the public system, the leaders of education, I think what they would want would be the products that we sometimes get from home-schooling. The young people who are thinkers, who are independent, who are creative, who know themselves, who are very focused, who have - their characters are developed and fine-tuned in particular kinds of ways, who may not feel too concerned about following a crowd, who may have an idea of how they want to contribute to the world. I think that's what our education technocrats would want to produce. But - producing that. So I think the outcome is what they want.

However, as expressed previously, the way the mainstream system was structured prevented this type of individual. Their home-schooling approaches developed and lent themselves to developing specific character traits. As Mrs. F. highlights, the way that she fosters independence in her daughters:

…and I've started letting her - after she does her work to sit down and check her own answers because, in my mind - things I want her to have. There's a measure of independence I also allow her – I, kind of, look at her, and I allow her to, kind of, do her own thing a little bit, you know?

Because the home-school environment facilitates learning as an enjoyable and continuous process; for these parents, children become self-

motivated and, as highlighted by Mrs. C., are not peer dependent. Moreover, there is the recognition that the educational philosophy for life means that learning is not relegated to academia but to all facets of life. The parents described the life skills that equipped their children:

> The home-schooling has given them the benefits of being self-motivated in certain instances. So I have never had to push my children to work or anything like that because of the environment. They have learnt to do a lot of work on their own.
>
> …So my children know how to cook, they know how to be, they know how to watch, they know how to clean. Why? Not because I lazy, but because… I need to equip them for life. And life does not only mean academic study. Life is all-encompassing. All these things you have to do to live life. You need to eat. To cook is the ability to feed oneself. We have to be taught how to be good. We have to be taught what is acceptable behavior. And these are the things that are missing from the child. We somehow feel that it is separate and apart, but all of life comes all at once. So from the age of 10, my children could wash their clothes. (Mrs. C.)

> …so we print out a recipe, he reads the recipe, he tells me where to find the things and what we need, based on what he may have done before, we create something together, and that may never come up on an SEA exam, but to me, that is learning - that's fundamental life skills. And these are things you need to survive as he grows older, which is what I am preparing my child the full, to survive without us. And during the early years is when you could really build a character, shape their character, influence their thinking, work on their self-esteem, work on how they view themselves and work around that. And to put them on any hands of a teacher who may or may not have a vested interest in your child, I think, is a dangerous thing. (Mrs. T.)

> So they get up in the morning, they make their beds, they fold and everything - it's part of life, it's a routine that you want to carry forth when

you get to your families, and after you do those things then you come out, you greet your family, and so forth, we prepare breakfast, you have your breakfast, but you would have done something to contribute towards the home. And that is life teaching them about character. (Mrs. N.)

I mean, I did speak about personal life skills, but I'm talking about even emotional maturity. Being able to and, like, work through a problem mentally, four-year-olds can do that to some degree, and that's something that we think about to on our daily basis. I give them their space or think through the issues themselves before I intervene. So all of that is learning, which I probably won't class as education - but is learning and in some sort to learn independently. It all depends on what their needs are at the point in time. (Mrs. T.)

Parents were adamant about wanting to raise children who were good people:

"Mommy do you want some tea?" "Do you want some water?" "Do you want some..." And I say, "Oh my God," I say, "You will make a real good husband." And we have to understand that these things are taught. People don't wake up one day being good people.

…And also in terms of the types of adults that we have the ability to help, mold our children into being the types of citizens, contributors or societies and our country in a particular, kind of, way. I think that is a tremendous opportunity that home-schoolers have as well. (Mrs. F.)

…we wanted to have a positive parenting style, elevate virtue instead of the suppressing ego, "don't do this, don't do that." You wanted to talk about you wanted to talk about kindness, you wanted to elevate that, and so that's how we began. The personhood of the human being not maths, English, science, history. Yes, you will learn that, but we want integrity, kindness, honesty, we want virtue first, and let all that you have to learn about the world follow. (Mrs. B.)

And I don't know that all of this education really improving the society at large because you don't necessarily have nicer people. (Mrs. S.)

…you want to see them build up character, and whether that is being done in the evening hours or with me if we're home-schooling during the day, it has to be done by the parent. You can't rely on the teacher to do that or these things. (Mrs. T.)

Also, they raised the idea of being present and influential in shaping their children, especially those with older children were very prominent. Home-schooling presented a space where they can prepare their children for puberty and actively participate in their development. They wanted to be present, and this too formed part of knowing your child:

…because we are Christians, Born Again, we also want –– especially during the adolescent years, where it is so tumultuous, and they're so impressionable, we wanted to be their biggest cheerleaders, but also their strongest support… And I found that people at that particular age and stage, they can be very volatile, and they want to please their friends, and sometimes the things they do to please their friends may not be the most sane things, you know, or the most wholesome things, and so we just felt like that is where we wanted to be. (Mrs. N.)

If you take that seriously, there are things that my children and I would talk about, and I like being able to the be the first person to talk to them about those things. As opposed to another person speaking to them about certain things and misinforming them. Which is what happens. So in schools, your peers leading peers. I think children need to have the input of trustworthy adults in their lives… (Mrs. F.)

Even if I look at my 12-year-old, you're on the cusp of puberty. There're things that were able to talk about. We try to create an environment of openness for her. But I grow up in a very conservative environment - when I look at y'all, I don't just see y'all now. I am enjoying now with you, but I also see what I would like y'all to be when you're 18, 21 when

you're young adult. And so I think home-schooling has rejuvenated at home for me, that this is a journey. I say that I would just wake up one day, and they would be 21. I would've been there. I would've known some years would have gone. I would've known how we contributed to the successes, the mistakes, the things I might have wanted to do over. So that I find a great privilege and a great blessing. (Mrs. F.)

3.6 Chapter Summary

Prioritizing the participant voice is critical to CGT. The parent discourses served as the pivot upon which to present a home-schooling framework in this context. This chapter presented the emerging theory of home-schooling, demonstrating the commencement of the analytical process. Interwoven in the discourse presented are beginnings of the home-schooling theory taking shape. This is evident as the reflective questions intersect with the thematic areas of the interviews. The upcoming literature review chapter seeks to frame these initial insights within the existing literature on the subject matter, thereby showing the progression of the analytical process at play.

Chapter 4: Literature Review

"The literature review and theoretical framework are ideological sites in which you claim, locate, evaluate and defend your position" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 305).

4.1 Chapter Introduction

In its rudimentary form, home-schooling is about the refusal or removal of a child/ren from one space, i.e. school, in favor of another - a choice of the home. Its symbolism as an alternative form of education is significant in a society like T&T, where the educational choice menu is limited to formal schooling, whether public or private. Home-schooling is a salient topic of interest, with a wealth of global research and scholarship on the area (for example, Barbosa, 2016; Collom, 2005; Johnson, 2021; Murphy, 2014; Nemer, 2002). Extant literature on home-schooling has focused on areas such as motivation, curricula and practice, outcomes, and law and policy (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). Despite over 2,000 literature sources (Kunzman & Gaither, 2020), one common thread has emerged from the discourse; the recognition of the existing challenges for home-school researchers owing to the diversity of practices that fall under the umbrella of home-schooling (Kunzman & Gaither, 2013; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017).

Home-schoolers oscillate and choose between methods of unschooling (completely child-led and autonomous) to classical education (favoring a more traditional schooled-at-home framework) and beyond (Efford & Becker, 2017; Taylor-Hough, 2010). Despite this recognition of heterogeneity in home-school approaches, the intention here is not to pinpoint any one method but to explore home-schooling as a process that unearths the possibilities of doing education differently. The stories of Chapter 3 did just that. The parents of this study discussed what led them to home-school and how they navigated an alternative educational choice. They capture and illuminate an educational approach different from the mainstream system and ultimately better serve their needs. Research has shown commonalities in how home-schoolers conceptualize education that differ from the mainstream system (Guterman, 2017; Neuman, 2019; Neuman &; Sabol, 2018; Thomas, 2016b).

Researchers including Pattison (2015) have noted that the challenge for alternative education, like home-schooling, is their limitations of being expressed only through and concerning the dominant mainstream system. In contrasting the two dominant notions of doing 'better than' and 'different from, ' she recognizes that each connotes a unique position. While the former expresses an understanding of the individual child, the idea of 'what is best for' is often positioned within what is understood as the ideal education context. The latter entails completely dismantling all societal norms and presenting a complete alternative, which seems almost impossible. However, the stories presented in this study show an oscillation between elements of the two philosophies as the parents talked about debunking some norms.

The parents' discourse presented the home-school choice as not simply about the change of spaces but representative of a different approach to education. Its growth indicates an educational movement whose philosophical and ideological framework, intentionally or not, can disrepute the existing mainstream education system. Home-schooling parents of this study emphasized a way of conceptualizing and enacting education that they understood did not and, in some instances could not, align with that of the formal school system. Meandering through the lived experiences, perceptions, commonalities, and differences of these home-schooling parents, I reflected on the way that these families were able to choose an educational option, in many instances, contrary to societal norms and operate in an almost untainted manner. In this instance, my use of the word untainted is purely comparative in nature. It recognizes the legal, economic, and socio-political tensions in other societies where home-schooling has carved out a space in the educational discourse (Aurini & Davies, 2005; Collom, 2005; Rothermel, 2003; Thomas, 2016a). From this, I assert that home-schooling in T&T can be viewed in the first instance as an educational experiment. Further, I explored the argument that home-schooling is a progressive and transformative form of educational praxis.

Embedded in the reflective process of the parents was a process of education, their conceptualization of home-schooling from the decision to execution reminiscent of Critical Pedagogy (CP). The references made by the

parents in their decision and execution of home-schooling seemed aligned with much critical pedagogical thinking. CP is built on the premise that questions traditional educational practices and speaks to how mainstream systems can be transformed to fulfil true education, promoting an agenda for change (Mcarthur, 2010). Home-schooling has demonstrated the possibility for it to be examined as a catalyst for transformation; despite the evidence of many attempts to transform education from within the mainstream system (Ortega et al., 2018; Ross, 2018; Stanger, 2018; Thompson & Kleine, 2015),

These appear to be happening in silos and within a deficient system, whereas home-schooling as a growing independent movement can be viewed as collective transformative education. There is no taken-for-granted assumption that all home-schoolers' educational philosophies and practices are the answer to the deficiencies of the formal system. Some CP theorists argued that perhaps some methods (or a combination of such) could produce educational goals such as undoing the existing hierarchy and empowering learner voices, whereas others on their own can be a replication of the school system at home (Harkrader, 2012; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017; Taylor-Hough, 2010). Fensham-Smith (2021), for instance, recognized that there are assumptions made about the liberating possibilities of home education that should be constantly debated. I assert, however, that home-schooling within the context of this study has demonstrated a way of philosophizing and enacting education that can be conceived as transformative, akin to the liberated education of CP. This literature review explores the existing home-schooling literature to determine how notions of transformation have been applied, exploring whether there is room for a CP lens to examine the practice (Harkrader, 2012; Kuntz & Petrovic, 2018; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017).

CP assumes education is a site where power is challenged; where educational transformations can promote social justice (Apple et al.,2009). It has been argued that as an emancipatory movement, in its rejection of the mainstream system, home-schooling presents itself as transformative (Cho, 2012; McLaren, 2015; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017; Ross, 2018). By choosing a different educational path, home-school families are inherently problematizing education and formal schooling. Beyond simply problematizing, they are doing

"something' differently. Darder and Miron (2006) agreed that CP is an insightful lens for looking at movements opposed to the inequalities and problems in education. On the one hand, they recognized its dualistic purpose, highlighting inequities in education while unearthing possibilities for change and counteraction.

A CP framework, therefore, positions home-schooling as a possible site of resistance to mainstream education. CP may present as a platform to interrogate the legitimacy of home-schooling as an educational option in the T&T landscape. Therein lies the functionality of CP, the broad lens to help interrogate educational contexts like home-schooling to determine how they 'do' education under their specific learning conditions (Giroux, 2010) and how that can benefit society. My data supported the claim that home-schoolers are intuitively engaging in educational practices aligned to many of the foundation and contemporary CP thinkers, as will be discussed and further analyzed in Chapter 5. As such, it can be further argued that "home-schooling provides a great incubator for educational ingenuity" (McDonald, 2019, p. 7). In this context, it represents an experiment in liberating education. It has been argued that CP is often relegated to abstract discussion and has even been viewed as mainly prescriptive (Mcarthur, 2010; Ross, 2018). However, positioning it within a home-school framework adds a layer, merging rhetoric and practice.

This chapter addresses one overarching question: is home-schooling liberating education in praxis, and how does the existing literature validate this? It suggests that home-schoolers are producing a similar process of education as envisaged by CP. It discusses home-schooling and its potential alignment to the educational processes theorized by critical pedagogues. I positioned the existing literature on home-schooling within a CP framework and situated the now emerging grounded theory within the context of existing literature on home-schooling. Though Cho (2013) offers three distinct categories of CP - theoretical, pedagogical, and political - this review presents neither as superior but operates from the standpoint that integral to the workings of all CP are fundamental themes. The themes are interwoven throughout the review:

1. Education is viewed as a change agent
2. Teachers are public intellectuals

3. Curriculum based on experiences and strengthening of learning voices

4. Emphasis on dialogue and consensus

5. Pedagogy as praxis

Although outlined by other authors (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Fischman & McLaren, 2005; Kincheloe, 2008), Cho (2013) provides the most succinct collation. This review explores the literature on home-schooling in varied contexts to gauge its plausible applicability in a CP framework. Additionally, it allows for an examination of the extent to which a CP framework has been used in home-school discourse and research. The reflective questions identified in the previous chapter were used to discuss the emerging theory with the existing literature, thus continuing to build an explanation of home-schooling in this context. These questions, emergent from the data, signaled the analytical direction and framed the representation of the construction of home-school.

4.2 Who Is My Child?

"If the child and childhood are only knowable in relation to the persons and environment in which they are situated, then the children of the families in my inquiry did not benefit from inclusion in school" (Green, 2007, p. 772). Extracted from a study of four home-schooling families, Green recognized that the parents' deeper understanding of their children's individualities was critical in making the home-school decision. They understood their child/ren as complex, varied, contradictory, and contextualized identities and decided that the home was their best learning environment. The home-school journey begins with a redefined construct of the learner. The single most frequent response given by families for selecting the home-school option was dissatisfaction with the formal education system because of its inability to meet the specific needs of their child/ren (Arai, 2000; Kunzman & Gaither, 2020; Murphy et al., 2021). Though the needs of each child may vary, home-school families evaluate their child/ren to determine these needs (Apple, 2006; Jolly et al., 2013; Kunzman & Gaither, 2020). 'Who is my child? ' emphasized a recognition of learner individuality and was permeated throughout, as the parents of my study

discussed their home-school journey. The excerpts taken from the stories show how understanding their chid/ren was integral to the home-school process; a point to be further discussed in the subsequent chapter:

"My son, I mean, he's very layered, yuh know" (Mrs. J)

"He would never be in mainstream… he was special needs. " (Mrs. B)

"Both of my children are now in a bit of a gifted spectrum. " (Mrs. F)

It has been argued that often the decision to home-school is reactionary, immediate and, most importantly, evaluative (Jolly & Matthews, 2020). The above excerpts are examples of responses from parents who have engaged in an assessment of their child/ren as individuals. Parents, according to Reich (2002a), have a vested interest in the developmental needs of their child/ren. As such, they are aptly positioned to pose such questions on the path to understanding their children as individuals to determine their needs. An emphasis on individuality recognizes a person with distinctive features and unique characteristics, talents and interests (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2019; Truskolaska, 2012). It understands the individual as a subjective entity. Home-school research is evidence of such evaluative practices, where parents recognize the uniqueness of their children. From the identification of their children's different learning abilities (Green, 2007; Jolly et al., 2013; Kunzman & Gaither, 2013) to the recognition of children as racialized individuals (Apple, 2006; Mazama & Lundy, 2015; McDonald, 2019). Parents assess their children as subjective individuals whose characteristics may require specific learning, development, and cultural approaches inaccessible in the mainstream system.

By selecting home-school, parents are signalling that their children's unique characteristics can be better served in a home-school setting and are in essence favoring a learner-centered approach. Home-schoolers, by using the individual as the starting point of their educational journey, seem to be intuitively selecting a liberated path. The act of reflecting and identifying their children as subjective beings is the first revolutionary step to resolve what CP has identified as the education paradox (Giroux, 2010). Therefore, agency is crucial to the transformative agenda and recognition of children as individuals,

which speaks to the formal system's failure to do this (Shor & Freire, 1987; Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Parents' dissatisfaction with the formal school system propels a simultaneous flight and fight scenario, where they reject the mainstream system, while enacting an alternative educational path for their children. My research indicates that as parents encounter and recognize challenges with the system, they embark on a process of doing education differently. CP is useful in demonstrating how the inability of the mainstream system to recognize learner individuality in its educational processes is problematic to achieving educational ideals. But this is dependent on how these ideals are understood, recognizing the fluidity, and differentiated constructs of education.

Historically, the thrust of modern education was political; to create a particular type of citizenry that met the needs of society (Dill & Elliot, 2019). Further, that education served the workforce needs, producing the type of workers to sustain a capitalist system (Black, 2016b). The education system is designed to meet a specific collective need. In so doing, a collection of learners, budding citizens and future workers are socialized into an overarching socio-political system promulgated through education. Knowledge became a necessary commodity, packaged accordingly through measurable and identifiable learning outcomes (Green, 2007). Schools train individuals according to universalized criteria (Kincheloe & Horn, 2007). Learners are subjected to universalized curricula, with established learning outcomes reinforced through standardized testing that defines the success of all individuals, assuming commonalities.

Each learner, therefore, is taught, measured, and judged against standards pegged as inclusive. However, as many home-schooling families recognize, it can be disadvantageous if learners are not neurotypical learners, as many of the home-school families in my study indicated. This collectivist education model has been heavily scrutinized and problematizes the process of education in the formal school system, particularly, the universal curriculum, standardized assessments and homogenized standards (Gatto, 2010; McLaren, 2015). For CP, this approach to education is inherently oppressive in its learner-as-object construct, with student agency being notably absent in the

learning process (Giroux, 2010). The mainstream system is not designed to recognize individuality; learners are subjected to universalized standards of learning with a curriculum and assessments that assume commonality. While education is promoted as a freeing entity, the rigid way education is packaged in the formal system is more exertion of power and control over individuals rather than a process of freedom. Genuine education, however, according to CP, is transformative; but the present system is stagnant, designed to stifle creativity and critical thinking in its design.

This school of thought positions education as a revolutionary act of consciousness, structured to help learners engage in the process of discovery and inquiry as opposed to simple memorization and transference of knowledge from a top-down structure (Apple et al., 2009; Fischman & McLaren, 2005). The learner must be positioned as central to the learning process to accomplish this - not merely a recipient of information, but part of a community of learners. Liberatory education rejects learning standards because it recognizes individuality and differences in learners and, as such, different capabilities. As Green (2007) recognized in her study of home-schoolers with learning disabilities: home-schooling allowed the parents to identify their children's differences without utilizing the labels of the mainstream system, which served to ostracize their children from the learning process because they were being judged by universalistic standards (Green, 2007). Green (2007) research shed light on the lack of a formal system to recognize students as complex individuals, often privileging some while disadvantaging others. In the school system, students are measured not simply as part of a group but against that group (Black, 2016).

The work of Paulo Freire (Freire, 1972, 1983, 1985) illustrated the understanding of learner individuality in honing critical consciousness and thus achieving transformation. For him, an exercise in liberated education must begin with understanding the learner. Freire (1972) argued that to achieve liberatory education, one must remove the teacher-student, subject-object contradiction - a defining feature of what he referred to as "banking education" (Freire, 1972, p. 73). Banking education is akin to the institutionalized education of the formal system. This type of education conceptualizes the learner as a

tabula rasa, as empty vessels waiting for information to be deposited by an all-knowing teacher. This education, according to Freire, produces a passive, docile learner. Liberatory education, on the contrary, understands learners as individuals and partners in the educational process. As home-schoolers can assess their child/ren's individuality, research has shown that they can tap into the interests and talents of the child that transcends the pre-determined curriculum of formal schooling (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2019; Truskolaska, 2012).

In so doing, parents gain a deeper knowledge of the needs and even the constraints of their children to design meaningful educational pathways to freely learn through education and discovery (Holt, 1982). For Freire (1972), education is a process of becoming; it is ongoing with incomplete and unfinished beings. It is a process of shifting the idea of creating learners as "beings for others" to "beings for themselves" (Freire, 1972, p.55). This reconstructed conceptualization of the learner defies the very essence of the formal system in preparing learners for the workforce. Knowing the learner aids in developing critical consciousness, which propels the liberated education thrust. Conceptualizing the learner as an object is an integral part of how the traditional school system operates.

Similarly, Huang (2019) distinguished between the 'being' and 'becoming' child, highlighting how the learner is positioned in the formal education process vis-a-vis alternatives like home-schooling. On the one end, the idea of the child as becoming connotes a passive approach to education, with a pedagogy emphasizing mastery of skills, standardized tests and authoritarian style delivery. The becoming child in his analogy is indicative of an old education system (Huang, 2019), one that creates, as Freire (1972) stated, "beings for others" where the sole purpose of education is the production of citizens (p. 74). It is these characteristics upon which CP theorists problematize the formal school system and home-school advocate the potential of home-schooling to counteract these practices (Gatto, 2010; Holt, 1982; Murphy, 2014).

On the other hand, the construct of the being child is akin to the underlying home-school philosophies of child-centered education (Power et al.,

2019). It recognizes individuality in children and understands teachers as facilitators of learning, not students as simple receptacles of knowledge (Huang, 2019). Home-schooling families, in their identification and recognition of their child/ren as subjective beings, are unravelling the voiceless learner of the formal system in favor of empowering learners as subjective individualities, whose uniqueness is entwined in the learning process (Mazama & Lundy, 2015; J. Thomas, 2016b; Yin et al., 2015). The system is not designed to recognize and treat learners as individuals. Though research has shown that the formal system has attempted to treat students' individualities, it often comes up short of what the parents understand are the deeper needs of their child/ren (Mazama & Lundy, 2015).

In discussing gifted children, parents recognized the nuances of these children and that the school system was often incapable of adequately meeting their needs (Kula, 2018). Formal education continues to enact education aligned to its original purpose: to create and churn out a collective workforce for a growing society. Home-schooling, with its recognition of the individual learner, lays the foundation for an educational path, much unlike the robotic beings that the mainstream system is said to produce (Black, 2010; Gatto, 2010a). The hierarchical structure of banking education notably shifts with the emphasis on the learner as subjective beings whose realities can influence the educational process. According to Freire (1972), this partnership requires that educators know their learners.

The notion that home-schoolers have embraced the uniqueness of their child/ren has often been critiqued as an individualistic approach to education that may have the potential to be harmful to a democratic society. "Home-schooling remains the quintessential example of education conceptualized as an individual good" (Brewer & Lubienski, 2017, p. 34). Such an assertion presents an opportunity to explore some of the tensions that this perceived individualistic identity might present. Home-school advocates praise the practice as transformative and emancipatory because it rejects many ideologies embedded in the mainstream system (Holt, 1982). For many, this rejection is problematic. Home-school critics, however, hold that the decision to remove or

not send a child to mainstream school demonstrates a lack of commitment to the common good and rejects the very principles of democracy.

The conventional construct of formal education as a collective good for society has provided the basis for home-school critics. For instance, Apple (2000) and Lubienski (2003) argued that home-schooling defies the collectivism of democratic societies. Brewer and Lubienski (2017) positioned home-schooling as individualistic, arguing that it elevates the individual over the collective. For Apple (2000), it serves as a protectionist movement, acting as a potential threat to notions of equality. Though his criticism is directed at one group of religious home-schoolers, the use of the words individualism and individualistic is worthy of differentiation, especially since the former is akin to self-seeking tendencies, while the latter speaks to the uniqueness and placing the child at the center of the learning process (Efford & Becker, 2017). The criticism is that home-schooling promotes individualistic tendencies that threaten the collective values of the wider society.

However, home-schoolers have shown that recognizing their child/ren as unique individual entities supports the cause of developing strong, independent individuals whose aim is not selfish but collaborative, because they understand themselves as individuals, not measured against society's yardstick for success or failure. Education should be geared towards autonomy based on the individual's interests and desires (Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017). It can be argued that the individualism upon which home-schoolers are critiqued is a prominent feature of the mainstream system through its competitive structure (Black, 2010; Garratt, 2011). It should be noted that the concerns Apple (2000) expressed regarding the possibilities of home-schooling in its reproduction of seemingly harmful individualistic values are salient. There has been a great degree of skepticism around home-schoolers, often assuming abuse and other aspects of misconduct (Charles-Warner, 2015; Graham, 2009; Jennens, 2011).

While Freire (2018) argued that the shift in the learner focus is a movement toward transformative education, some argued that the notion of developing authenticity through home-schooling is grossly exaggerated (Sarajlic, 2019). Referencing Christian home-schoolers, Sarajlic (2019) argued that in the indoctrination of values, home-schoolers become separated from the

social context and exist as a separate entity. Despite home-schoolers' arguments that recognizing their children's uniqueness helped them design an authentic education experience, Sarajlic (2019) asserted that having their parents' worldview as the dominant one prevents children from having a truly authentic experience. They cannot truly understand themselves as an entity if they are only subjected to their parents' worldview; thus, it inhibits the child/ren development of the self.

Freire (1972) critiqued banking education on this point, stating that teachers, because of the hierarchy created, regulate the way the world is introduced to the student, but stresses that liberating education is not one that alienates. This critique of limited exposure is debunked in the research into home-schooling families. It revealed that children are encouraged to read widely and explore beyond the family threshold (de Carvalho & Skipper, 2019; Sabol, 2018). The criticisms regarding narrowed exposure may very well be validated as some research showed that parents often control and facilitate these external activities (Thomas, 2016a). Although, alternatively, it has been stated that it is usually aligned with the child's interest (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2019). While individualism is problematic, recognizing and treating individuality from the perspective of giving the child an equal opportunity in education may not be.

4.3 What Does He/she Need?

Recognizing the child as an individual allows parents to assess how their child/ren can be better served**.** Research has shown that previous experiences in the education system as educators often provoke a home-school attitude in many parents (Ahi & Sengil-Akar, 2021; Haugh, 2014). They questioned the inefficiencies and incapability of the mainstream system to address individual needs and determined that, as parents, they would approach education differently. Haugh (2014), in her autobiographical presentation of home-schooling, makes the distinction between the lens of the educator/educated and that of the parent. This distinction is key to recognizing the convergence of educator and parental viewpoints as parent-educators choose home-school. Parents are tasked with bridging the gap between educator knowledge and

parental desires. There is a notable shift from the professional to the personal when it is your own child/ren. Parent-educators enter the home-school space with a cheat sheet of sorts. Their exposure to intimate knowledge of the mainstream system presents evidence of the practices they reject. For many, they may be unconsciously entering the home-school space with a CP mindset; one that is dissatisfied with a system and desirous of change. Ahi and SengalAkar (2021) further reinforce this point in their study of a group of Turkish homeschoolers. The participants of this study pinpointed the primitive, traditional instructional models and practices that inundated the school setting. Parent-educators to some extent are able to utilize home-schooling to achieve a CP agenda. The questions and attempts at change within the mainstream settings they occupy are put into practice through home-schooling, as they are not tethered to the perceived restrictions and requirements of the school. Giroux (1993, cited in Fischman & McLaren, 2005) applied the label of "transformative intellectuals" (p.496). He argued that these people take a stance against an oppressive education system. According to Giroux, persons within the education system must operate in this manner of wanting to do differently in favor of a different educational ideology. It can be argued that this is done through home-schooling by the parents. Parent-educators are able to reflect and use as reference points their education background and experience to ground and guide the home-school experience. What they were at times unable to do in the mainstream with their students, they can achieve with their own child/ren. The idea that home-schooling is guided by the parents' educational philosophy in this instance raises the questions of the influence this may have on the home-schooled child/ren and their ability to develop authenticity. There is the assumption of critics like Sarajlic (2019) who hold the viewpoint that the parents' worldviews stifle the possibilities of the child. This may prove accurate in instances where the child/ren's sole interaction is with the parent. However, studies like that conducted by Neuman and Guterman (2020) show that the home-schooling community extends beyond the home and the parents and expose children to diverse groups. On the contrary, one study conducted by de Carvalho and Skipper (2019) problematized the influence that

parents worldviews had on teenagers' perceptions of mainstream versus home-school, thus giving credence to the concerns of critics like Sarajlic.

Illich (1970) argued that universal education through schooling is not feasible. The ability to pinpoint the unique elements of a child better equips parents to implement educational plans that cater to the child's needs. As parents come to see their child/ren as subjective beings, they determine that two overarching needs must be met: an environment that supports and develops individuality; and an individualized education plan (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012; Neuman & Guterman, 2017; Thomas, 2016a). Unlike the mainstream system, which is premised on collectivity, home-schoolers pride themselves on the ability to provide individualized educational programs that revolve around their child/ren (Haugh, 2014; Reich, 2002). Though this level of customization has been critiqued on the basis of over-insulation and narrowness, home-schoolers have counteracted this claim (Reich, 2002a). They asserted mainstream system, by design, presents a narrow, monolithic worldview that inhibits diversity.

By customizing education for their child/ren, they are shifting a power pendulum away from a curriculum-centered rigid system to one that is child-centered and endorses flexibility. Essentially, they protect their child/ren from a system they perceive as harmful (Holt, 1982). Critics of the formal school system have questioned the assumption that schooling leads to education. It is presumed that a child who attends formal school receives an education, oftentimes ignoring the differences of each learner judged by the same standards. By designing rigid curriculum and learning trajectories that positioned all learners as equal, a major pitfall of the formal system is identified (Pritchett, 2013). By creating an environment that supports the child's uniqueness, the relegation of learning to the brick-and-mortar school system and the school being perpetuated as the 'purveyor of knowledge' is overturned. It recognizes the home as an environment that can facilitate a particular type of learning that is differentiated from a mainstream system (Anthony & Burroughs, 2012). Home-schooling families can thus shield their child/ren from the

"instrumentality" (Giroux, 2018b, p.496), evidenced by examination-based curricula in a "competitive situation" (Clark, 2006; Mortimore, 2013 p.46).

The education design of formal education guided by a curriculum has received the most criticism, and it is through this that many home-schoolers are able to distinguish themselves and their educational ideological framework. In the formal school system, the curriculum has been deemed rigid, narrow, and standardized (Gatto, 2010; Giroux, 2018b; Mortimore, 2013). Home-schoolers have expressed concern over how the curriculum is universalized, with established subject-specific standards of knowledge and skills intended to apply to each child (Haugh, 2014; Thomas, 2016a). Similar criticisms have been addressed within the T&T formal system (de Lisle et al., 2010), referencing the barriers created due to the examination-focused curriculum, further presenting an inauthentic learning experience (Aurini & Davies, 2005; Efford & Becker, 2017).

Home-schoolers have demonstrated that they can choose from and oscillate between many curriculums to guide their journey, ranging from unschooling (led by a child's interests) to a host of other curricula (Kula, 2018). Home-schoolers are privileged in their ability to provide individualized programs tailored to each child, their ability, and capability (Aurini & Davies, 2005; Efford & Becker, 2017; McDonald, 2019). It recognizes and designs around the child's individualities in a manner that the mainstream system cannot. It should be stated that some home-school families do not altogether reject the methods of the mainstream system and may often incorporate direct instructions and elements of the curriculum. The point of departure, however, even for these families, is the flexibility and the freedom to chart an often eclectic learning path that prioritizes the individuality in the child deemed to be a positive (Fineman, 2016).

The learning experience for the child in a home-school setting is not bounded by a pre-determined curriculum, but can be influenced by many factors that may inevitably enhance the development process (Efford & Becker, 2017). The child is exposed to an environment where their identity and sense of

self are not tied to a test or examination (Barrow, 2015). Children receive a broader educational landscape and more options to enhance their learning as the mainstream system provides little to no wiggle room for individualizing each child (Truskolaska, 2012). In using individualized programs, home-schooling creates room to harness the critical consciousness that authors advocated as critical to education (Freire, 1972; Shor & Freire, 1987). As the learner comes to understand themselves as individuals, in competition with themselves and their thoughts, they become better equipped to challenge all assumptions. For Freire (1972), similarly in the CP doctrine, oppression was presented through a system that did not cater to the learner's levels and abilities. It is argued that rejecting the standardization and regimented nature of formal schooling benefits home-schoolers because their learning is not limited to or tied to a specific curriculum, which ultimately produces a richer experience for the child (McDonald, 2017).

However, it has been questioned whether the family is the best space to develop individualities; it may not be best equipped to develop the individuality and independence needed in liberated education. The fact remains that the perceived narrow lens provided by the family can inhibit and ultimately disadvantage the child in its inability to prepare them for a life outside the home (Sarajlic, 2019).This argument assumed that the tailor-made design of home-schooling relegates learning to the home and the immediate family members. It assumed zero exposure to the outside world and differing worldviews from the family (Reich, 2002a). Moreover, it made a huge assumption about the diversity to which learners in the mainstream system are exposed (Reich, 2002a). With a rigid curriculum, that only flags specific chunks for learning; the education discussion should transcend the issue of where (home or school) education takes place in favor of how. Each space symbolizes a particular ideological approach and understanding of education. Each has philosophically similar goals, but practically different ways of achieving them (Jolly & Matthews, 2020).

Beyond designing educational schedules that address the child's learning needs, the home-school structure allows parents to incorporate elements of the child's interests and desires into the learning plan. They are not

bound by the same standards and trajectory of learning outcomes of the mainstream system; they can go at the child's pace while exploring the child's interests and desires. A study comparing home-schoolers' and mainstream schoolers' critiques of the system showed a different way of conceptualizing education (Neuman, 2019). Mainstreamers felt that the curriculum incorporated too few subjects, while the home-schoolers felt that the curriculum was too limited, overemphasizing academic matters equated to education. As such, where mainstreamers focused on quantity, home-schoolers emphasized quality. An individualized education plan for home-schoolers provided a sort of limitless education, unbound by the dictates of an assigned curriculum that presented education as a set package, with little opportunity for diversion.

Home-school parents have noted that this approach provides the opportunity for differentiated instruction and an exploration of interests that meet both the child and family's needs (Sabol, 2018). Families may have specific value systems that construct learning and education differently. Take, for instance, one of the parents of this present study, who articulated that their family views education as character development, then academic matters: "We believe if you get the character right, then the academics will follow." (Mrs. B)

While they do not deny the importance of academic matters, they were able to create a dual learning structure that incorporated a heavier emphasis on character development. A benefit they felt was lacking in the mainstream system. They abhorred the feeling of being controlled by a curriculum with a clear outcome, and they preferred a seamless approach where the learning evolves with the child and not the other way around.

Home-schooling presents a fluidity of schedules that is not solely academically driven (Thomas, 2016a). This notion is supported by home-schooled children who have described the freedom of learning provided by home-schooling as it pertains to the breadth and depth of subject areas and the exploration of their interests (Neuman & Guterman, 2022). Former home-schoolers have lauded the ability to have an individualized program that gave them greater confidence to identify and express a problem than if they were in a

larger setting. The environment felt safe, and parents created an environment that allowed children to explore their interests with no limits. For example, in Williams's (2016) study on African American male home-schoolers, one student spoke of his interests in astronomy and how his parents provided him with tools to further explore the topic through home-schooling (Williams, 2016). Furthermore, students expressed positive feedback on their home-school experience and how it equipped them for life; their experiences in more personalized environments, and their ability to explore their interests.

Home-schooling research has shown that the practice allows for mastery of subject matter, ebbs and flows, progression, and digression if needed, all influenced by the child. Parents spoke of the ability to delve deeper into subject areas if it aligns with their children. In one case, a parent emphasized exposure to more languages because that was their child's interest (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2019). As Freire (1985) asserted, knowledge must come from inquiry and discovery in and with the world. Home-schoolers have contended that their emphasis and design based on individuality develops this kind of inquisitiveness and curiosity needed as individuals interact with the world (Neuman & Guterman, 2017). A limited curriculum only presents a fraction of that world, and children are expected to be satisfied with what is fed (Ahi & Sengil-Akar, 2021). This approach presents an opportunity to learn broadly and deeply, focusing on areas that interest them, but parents can be creative as partners of the learning process.

The home then becomes the environment that facilitates learning, rejecting the tightly bound curriculum. Unlike mainstream education, the program may not necessarily begin with or even emphasize academic matters. These tailor-made programs "evolves with the child as compared to the other way around where the child has to move with the system," said one parent participant (Mrs. J). Customizing education to their child is a way of freeing the child from the reigns of a prescribed learning path where the end goal in many instances is preparation for high-stakes tests. In discussing their home-school choice, another parent noted that the formal system treats each child the same

and expects them to be satisfied with what has been designed for them without them in mind (Ahi & Sengil-Akar, 2021).

Child-led learning makes the learning process more enjoyable because the child can see themselves in it, and they do not feel like a recipient of it, as in Freire's (1972) concept of banking education. Home-schooling respects that each child learns differently and at different paces and so caters for that. In one study, a parent expressed that they had the flexibility to have the children sleep later if they felt tired or take a break in a given day, privileges that were not allowed in the inflexible formal school system (Sabol, 2018). Environments like these become possible through home-schooling and unearth a learning experience very different from the mainstream setting. The conformity and rigidity of formal schooling, evidenced by children sitting at a desk for hours and being spoken to by an instructor, spotlights the challenges with the learning process in mainstream settings (Black, 2016; Neuman, 2019).

Home-schooling allows for the application of content according to the personal realities of individuals, promoting personal identity and cultivating knowledge comprehensively. Parents choose the learning environment that links the true character of individual learning knowledge without feeling forced (Johnson, 2021). It is argued that children need to feel like learning is not relegated to a strict curriculum and tied to universal standards; they should see and experience all dimensions and aspects of learning. An individualized plan and an equally conducive environment allow for learning through life, academic matters and beyond, and creating "teachable moments" that enhance the learning experience (Thomas, 2016, p.238). Children need unregimented forms of learning. Contrarily, a mainstream setting's one-sided curriculum exposes learners to only one type of knowledge (McLaren, 2015). Creativity and curiosity are said to be stifled in the curriculum (Harber, 2004), where the individual approach will unleash creativity. Individualized approaches encourage children to learn on their own and not only through direct instruction (Illich, 1970), but the drilling, habit training, and memorization part of mainstream education make this depth of learning impossible (Freire, 1972; Illich, 1970).

4.4 How Can I Fulfil That Need?

"Tailoring curriculum, instruction pacing and assessing to individual needs" is the most succinct way to describe the home-schooling educational and learning process (Efford & Becker, 2017, p. 44). Regardless of how they come to the decision to embrace the home as the learning domain, home-school parents present a type of education that CP has referred to as emancipatory. Ray (2022), a home-school advocate, referred to the practice as championing educational freedom. Home-school parents may not be overtly pushing a liberated educational agenda; however, through their conceptualization, process and action of education and learning, they are pioneering an emancipatory education, positioning home-schooling as a practice of freedom (Freire, 2019). This notion is guided by one pervasive sentiment: doing better by and for their children (Holt, 1982).

There has been limited literature that makes direct links between the work of CP, as discussed by Freire (1972, 1983, 1985, 2013, 2019) and what home-schoolers do. By selecting the home as the learning environment over the physical school, home-schoolers embrace the home as the space for learning differently. My research led me to one article where a former home-schooler synthesizes the writings of Dewey (1935) and Freire (1968). Harkrader (2012) highlighted the challenges in the school system and discussed how home-schooling could counteract this, applying the very ideology of these prolific writers. Harkrader's (2012) article reinforced the ideas espoused by Dewey (1997) that spoke to the importance of making learning experiential , which served the dual benefit to individual learners and society at large. Sentiments like these are not isolated. The liberated home-school learner is identifiable in many spaces.

McDonald (2019) discussed being able to immediately identify a former home-schooler through a simple headline that speaks to a love of reading. Her article referred to reading as freedom, exercised by home-schoolers who move beyond reading as a separate subject to reading as a part of life, providing a richer learning experience. She articulated that children are not tied to reading

standards through pressure and standardization, but by seeing reading as a pathway to exploration and discovery. Freire (1983, 1985) was explicit about the importance of reading to develop critical consciousness. To him, reading was not simply about literacy and the ability to read words and text, but the comingling process of simultaneously reading the world and words. Through reading, individuals become aware of the world and can inspire change. He further asserted that an integral part of reading is the ability to experience the world.

The result of home-schooling presented in the examples above gave insight into the unique and differentiating way home-schoolers perform their fluid learning packages (see Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1972). Freire (1972), in his seminal work, presented the reader with the interrelated processes that must occur to achieve liberation. It is not solely based on a desire to do differently; it begins with understanding what exists and how change can be affected. It is about seeing learning and education differently. It is about identifying how it is used in the formal system as a measure of control and determining what can be done to free individuals from such influences - sentiments echoed by other writers in the CP tradition (McLaren, 2015; Mortimore, 2013). Education, if done effectively, should awaken the learner's ability to question power structures, even their own. The essence of education is to invoke a critical consciousness in the learner that provokes deep exploration of the world.

To do this, 'banking education' must be overturned. Research has shown that home-schoolers have been able to achieve this by their approach to education. Throughout this chapter, I have discussed the broad pitfalls of the formal education system through CP proponents, supported by much home-school research. It cannot recognize and serve the individual child, as well as, the rigid and inflexible curricula that prioritize a specific type of knowledge and cater to a particular type of student. However, many critics identified the continued legitimization of formal education due partly to its emphasis on outcomes and measurements as opposed to the education process (Pritchett, 2013).

The daily operations of how education is carried out in the formal setting differ from how home-schoolers can use their individualized schedules, programs, and home environments to produce an alternative approach to education and learning. These approaches and methods can be likened to the processes that Freire (1972) and many of his CP counterparts advocated. Through its re-envisioned education processes, home-schooling has presented itself as a counter-hegemonic space, positioning it within the realm of the CP agenda (Apple, 2009; Ross, 2018). Though authors like Apple (2000) disagreed about specifically religiously motivated home-school groups because of their perceived posture of protection of religious values, continued research shows facets of home-schooling practice that apply the principles and processes of CP scholarship that have ultimately positive impacts on the learner (e.g. Efford & Becker, 2017; Haugh, 2014; Kula, 2018).

One of the first ways home-schoolers digress from the banking method is through dismantling the power hierarchy. CP theorists argued that a rigid hierarchy is created in the formal system where teachers are the "pillars of knowledge" and students are the receptacles (Aliakbari & Farajli, 2011). Freire (1985) is clear that the teacher-learner dichotomy must be dismantled in the act of liberation. Through a 'talk and chalk' process, learners are taught what and how to think through rote memorization (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Black, 2016; Freire, 1972). Home-schooling provides an opportunity for learners and parents to become partners in the learning journey. This partnering is done by cultivating and fostering an environment that encourages the freedom to explore beyond what is taught.

This process does not negate that some forms of home-schooling include direct instruction or structured learning activities; however, all knowledge is not housed in the instructor or a textbook. As the participant, Mrs. N, stated, "Learning is not relegated to the pages of a textbook." Though parents still have a measure of control over learning, they are not the be-all-and-end-all of learning possibilities. Home-school families have indicated that their children execute agency in learning by selecting activities of interest (Purwaningsing & Fauziah, 2019). However, parents exposing their children to

field trips and library visits introduce them to a world beyond the family (de Carvalho & Skipper, 2019; Sabol, 2018).

Practitioners have described the home-school experience as a healthy mix of academic and personal pursuits (Thomas, 2016b). The home-school flexible and individualized learning path loosens the hierarchy because children are inculcated into a practice where they too can be knowledge sources, unlike the formal system where the curriculum determines the extent of knowledge to be carried out by the teacher and the learning priorities are differently constructed (Harber, 2004). Repositioned power structures may not be the case in all home-schooling scenarios, as was highlighted by one former home-schooler, Virban (2017), in her auto ethnographic study. Her home-school experience was one that she described as an authoritarian style approach, which she felt made her education experience incomplete.

Positioning the learner as active in the educational process comes not only through exposure to knowledge beyond a standardized curriculum, but through a process of making sense of these broadened encounters. Several home-schoolers I spoke with discussed the act of talking with their children as an integral part of and for them - an advantage of home-schooling. They listened to their children regarding areas of what they wanted to learn at their pace. Talking to their child/ren was a way of getting to know them and helping them get to know themselves, which is how critical consciousness is developed in Freire's analogy. Several authors referred to the concept of the pupil's voice as democratizing the school process (Cook-Sather, 2020; Fielding, 2004).

Fielding (2004) identified that the pupil's voice is multi-layered and considers factors such as who speaks, what is spoken, skills needed, and the systems that must be in place to facilitate this. He acknowledged that the gamut of what is allowed to be discussed is often censored, with teachers framing the discussion questions. The reality is that the school system can often inhibit the full transformative and emancipatory possibilities of the pupil's voice in its "performance-obsessed" structure (Fielding, 2004, p. 102).

The act of talking to, the problem posing, and the dialogue Freire (1972) alludes to, are integral to liberated education (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1972). Another parent in the study, Mrs. T, spoke about giving her four-year-old the space to work through a problem rather than immediately disciplining them, while another, Mrs. F emphasized that talking with her children was a part of their home-school journey. She described teaching as "dialogue." In the context of the pupil's voice, the reciprocal nature of speaking and listening is understood as central to dialogue. These core educational values appear to be restored through the home-schooling process in ways that CP theorists argued that the formal system killed in favor of valuing and prioritizing testing, numeracy, and literacy skills (Giroux, 2010, 2018). As children come to manage themselves in learning, they are encouraged to think critically and independently (Gatto, 2010), facilitated by the parents. As Illich (1970) asserts, the school assigns specific roles by setting a curriculum of instruction: a person to administer and one to receive. Learning is therefore reduced to skills acquisition (Illich, 1970) or "habit training" (Gatto, 2010, p.30).

In CP, the processes of problem posing and dialoguing are intricately interwoven in the learning process. According to Freire (1972), working through problems together unearths a partnership of inquiry and discovery of the world. For him, dialogue allows teachers and students to engage in the process of unveiling, evaluating, and recreating reality. The dialogical method supports horizontal relationships, where communication is done 'with' as opposed to 'over' or 'to' another (Freire, 2013). In the process of dialoguing, learners introduce their ideas as opposed to merely consuming the ideas of others. The liberated teacher, in this case, parents, must represent the student's worldview in a way they can work through (Beckett, 2013). The reality, through dialogue, is not considered static, but dynamic and ever changing. It is a space to question truths and debunk falsehoods.

Dialogue should not be understood as arbitrary communication between persons, but as an intentional process of knowing, where knowledge is understood as a social process (Freire, 1972). As Efford and Becker (2017) asserted, parents and children, engage in a partnered process of 'provoking

curriculum' through home-schooling. The question remains: does the school culture assert the student voice as integral to its educational design? Home-school research, like that presented by Efford and Becker (2017), highlighted how the daily practices of home-schoolers support the pupil's voice. The home-school environment saw dialogue and problem posing interwoven in their operations. As one parent spoke of reading and the kinds of consciousness it invoked in her children; she exclaimed, "They were able to try out ideas… and create meaning from texts without barriers" (Efford and Becker, 2017, p. 45). In circumventing the one-dimensional worldview that a rigid curriculum may present, home-schoolers presented reading as a journey of discovery and exploration of various viewpoints.

Discussions among family members on a plethora of academic or otherwise topics emerged through many studies of home-schooling. For families with multiple children, the dialogue was not strictly parent-child; but encouraged among siblings. One parent spoke of trips to the museum where on the ride home they would "discuss what we each thought of the day's story", giving each child a voice to share interpretations and have disagreements (Efford & Becker, 2017, p. 47). Parents spoke of engaging their children in group discussions on subjects learnt and experiences (Sabol, 2018). Thus, learning is about making students a part of the discovery process; the investigative journey instead of having knowledge handed to them (Shor & Freire, 1987). Cook-Sather (2020) discussed power sharing in the pupil voice and the relationship between voice and agency. It is not simply about students speaking, but about students' ability to have influence in their learning context, even amidst 'credentialized educators.' In so doing, the pupil's experiences and thoughts are legitimized within the learning space. The role of problem posing, therefore, is to get students to consolidate their truths, falsehoods and overall assumptions of the world, so that their entire world is transformed and the facts that they are now exposed to are not only thought of as facts specific to school, but life.

Problem posing is about communication; it is about engaging in an education that fosters a critical engagement between teacher and student as

opposed to against (Freire, 2013). Home-school provides a learning environment for broadened experiences that surpass and do not necessarily prioritize academia. Many of the parents of this study spoke to the inclusion of life skills in the curricula; they saw it as ultimately shaping and influencing even the academic side of things. For them, if children understand learning through life, then learning of any kind, academically or not, will come naturally to them. As many CP theorists have noted, education is life, and all aspects of life should be considered learning possibilities. As Black (2016a) said, "to know the world, you have to live in the world" (para. 13). She argued that too much formal education is prescribed, condensed, and packaged.

CP critiqued the formal school for separating daily life from learning (Bruno-Jofré & Schriewer, 2012; Mortimore, 2013; Shor & Freire, 1987), arguing that the overemphasis on learning skills takes away from any other type of learning that can be exploratory and creative (Illich, 1970). As Holt (1982) argued, education promoted through formal schooling is "learning cut off from life; done under pressure" (p. 9). As he explained the importance of reading through his reflection of his development, Freire (1983, 1985) recognized that before adults engage with the process of decoding the written word (which they categorize as reading), children come to engage in the process of reading through their experiences with their external world; through interaction, observation and play. Neuman (2019) showed the differentiation in the educational outlook of home-schoolers, where he compared the critiques of home-school parents to school attendee parents. In his study, the school attendees relegated academic subjects to excellence and criticized the system for insufficient subjects, while home-schoolers perceived the limited curriculum based on its inability to infuse life skills into it.

Neuman's (2019) study demonstrated that while both groups are critical of the formal system, each differed in how they conceptualized education and the learning process. For school attendees, it was a matter of resolving the issues from within, while for home-schoolers, the change they envisioned could only occur by vacating the entire formalized system. Therefore, problem posing, experiential learning, and learning through life are interwoven in the home-

school process. One study aptly captured this interwoven approach to education regarding "teachable moments", described as "spontaneous learning activities" (Thomas, 2016a, p. 38). Freire acknowledged he is critiqued for his transformation of informal moments into pedagogical ones, mainly since much of his work is centered on formal settings, where curricula imply rigidity. Dewey (1997) proclaimed that experiential learning is integral to the learning process; when knowledge is based on real-life experiences, it provides a context for learning. The home-school structure's flexibility permits the type of deviation that facilitates learning. It allows learners to work through problems in meaningful ways.

In the case of gifted learners, the freedom to learn beyond and explore has been deemed critical to their development as it allows them to work through problems and any inquisitiveness areas that pique their interest (Rivero, 2002). Two prime examples emerge from the data. The first is one parent talking about a day at the park with her children and the way they were able to make connections between items of play and mathematical concepts (Mrs. J). Another spoke of seeing her daughter struggling with fractions and encouraged her to engage in baking, an activity of interest to her, where she was learning fractions without the added pressure at the end (Mrs. B). The process of talking through the baking method, from measurements to completion, assisted the parent with helping the child work through a challenge without her knowledge, using something that she considered fun and interesting. Infusing the practical elements of learning was facilitated by an environment that fostered what she called "being at home with an education mindset" (Mrs. B). Everything counted as learning; both on and off text. I listened attentively to these sentiments being echoed differently by each parent as one spoke of the art of learning to sew and how much learning could be derived from it.

4.5 What Kind of Person Are We Educating Towards?

The positioning of this question is in no way indicative of the level of importance that it holds in this discussion. In fact, "What kind of human beings we hope to nurture and inspire through education?" (Browstein, 2007, p. 520),

can be conceptualized as an inquiry of both outcome and source. It is an introspection that influences educational decisions while simultaneously affecting the result. It is the beginning, middle, and end of the process of reframing education towards freedom. CP theorists like Giroux (2018) highlighted the possibilities of transformative education from within the system by presenting a toolkit to help activate the agency of both educators and learners through critical awareness. He acknowledged that the confinement of formal schooling to objective truths sustains knowledge in a "bounded… impersonal, context-free" manner (p. 21). In essence, this ideological orientation of schools inhibits the kind of critical awakening or critical consciousness espoused by writers like Freire (1972).

The separation of individuals, histories and realities from subject matter prevents learners and educators from the discovery and inquiry of and with the world (Freire, 1972; Gatto, 2010). As previously mentioned, the sole aim of this type of education in the formal setting, as has been emphasized, is to create a type of citizenry that sustains the current societal structure, maintaining a status quo. As Reich (2002a) highlighted, the state's interest is to produce independent functioning and self-sufficient beings. I would add independence within a pre-conceived, rigidly structured bubble. Such citizens may be capable of memorization, academic skill, and knowledge and deemed successful by universal standards (Gatto, 2010), but are they truly liberated; have authentic and autonomous beings emerged, capable of being the change agents that CP theorists envisage?

Home-schoolers have demonstrated that their alternative approach to education intends to achieve that purpose. Brownstein (2007) expressed that the key to achieving educational freedom is creating environments wrought with discovery and intellectual empowerment. Furthermore, Harber (2004) encouraged the consideration of the sole purpose of flexibility, creativity, imagination, and independence as educational processes and outcomes. For home-schoolers, it is about creating a learning environment that can harness a particular type of individual that can contribute meaningfully to society. Home-school advocates argue that while the formal school system is focused on

preparing students for full-time work, home-schooling creates independent, self-directed learners with the freedom to explore the world around them (Holt, 1982). The home-schoolers of this study supported this point, stating that there was too much emphasis on job status as the measurement of success as opposed to imparting the values that made individuals wholesome citizens.

Czank (2012) has described the kind of freedom that Freire (2013) discussed as "the realization of our critical capacity for subjective determination within a concrete context" (p. 803). In this vein, CP theorists have outlined that the epistemic aims of education should be towards producing authentic and autonomous beings (Freire, 1972; Petrovic & Rolstad, 2017; Sarajlic, 2019). According to Freire (1972), authenticity emerges through inquiry and change, whereas Petrovic and Rolstad (2017) viewed autonomy as an individual's ability to decide a course of action through careful consideration. The two dimensions of being work hand-in-hand, signalling an independent person capable of making well-thought-out decisions. It speaks to a type of personhood and begs the question of whether education is responsible for making individual beings who can operate in a social world or collective citizenry. Home-school research has demonstrated that home-school educational approaches produce unique, strong personalities with a high level of social development that can contribute meaningfully to society (Truskolaska, 2012).

Within a Polish context, research revealed that home-school families were capable of raising creative and engaged members of society through their understanding of socialization (Truskolaska, 2012). Home-schooling activities make valuable social beings for society, and individuality allows for the development of an independent person who values themselves and others; who cooperates as opposed to competes with others. Nevertheless, authors like Sarajlic (2019) have critiqued the overemphasis on authenticity by home-schoolers. He argued that Christian home-schooling inhibits authenticity because of the indistinguishability between upbringing in value and education. Home-schoolers cannot independently think when the level of attachment is high to the parents and they are grounded in their parents' belief system, especially if the main aim is transmitting cultural values.

Moreover, the parents' underlying emotions regarding the curriculum invalidated the notion of developing authentic individuals because children cannot evaluate their educator (Sarajlic, 2019). To him, learners cannot truly question and evaluate their education and educator, because of the lack of detachment. These home-schoolers, from his perspective, are incapable of separating and understanding self from the religious context within which they are being educated. Such an assertion assumed greater diversity in the formal school system. Although authors like Reich (2002) have emphasized that the school exposes children to beliefs that are beyond, not different to, that of their parents, one cannot deny that the formal school system by relegating subject matter to a series of 'facts' (Giroux, 2018), produces an equally monolithic worldview. In the same way that home-school critics like Sarajlic (2019) questioned the perceived authenticity of home-schooling, it has also been argued that the purely political thrust of formal schooling is geared towards producing one type of identity; that of making collective citizenry (Dill & Elliot, 2019; Glanzer, 2013).

Many, however, see the possibilities of home-schooling as expanding these. It has been argued that home-schooling, because it recognizes the unique individual in the learning process, can develop personhood with an understanding of the multifaceted identities that make human beings (Glanzer, 2013). Furthermore, the assumption that home-schooling as a privatized form of education means that they are inevitably creating bad citizens has been debunked. Instead, they argued that home-schoolers could cultivate a voice of reflexive thinking in their children through their philosophical frameworks and methods (Dill & Elliot, 2019). Because the school has been touted as the only institution specializing in education (Illich, 1970), it is believed to be the only space where citizenship education is taught (Arai, 1999). Moreover, Arai (1999) argued that home-schoolers construct citizenship differently, perhaps more aligned to creating and reaching the goals of autonomy and authenticity.

Research on home-schoolers has yielded active citizens participating in their communities (Purwaningsih & Fauziah, 2019). It is revealed that autonomy can be honed within the family environment, primarily since home-schoolers are

not relegated to the home for the process of learning and education. African American home-schoolers at college spoke of home-schooling as a journey of self-discovery, where they were given the space to know themselves, which better equipped them for college life (Williams, 2016). Further studies on home-schooled students revealed thought processes aligned to the kind of education parents envisioned (Neuman & Guterman, 2022). Other studies spoke to the expanded possibilities that home-schoolers had through their exposure to mixed and diverse groups and social experiences, not relegated to same-age peer groups as in the formal school system (de Carvalho & Skipper, 2019).

In their study of home-schoolers, Neuman and Guterman (2017) derived three key outcomes of education - socialization, acculturation, and individualization - all of which were prioritized differently through home-school practice. Home-schoolers of this study Neuman and Guterman (2017), emphasized character development as foremost in the learning process. There seemed to be no age range that determined when and how character development was taught as parents of children, young and older, spoke of developing character in their child/ren. This aspect of learning they felt was missing from the formal system as they spoke to the kind of unfiltered exposure their children could, and in some cases did, encounter. They were preparing individuals for a future they could be proud of and that could make their parents proud.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter positioned the emerging theory of home-schooling within existing literature. It introduced the transformative notes of home-schooling that emerged from the data of Chapter 3, presenting the possibilities of positioning home-schooling in this instance within a CP framework. Utilizing the reflective questions from the data, a discourse around home-schooling and liberated education was presented.

Chapter 5: A Theory of Home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago

"Today, it is likely that there are teachers doing exactly what critical pedagogy promotes, but who have never heard of critical pedagogy" (Cho, 2013: 37)

5.1 Chapter Introduction

Charmaz (2014) asserted that CGT entails a co-construction of narratives between researcher and participants. She emphasized the need to examine the actions and processes of the studied phenomenon as told by the participants in dialogue with the researcher. The aim of this study was an exploration of home-schooling from the perspective of the practitioners, intending to theorize on the practice within a Trinbagonian context. Thus, I set out to construct a framework for home-schooling, grounded by an analysis of the discourse of the parents. Two overarching questions guided the study:

1. Why are parents choosing to home-school?
2. What does this say about the education system in Trinidad and Tobago?

Embedded in the stories presented in Chapter 3 is a discourse about home-schooling that provoked answers to these initial questions. Generally, the parents' stories painted a picture of home-schooling that revealed a reflective journey of choice and discovery about their child/ren, themselves, and their families. Moreover, these reflections illuminated poignant questions about the fundamentals of education and the entire learning process.

As the stories navigated through the parents' processes of choosing and doing home-school, it positioned T&T education under a microscope for inquiry. Consistently present in the narrative was the interconnection between the choice to home-school and discussions of the mainstream system. The stories suggest that reasons for home-schooling were often situated within the context of the mainstream system. Despite the initial presupposition of the question, parents made no pronouncements about the T&T education system. Rather, insight into the home-schooling experiences highlighted the T&T education system, positioning it under a microscope and creating opportunities to explore

contradictions and problematize its existing practices and ideologies. Their choice to home-school was consistently contextualized within the existing education system. This finding was not surprising, as their home-schooling choice was situated within a context where school attendance and mainstream education are the standards. This was validated in the stories as most parents, all but two, enrolled at least one child in the education system before embarking on their home-schooling journey.

The discourse on home-schooling illuminated a particular construct of education in T&T as experienced and perceived by the parents, brought about through reflection on their home-schooling journey. In essence, home-schooling became the lens through which education, specifically the T&T education system, was scrutinized and provided a space to question its philosophical, ideological, and pedagogical foundations. More than just a space for questioning the T&T education system, speaking of the home-school choice provided an introspective pathway to discover the deeper meaning of education. This is not to argue that there is a universally accepted definition of education, as its meaning has very subjective qualities. The inclusion of these Trinidadian home-schooling parents' voices added a layer to the broader discussion of education in general. As such, I argue that the home-school narrative was positioned within an overarching framework that questioned education fundamentals, utilizing the T&T education system as its point of reference.

The decision to home-school is encased in three overarching, overlapping categories - circumstantial, experiential, and ideological - explaining the parents' reasons for home-schooling. Circumstantial reasons cite the personal reasons that the parents decided to home-school their child/ren. Though met with different junctures, the different circumstances the child/ren faced impacted the parents' home-school decision. For some, the experience in the mainstream system proved to be the catalyst, while for others, it was clear that mainstream school was not an option. Though each family presented their reasons differently, several overlapping individual circumstances impacted families' decisions to home-school. Section 3.2 emphasized several reasons, including medical and developmental. Significantly, the parents identified that

the unique circumstances their child/ren faced required an alternative approach to education to meet these needs.

In many cases, the needs were assessed by comparing the expectation and what they recognized as possible within the mainstream system. The dialogue revealed that, in most cases, the first option for all but two parents was to enroll their child/ren in the mainstream setting. This clearly signals that school attendance was the norm in Trinbagonian society. For several of the parents, a recognition of the unique circumstances of their child/ren emerged only after their initial engagement with the mainstream setting. In several instances, their ability to experience the mainstream school setting solidified or propelled the home-school choice. From the child who bypassed the curriculum to the child who was bored in the setting, it was clear that the mainstream environment did not suit their children. For others, whose medical challenges ensured consistent absenteeism, there was the recognition that they could not keep up. As indicated, most parents enrolled their child/ren in schools, but the experiences highlighted their unique circumstances, ultimately leading to the home-school choice. Through their lens, the system was designed to cater to a particular type of learner, a mold their child/ren did not fit, hence provoking the home-school choice.

There was a seamless interconnectedness between each category as they fed into each other to not only highlight why parents were choosing to home-school, but more significantly, they proved a way to collectively engender a questioning of certain aspects of the education system and education in general. On the one hand, they problematized the philosophical foundations that underlie Trinbagonian education. Secondly, they highlighted the great ideological disconnect between the existing education system and the parents' ideologies. Frequently, a discussion of the unique circumstances of the child/ren was rooted in an examination of their experiences within the mainstream setting. As such, there was a clear connection between identifying the needs and the experiences in the mainstream system. In some instances, it was not an indictment of the education system, but the reality of a unique circumstance of their child/ren and family.

As highlighted previously, most parents placed their children in mainstream settings at one point or another in their educational journey. Interestingly, it was not only the children's experience in the mainstream setting that proved to be a catalyst for home-schooling. Section 3.3.1 demonstrated how the experiences were layered; encompassing the child's experiences and that of the parents as students and as educators. These experiences provided the foundation and, for some, ultimately solidified the home-school choice. The ability to speak from an experiential perspective, whether through their child/ren in the mainstream setting, as educators, or as former students themselves, grounded and facilitated an evidence-based approach to their decision. For most, the dialogue connecting their experiences to home-school choice was positioned within a discussion of the formalized school system and some practices and philosophies that undergirded these settings.

I would argue that the children's experiences in the system were two-fold and connected to the understanding that the education system could not cater to the child's individual needs. Some parents cited concerns of negligence and negative speech exposure from which they were safeguarding their children (see Section 3.3.1). Though all parents spoke to some extent about the negative influences and exposures of the mainstream setting, for most parents, it was not inevitably the deciding factor to home-school, but part of an interwoven validation of their decision. Section 3.3.1 revealed the experiences of four parent-educators in the group. The fact that these parents taught within the mainstream system proved integral to guiding their decision and highlighted many of their ideological views on education. Their ability to experience the system directly provided a perspective for the type of education they wanted for their children. Much of these experiences, particularly their experiences as educators and students, encouraged the parents to begin to question the entire education process.

Their experiences unearthed a reflective mode of thinking through education, teaching, and learning, reflecting the ideological frameworks from which they operated and, to a large extent, showed how these experiences sowed the seeds for their ultimate home-school journeys. It showed how they wanted to offer an educational experience different to what they knew and

experienced in the mainstream system. They pinpointed deficiencies they recognized and yearned to correct them through their alternative approaches. That which they felt was notably missing, revealing gaps they wanted to fill by delivering what they deemed a more holistic education. The first-hand experiences of these parents as educators within the system that they ultimately rejected for their children gave them a lens to think about education objectively.

Even though some parents spoke positively about their experience as students, the general sentiment is that they wanted to do education differently for their children on the one hand and the other, a recognition that education changed from their childhood. Their comparisons between their own student life and their child/ren's alluded to the fact that the education system seemed to have transformed into a more pressurized system than previously existed (see Section 3.3.1). The varied yet connected experiences of the parents and their children demonstrated that the educational approach they desired was not aligned with that of the mainstream system. Parents were sympathetic to the realities of the classroom setting in the mainstream system and the type of education it could realistically provide. They saw the classroom as a microcosm of a larger education system that determines how education is done, recognizing that there is little that can be done within a small classroom to change the system. In recognizing that there are what they titled 'good' teachers (see Section 3.3.1), they have also recognized that there are imposing factors that undergird the system, one that, for them, could not be fought within the system, therefore propelling and through their discussion validating their home-school choice. As educators, many of their beliefs about the education system shed light on underlying philosophical questions around education and what it ought to be.

Many other parents were either adamant that they were home-schooling through to secondary school or were uncertain at the time of our discussion. However, for at least two parents, experiencing the mainstream system proved to be a bit different, given that they chose to home-school only through primary school and enroll their children in secondary school. They saw it as a partnership of sorts between family and school. To a large extent, this

demonstrated that there was not a total rejection of the mainstream system, and, for some, they were able to successfully find ways to fulfil their educational needs within a mainstream setting at a particular stage in their child's life. This decision was consistent with most parents' challenges regarding education in T&T. Most parents highlighted one key element of the education system that they abhorred, the Secondary Entrance Examination (SEA). However, in one case, it was not only examinations at the primary school level that showed how education was constructed within T&T society.

One family enrolled their boys into the secondary school system to take examinations solely to meet tertiary requirements. It showed that high-stakes testing continues to be the standard through which progress through the education system, even at the tertiary level, is based. It was emphasized, however, that the home-school experience better prepared the children for these examinations. Reference to the testing system that permeated the education system, specifically at transitioning points, spoke to an educational culture within T&T society. Again, solidifying the partnership or the desire for such did not always yield the expected results. One couple expressed their initial yearning to partner with a school whose ethos aligned with theirs. They quickly recognized that the way the system is designed presently meant that the end goal within the system is the same; examination and test-structured (see Section 3.3.1.). The evidence or partnership attempts in these instances demonstrated two things: (1) parents did not wholly reject the system entirely; and (2) the system bounded them, especially where entry into local higher education institutions was concerned.

The intersection of values was very pronounced in the discussions, and they undergirded all areas of the discussion of home-school choice and the importance it held for each family's journey. This was evident even as they spoke about their mainstream experience. Each spoke of specified belief systems that charted their path before and during their home-school processes. A critical point to note is the realization that the value systems that represented their families, in some cases, seemed to stand in opposition to what they felt existed in the mainstream education system. Furthermore, the parents' discussion of values showed how their beliefs, including those before becoming

parents, influenced their choice of home-schooling. The most prominent values were educational, religious/spiritual, and parenting. The ideological reason for home-schooling is an umbrella to cover several areas, highlighting how the families' belief systems contradicted the mainstream system.

Sections 3.3 and 3.4 addressed how the parents saw their belief systems and the mainstream system on opposite ends of the spectrum. What was clear is that the way the parents construed education and the entire experiences stood in opposition to that of the mainstream system. The belief systems that undergirded their educational choice were rooted not only in questioning the pedagogical foundations of the mainstream system, but religious and parenting beliefs were closely intertwined in their choice to home-school or how they practiced home-schooling. Families expressed guidance by a divine being in their choice and home-schooling journey (see Section 3.4). While it was not out rightly stated that religion was a primary reason for home-schooling, it was clear that religion factored in through their home-schooling processes, either through the curriculum, their choice of secondary school, or their overall socialization practices (see Section 3.4.3). Reference to religion and spirituality was used to show the kind of upbringing they were desirous of creating for their child/ren. In essence, they determined how and in what way their ethos is imparted to their children through the education process rather than leaving it to the responsibility of the formalized system.

Several of their views on parenting before parenthood seemed to lead them to the home-schooling path. For one couple, what they wanted for their children did not align with a system they perceived as inherently stressful (see Section 3.4.4). Although they tested the mainstream system, by enrolling their children, it seemed that it was almost inevitable that to the extent that the present education system existed, it would contradict the experience they felt as parents they should be offering their child/ren. Also, the educational values the parents either alluded to or raised openly supported much of the discussions. Specifically, parents spoke of their vision of education and learning. In some instances, this point was raised as a form of comparing what existed in the education system versus what kind of education they envisioned for their child/ren.

Importantly, these ideals were not simply thought processes about education, but manifested themselves in how they practiced home-schooling. A comparison between education in the formal system served as the pivot upon which to explore their ideas about what education is and should be and how home-schooling manifests those ideals. They did not only explore the processes of teaching and learning but the more profound ideas around what education ought to be. Much of the educational values were also intertwined with some of the religious and parenting values. Generally, there was a consensus about what education meant for these home-schooling parents. Their education ethos was aligned to life and not relegated to a set and rigid curriculum. They envisioned and practiced a broadened education scope that transcended what was or could be offered in the mainstream setting.

Ultimately, the discourse about home-schooling meandered through a reflective journey of deciding, doing, and the outcomes of home-schooling. The decision to home-school is supported by a series of interconnected ways of thinking and acting that collectively explain the educational choice. It demonstrated a form of telling about home-schooling, though varied by experiences and individual circumstances that reveal common threads. Their journeys presented home-schooling as a cognitive process encased by experiences, emotions, and decisions. As each parent spoke of their home-schooling journey, they unveiled more than an educational choice. Their circumstantial, experiential, and ideological reasons for home-schooling birthed a reflective way of thinking through the home-schooling process. Parents were not simply citing reasons for home-schooling; their narratives reveal deeper thinking about education within a Trinbagonian context. Their discomfort with the education system led them to not only critique the system, but to embark on an educational journey that was different from the norm. Their alternative educational choice enabled them to adopt educational philosophies that contradicted that of the mainstream system.

The constant comparison method of CGT revealed four themes that explained the home-schooling process: understanding child/ren, experiencing mainstream, valuing, and becoming. The connections, disconnections, and nuances of each theme were further explored concerning the narratives. The

stories suggested the parents were not merely recalling their home-school experiences, but simultaneously reflecting on their decisions and processes through a home-school lens. The thematic areas, therefore, birthed the four reflective questions used to present the home-schooling stories in Chapter 3.

1. Who is my child?
2. What does he/she need?
3. How can I fulfil that need?
4. What kind of person am I educating towards?

These questions revealed a mode of thinking about home-school families' education and learning. This home-schooling process transcends what is evident in the mainstream system. It may, in essence, promote a liberated education that has the potential to produce a particular type of individual, counteract the inequities of the mainstream system and ultimately challenge the status quo.

These questions provided the basis for the theoretical framework on home-schooling within this context (Figure 5.1). The introspective questions positioned home-schooling within a particular educational construct while at the same time displaying deficiencies within the existing system. As parents think deeply about what they want for their children, they unveil their conceptualization of education in the context of a system they reject.
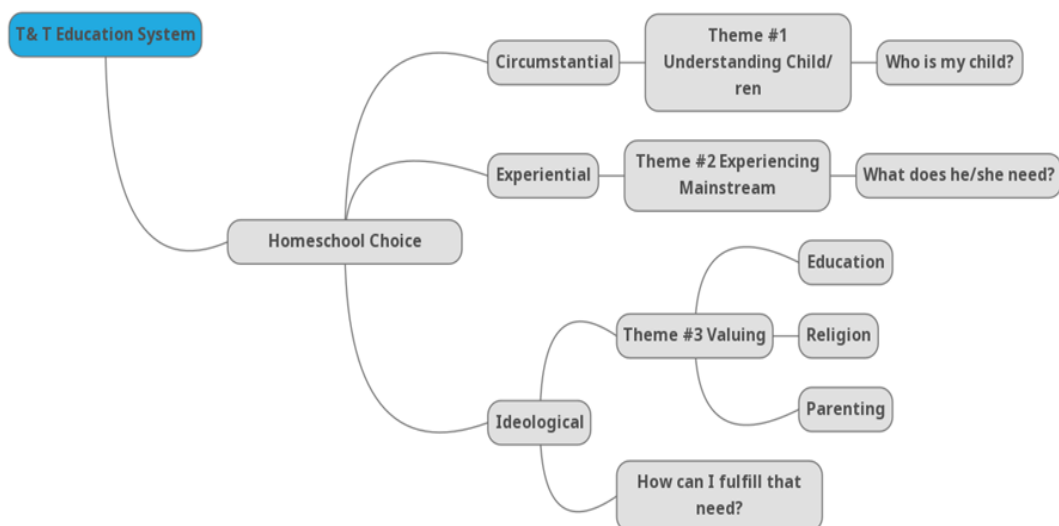
Figure 5.1 A Home-schooling Framework

Figure 5.1 depicts how the research questions were addressed and the framework utilized in the final analysis. It highlights the emerging themes and corresponding reflective questions that provide the theoretical framework of home-schooling in this research context. The parents' home-schooling narratives served as the basis for constructing a home-schooling framework rooted in reflective questions about the circumstances, experiences, and ideologies that influenced their educational choice. These reflections, positioned within a T&T context, spotlighted the more profound question of 'What is education? 'This questioning ultimately led to an alternative educational choice; home-schooling.

Ultimately, their home-school experience was shaped by a duality of concern, an agenda of change through their alternative educational choice, contextualized by their problematization of a mainstream education system. This construct of home-schooling bore an overarching resemblance to many of the basic tenets of CP. Under the CGT umbrella, theory represents a phenomenon, showing relationships, nuances, connections, and disconnections between concepts within a bounded context (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). This provided the direction and impetus for this analysis section. Their transformational approach to education, coupled with their questioning of the

existing system, provided the potential to explore the possible relationship between home-schooling in this instance and the doctrines of CP. In the following sections, I discuss the extent to which home-schooling in this instance demonstrates CP in action by exploring the extent to which the home-schooling narratives align with CP. It is important to note that in this study parents were educators. As such, there is no taken-for-granted assertion that the kind of questioning and reasoning this group of parents could derive may be possible in other groups. Their access to ideas and background may have positioned them differently to construct and conduct home-schooling with a particular mindset, a point to be discussed later in this chapter.

In this study, the duality of concern shaped the parents' home-school experience; on the one hand, a critique of the education system, and on the other, a transformative agenda. Their choice processes and enacting home-schooling revealed an epistemological resemblance to CP. Their narratives embodied a reflective and contemplative dialogue in much the same way CP theorists like Freire (1987) speak of reflection as a path to liberating education (as cited in Shor & Freire, 1987). From this premise, I noted that even as foundation CP proponents like Shor and Freire (1987) discussed liberating education within a formal school context, they opened the door for exploration of other possible contexts, like home-schooling. "There is another place for the existence and the development of liberating education… in the intimacy of social movements" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 38). Many parents' voices substantiated this notion by acknowledging in our discussions that more persons were selecting home-schooling in T&T, thus presenting the practice as a potential social movement.

The dialogue around the emergent four reflective questions is the starting point upon which home-schooling in T&T is situated within a CP framework. They revealed the answers to this study's two overarching questions in a manner resembling the key arguments postulated by CP. These reflections unveil a way of thinking and doing education differently within a context where school attendance and mainstream education are the standards. According to Cho (2013), the fundamental aim of CP is to "construct… education as agents of change" by accomplishing three elements:

1. Build more egalitarian power relations
2. Strengthen learner voices
3. Inspire critical consciousness (p. 1)

Moreover, CP has been broadly defined and explained in many ways:

- McLaren (2015) argued that CP advances an agenda for educational transformation by exploring the socio-political context of education acts and the importance of democratizing education sites.
- Giroux (2018b) noted that CP highlights the way knowledge is produced under specific conditions of learning, while
- Darder et al. (2003) stated that CP links schooling practice with democratic principles and transformative action.
- Malott and Porfilio (2011) promoted the idea that educational "modes of engagement" serve to produce and/or reproduce social systems.
- Kincheloe (2008) stated that CP "is grounded on a social and educational vision of justice and equality". (p. 10)

Home-schooling, in this context, is a space where education takes place, and the way parents construct and conduct education is akin to shifting the power pendulum and democratizing. It has been argued that CP thrives on skepticism, doubt, and analysis (Ross, 2018). The reflective discourse of the parents represents these characteristics as their process of deciding and ultimately enacting home-school problematizes education offered in the Trinbagonian mainstream system, evidenced in the reflective questions. Freire (1970,1974) argues that education serves two purposes: conformity, which is used to integrate persons into the system's logic, or the practice of freedom (as cited in Ross, 2018). Democratizing education rejects the logic and ensures that education is a freeing act. As the CP proponents above have shown, they recognize that education can be both a site of oppression and one where such oppression can be disrupted (Malott & Porfilio, 2011). I suggest that home-schooling is demonstrative of this type of freedom, presenting a pedagogy of liberation in this context.

I, therefore, put into a conversation the parents' home-school constructs with key CP concepts to discuss the extent to which home-schoolers are,

plausibly, liberated educators. I argue that home-schooling provides a valuable space within which dialogue around transformative education can emerge. According to Apple (2000), naysayers have questioned the effectiveness of alternative forms of education, such as home-schooling. He has spoken openly about what he refers to as conservative social movements in his discussion of specifically religious/fundamentalist home-schoolers. He argued they create "hegemonic blocs" as a means of preserving traditions, which in essence can itself be oppressive (Apple, 2000, p. 63). While not aiming to explore the effectiveness of the home-school practice within this context, this study recognizes that the discourse around home-school pedagogy provides a framework by which to explain the growth and its possible impact on the existing education system.

Recognizing key elements of the CP framework built into the home-school experience is a helpful starting point for discussing alternatives in such societies. The interconnectivity of the sub-themes of the reflective discourse tells a story of transformative education, birthed from a plethora of circumstances and experiences. The analysis will situate and synthesize the core principles of CP within the context of the home-school experiences to determine the extent of comparability. As such, the substantive theory presented here is that home-schooling presents a progressive and transformative form of educational praxis. It presents an alternative form of education within a Trinbagonian context demonstrative of a language and action of possibility envisaged by the CP transformative agenda.

The parents' reasons for choosing to home-school are not far removed from that presented in the extant global literature as it similarly problematizes a traditional mode of education. However, by merely exploring the surface reasons for this educational alternative, the deeper processes at work are neglected; the way parents rationalize their choice and practices give insight into a deeper construct and understanding of education. The CP principles identified by Cho (2013) will form the foundation upon which selected CP concepts will be discussed regarding the home-school reflections of the parents. The intentionality of the word selected is rooted in the recognition that home-schooling in this context, though transformational in its agenda, in

essence, may not be fulfilling the holistic transformation as envisioned by Freire and Shor (1987), but demonstrates "gradation of transforming moments" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 34) throughout their journey.

Home-schooling allows for exploring these transforming moments through how parents rationalize and conceptualize their educational choice. The intention is not to romanticize CP, recognizing the critiques about its abstract nature and inability to demonstrate an accurate model for transformation within the mainstream system of which it speaks (Abraham, 2014; Mcarthur, 2010). It is to explore the possibilities of transformation presented through a home-schooling agenda. It recognizes that CP is a "contested and dynamic educational field" (Malott & Porfilio, 2011; Porfilio & Ford, 2015, p. xv). Furthermore, there is the acknowledgement of the broad gamut of educational theorization that is offered within the CP tradition, as highlighted by Cho (2012). The use of CP in this instance is not specific to any one domain, but instead looks at the core/fundamental arguments articulated differently in various camps and postulates one coherent idea of CP.

Parents' narratives about the essentiality of reading, the practicality of education, and the limitless nature of education, for example, can be aligned to much of CP thinking as espoused by prominent CP thinkers. The subsequent sections of this chapter will elucidate CP's conversing story with theory. Specifically, its emphasis will be on the fundamental principles identified by Cho, highlighted in Chapter 4, that underlie CP theorizing. Figure 5.2 is a tabular representation of the theorization of home-schooling being offered. It shows how the reflective questions as overarching themes relate to the core CP concepts in a manner that explains the home-school choice within this context. It demonstrates, through story excerpts, how the data validate the presented transformative argument. What is depicted is how the circumstantial, experiential, and ideological reasons for home-schooling are captured as a type of emancipatory education, positioning home-schooling as a possible site for liberated educational ideals.

Homeschool Choice	Emergent Themes	Reflective Questions	CP Concepts	Stories Excerpts
Circumstantial	Understanding Child/ren	Who is my child?	Education as a change agent.	*I think generally the broad public view of education may be more geared towards job acquisition, education*
Experiential	Experiencing mainstream	What does he/she need?	Pedagogy as Praxis	*But to her, she knew it already. She was ready to move on and, And I think home-schoolers are constantly challenged to look at their philosophy of education. What is the purpose of education? What are you trying to do with your child?*
Ideological	Valuing	How can I fulfill that need?	Build egalitarian power structures	*I had two of my children were diagnosed with sickle cell disease .....Actually knowing your child. And it's good and it's bad, but, I mean, I can tell you that I know my children*
		What kind of person am I educating towards	Curriculum based on experience and strengthening learner voices	*You know? there're these table top signs that say "silence" yuh know? Sometimes you have the children holding their mouths togetherVisit to the Library; the library has story time, and everything is something you can learn about Or say look you baking, I say, okay, this is 1/3, this is whatever. And you're seeing in action, your seeing it in life. Okay this has an application.*
			Emphasis on dialogue and consensus	*Even if I look at my 12-year-old, you're on the cusp of puberty. There're things that were able to talk about. But they were never really afraid of questioning. They were never afraid to voice or to just say I don't understand the miss or something like that because that is what was encouraged. It was always a dialogue. I think schooling was always like a dialogue.*
			Inspire Critical Consciousness	

Figure 5.2 Connecting CP to Home-schooling in T&T

5.1.1 Education as a Change Agent

The philosophical foundation of critical pedagogues is rooted in questioning the fundamental purpose of education and theorizing on what it ought to be. Thus, recognising the possibility of change has always been integral to the CP agenda. The recognition of this key function of education places these home-school parents within the realm of CP. The parents' articulation of the mainstream educational context provides the platform for them to enact a change agenda. Their home-schooling is a construct premised on change as it recognizes the socio-political context that inundates the mainstream educational space and moves towards creating a more democratizing educational site. They identify the key elements of the system, features that they cite as inhibiting and not in keeping with what education should be. Their change, evidenced through thought processes and home-school practices, contradicts what exists.

They do not identify themselves as critical pedagogues; however, their stories in Chapter 3 are indicative of a language and action of possibility by the

way they construct and enact education through the home-school journey. For these home-school parents, the T&T education system embodied a type of education designed under specific learning conditions, essentially maintaining a specific status quo. Conditions such as the high stakes testing culture and silencing of student voices maintain an inequitable educational context from which they shield their child/ren through home-schooling. The home-schooling process, as such, is presented as a safe haven and a space where improved education and life philosophies can be brought to fruition.

The parents' problematization of a status quo that they perceive to exist within this education system induces an alternative form of education. Their choice to home-school is situated within a deeper and broader understanding of education, one that opposes the philosophy of education that they see present within the T&T mainstream, a philosophy that stagnates rather than presents opportunities for growth. Their educational ideology is positioned within their dialogue of the home-school journey. The stories signal a home-school journey wrought with the critique of the existing, normalized education system and a thrust to move away from the inherent inhibitions towards a more freeing pursuit. In Chapter 3, the parents exposed the hierarchical nature of the education system that they reject, dissecting specific system elements that they identified as part of the dominant educational ideology. The parents understand mainstream education to be, most notably, one that is strictly geared to preparing a particular type of citizenry, manufacturing a futuristic workforce to fulfil the needs of society.

They identify the mainstream system as where educational practices are used as a means of social control, thereby maintaining the status quo. Distinct features of the status quo are unveiled through the hierarchies they present as integral to the education system, such as the segmentation of students in classrooms according to performance and levels of prestige in different schools. For them, what is promoted as education within the institutional school is myopic and inhibiting. Education for change is presented as the starting point and the underlying premise that fuels the action and processes that facilitate this shift through home-schooling. For these parents, true education should go beyond these elements. It should not be merely about job acquisition and

status. Their ability to highlight what they see as deficient educational ideologies and practices in the mainstream setting positions home-schooling as the antithesis, promoting a change agenda. The home-school parents of this study manifest that recognition of education as a space for change/transformation. Their alternative form of education represents more than an aversion to the existing status quo, but a challenge. They were rejecting a system while simultaneously creating an alternative education.

Quotes from Chapter 3 revealed critical elements of the T&T education system through the lens of the parents. They highlighted the problematic way they see education being conducted and what they reject. More than a rejection, these represented what their home-schooling undertaking would seek to do and, from their viewpoint, ultimately change. They highlighted the culture of hierarchy and competition created within the system that they believed inhibited the true essence of education. Parents spoke to a hierarchy of performance, schools, and subjects that further disadvantaged many students within the system, seemingly serving the needs of some students as opposed to all. Through their diverse yet connected reasons for home-schooling, the parents were able to interrogate and draw attention to how certain types of knowledge are superior to others, affirming the values of high performers, prestige schools, and subjects deemed necessary.

As such, education in the mainstream setting was not the great equalizer; from their perspective, it was the great divider. Additionally, they take issue with the overly examination-focused education structure, which feeds into the hierarchy. Parents spoke of the aim of T&T education being only job and status acquisition. As such, the reason for getting an education was tied to an end goal, not necessarily about learning, growing, and developing, which they saw as critical to the educational process. This is very much connected to the notion of instrumental rationality, i.e. knowledge is tied to a specific outcome, a means to an end, as opposed to knowledge being about discovery. For these parents, the home-school option provided an opportunity to offer a different construct of education that presented learning, not in the commodified way they see in the formal system, but as a holistic undertaking. Thus, it recognized the

possibilities of change through an alternative type of education - home-schooling.

5.1.2 Pedagogy as Praxis

The parents' discourse in Section 3.1 demonstrates that their agenda for change required introspection and interrogation of the system's practices, philosophies, and overall pedagogies that they have now removed or refused to send their child/ren to. Home-schooling, as parent-led education, positions parents as the transformative intellectuals in their recognition of the inequities of the existing system and their decision to do differently through the home-schooling process. Their home-schooling journey is critically reflective, rooted in assessing and acting upon the existing educational context. Their narratives were evidence of a type of juxta-positioning between the existing T&T education system and how their home-school approaches challenged it. The emergent reflective questions from the dialogue are demonstrative of pedagogy as praxis. It is about how the parents think critically about education before, during, and after executing a different form of education through home-schooling.

Home-schooling reflections encourage the parents to think about educational practices as integral to creating a better world. It is intentional as the parents focus on the kind of world and persons they perceive to be produced from the existing system. Sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5 show deep reflection on what education should do and how it should impact society at large. Their questioning of whether the existing education improved people and society pinpoints the fundamental aims of their home-schooling practices: to create nicer, good people, independent, focused creatives with sound characters who can make an impact. The essence of their education was to create learning environments that birthed entrepreneurs and employees with impeccable work ethics (see Sections 3.4.4 and 3.4.5).

Importantly, the reflection was not only about the T&T education system, but their home-schooling processes. Persistent skepticism and scrutiny ensured that the ultimate question of the purpose of the education was always being

met, even in their practices. The recognition of their child/ren's uniqueness (see Section 3.3.1) presents the first layer of introspection. Parents ask themselves what they are trying to accomplish with their child/ren and whether that aligns with their understanding of what education should be. This continuous process of questioning motives, purpose, and ideology in practice is a process undertaken as a pulse check tool. Many of the parents expressed initial doubt and fears about their ability as parents to educate their children in the way they perceived children should be raised. Their evaluation of their position as parents shows their awareness of the possibilities of replicating what they are rejecting.

Through choosing and enacting home-schooling, the parents find themselves tasked with questioning their decisions, recognizing that their child/ren's education rests solely on their shoulders. The questioning is not regretful, but encourages them to evaluate the fundamentals of education. Having identified the power imbalance within the mainstream system, they must be conscious that they are not replicating what they problematize. Although, they are very clear about the type of values (see Section 3.4.2) that they are desirous of entrusting to their children through their educational processes, this does not negate the different educational approaches. Their home-school ideology and practices aligned with their education ethos for life. As such, their reflections and actions upheld this philosophy through their home-school journey.

5.1.3 Build Egalitarian Power Structures

For these parents, the transformative educational approach was not strategically engineered, but is understood as an outcome of their identification of their child/ren and their learners' unique needs (see Section 3.2.1). Learner individuality is crucial to the transformative process and is integral to how the parents conceptualize the point of educational departure. Their home-schooling recognizes the learner as central to the learning process. Whether circumstantial or experiential in one way or another, by scrutinizing the child/ren, they positioned education within a context where the seeds of

transformation are present. The learner is the starting point, the unit of analysis in this home-schooling process. An egalitarian learning environment is thus created where the learner becomes the subject and not the object of the learning process. They recognized that the universal standards that plagued the mainstream system could not meet the specificities and requirements of their specific learners. The experiences of their child/ren in the mainstream system and their specific medical and developmental needs encouraged them to refocus on individuality.

They took a more proactive role in providing an educational site aligned to the identified needs of the child/ren. This, in essence, challenged the rigid, hierarchical structures of the mainstream system by thinking of learners differently. It set a foundation for home-schooling to pivot education differently, understanding that the students were not merely receptacles of knowledge and information but must be factored in and included in the educational process. The ability of the home-school parents to identify their child/ren as individuals and commence a learning path tailored to their needs is demonstrative of a trajectory to creating more equal structures within education. Their positioning of the learner as central to the learning process undoes the banking structure of education that Freire (1972) problematizes.

Through their choice to home-school, parents become partners with their learners, ultimately dismantling the power hierarchy created within the traditional classroom. This is initially done by first seeing their child as an individual. I argue that, to a large extent, home-schooling, in this case, resolves the teacher-student contradiction. It is a platform to commence an educational journey toward dismantling perceived hierarchical structures that plague the formal education system. This allows parents to introduce a source of autonomy to students that does not exist within the system. There is the recognition, however, that an inherent power relationship may exist between parent and child. Parents, however, discuss ways in which they recognize and attempt to destabilize that hierarchy. For example, Mrs. N revealed her openness to being the learner as she journeyed with each of her children in their educational process. She recognized their agency in the educational

process, open to learning from and with her children and their unique perspectives (see Section 3.4.2).

5.1.4 Curriculum Based on Experience and Strengthening Learner Voices

Transformative education is about fundamentally broadening what education is, beyond a textbook and sometimes even beyond or outside of the curriculum: a curriculum designed to develop their natural talents, interests, and inclinations. As the home-school environment emphasizes a more child-centered approach to the educational process, the voice of the learner matters. With home-school premised on repositioning the learner, parents embark on a process that serves to empower their child/ren. Parents alluded to the fact that a significant amount of silencing culture was promoted within the T&T education system (see Section 3.3.1). This served to maintain the unequal power structures, where teachers taught and students listened.

Home-schooling transitioned from this banking structure of education by engaging in education framed around the students' needs and interests. This is again tied to their 'education is life' mantra because, for them, learning entailed exploring interests, such as baking, sewing, and playground activity, often using these interests to help the child/ren learn fundamentals (see Section 3.4.2). Their education was practical and engaging, allowing their children to engage in an environment connected to everyday life. The knowledge, therefore, is positioned within a context that is both familiar and enjoyable to them. In so doing, their approach encouraged exploring the interests and honing the talents of their child/ren as crucial to the educational experience.

This was part of creating a more democratic environment that was not governed by a rigid, standardized curriculum that emphasized memorization and drills as opposed to creativity and discovery. Creating a space where the subjects were not pre-determined, or the depth of the subject matter was not pre-determined and inflexible, enabled the children the freedom to explore and discover without limitations. Measurable indicators and learning trajectories did not govern their educational processes; the needs of the individual child did and, as such, were based on 'situated pedagogies. ' What they wanted mattered and was considered and facilitated in the home-schooling

environment. Some of these interests were intertwined as teaching moments. Many parents spoke about the importance of reading and how this engendered greater autonomy and agency in home-schoolers. It tied into their understanding of learning as exploration and discovery because they understood that reading exposed them to an unlimited, unrestricted cadre of knowledge.

In most cases, the fact that the parents selected the curriculum brings into question whether the home-schooling structure operated similarly to the pre-determined curricula of the mainstream setting. Furthermore, that parents expressed that, though pre-selected and thus subjective, it was selected with the child's needs in mind and allowed for pacing and deeper exploration aligned to interest. As such, if a child wished to delve deeper into a subject, this type of flexibility was catered for, and did not tie specific subject matter to an age-related trajectory. While parents have a measure of control over the learning environment, what is facilitated is a space for their child/ren to discover and develop using the curriculum as a flexible guide, listening to the needs and desires of their children throughout the learning process. Essentially, these practices engendered greater involvement of the learner in the educational process rather than detachment. It made learning practical and, more so, aligning it to interests ensured the learner had an active role in the process.

5.1.5 Emphasis on Dialogue and Consensus

In his discussion of banking education, Freire (1972) identified dialogue as central to developing critical consciousness(Freire, 1972). He describes this dialogue as a social process, one where the authoritarian style of talk and chalk, the lecture style of the traditional classroom, is replaced with an open channel for learners to be teachers and vice versa (as cited in Shor & Freire, 1987). He argued that teachers must be open to "being their students, to learning by experience with them… in a relationship that is informally educational" (Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 30). Through their home-schooling stories, parents have demonstrated how they have assumed the role of co-investigators of knowledge with their child/ren. They reported constantly dialoguing with their children as part of the learning process. Although this is not possible to validate

without the presence of the child's voice, dialogue opens the channels for exploration, meaning, and the negotiation of reality. The context of this research and the choice to prioritize the parents' voices in essence highlights some of the very power imbalances that CP theorists present. It signals a contradiction of sorts, connecting CP to homes-schooling in the absence of the home-schoolers themselves. It is the parents in this instance who author the homeschooling story, thereby removing the learners' frame of reference about the liberating educational practices cited. The nature of the research questions serve to manage this perceived contradiction in this instance, as it seeks to understand the choice to homeschool from the adults, who ultimately make the final homeschool decision. This does not negate the critical role that the learner plays in the homeschooling process and their fundamental right to speak for themselves, especially in matters that directly affect them.

An emphasis on dialogue strips the hierarchical nature of traditional education. It presents learning as a two-way street and not linear. Learning is constructed as a mode of exploring. Dialogue allows for deeper exploration and discovery. It helps to unearth varying world-views and to develop critical and independent thinkers. Learners are encouraged to explore their subjective understanding through the discursive process. The integration of dialogue in the home-schooling process (see Sections 3.4.2 and 3.5.1) is a shared space where the learning process is shared. Many parents highlighted that, although home-schooling is parent-led, the delivery and overall learning process is not only facilitated by the parent. This is the case as the parents use tutors and other subject matter specialists, even within the home-schooling community. Thus, the dialogue is not only relegated to parent and child but extends to diverse voices. Children are encouraged to understand themselves as worthy of having viewpoints or, as one parent indicated, allowing them the space to lead them to a source of power (Mrs. A).

During the second interview, the parent (Mrs. B) advised me to listen to the podcasts of another home-schooling parent (Mrs. N). In the podcast, Mrs. N has one of her older sons present, where he gave insight on his research on the history of education. Not only was he discussing his research, but the dialogue between himself and his mother highlighted the examples of what the

home-schoolers of this research indicated that they wished to achieve for their children. In that podcast, a very assertive, knowledgeable young man presented himself in a position of engaging on a subject matter with which he was impassioned. It was during this podcast that the notion of democratic engagement was brought to life.

Student voice is "positioning students to identify and analyze issues related to their school and their learning that they see as significant" and that they "feel empowered to act alongside credentialized educators as critics and creators of educational practice" (Cook-Sather, 2020, p. 3). At that moment, it was clear the way that the voice of the child was prioritized and encouraged as mother and son engaged in the dialogue process. That they can work through a problem together raises their levels of consciousness.

The parents with multiple children recognized that each child brings a different perspective to the material/subject matter, allowing this type of discourse to occur. It is noteworthy that the dialogue, or "talk" as it was referred to, did not concentrate on academics only; it transcended all elements of life. Conversation, sharing of ideas, and encouraging a space where their voices mattered in the discussion proved to be an integral part of the home-schooling process. Additionally, in the process of talk, the parents emphasized using these talks to guide their child/ren and teach them values that were important to them, in some instances, their religious values.

5.1.6 Inspire Critical Consciousness

A liberated pedagogy is premised on developing critical consciousness that allows learners to understand themselves as subjects instead of objects of the learning process, who can ultimately better understand and make changes to the world around them (Fischman & McLaren, 2005). In the words of Freire (1972), developing critical consciousness is the shift away from creating "beings for others" to "beings for themselves" (p. 55). The parents of this study discussed how the mainstream system pegs education as a vehicle to social mobility, inundated with high-stakes examinations as gatekeepers of the system centered on a rigid curriculum. Moreover, in their decision to home-school, the parents are themselves engaging in the process of critical consciousness. They

do this by identifying the unequal structures embedded in the formal education system, and their home-school choice presents a means of acting against the said system.

Their entire premise of choosing to home-school, regardless of reason, is demonstrative of critical consciousness. The parents showed awareness and openness of their assumptions that shaped their educational choice. They were evident in their dialogue about the premise upon which their education operates and how it differs from that offered in the mainstream system. They recognized that these assumptions are multifaceted and guided by their values and ideologies about life and learning. They desired to move away from the premise of creating individuals for a specific system, as beings for others, as opposed to beings for themselves. The parents identified the deficiencies in the system and the kind of person the mainstream system educates to develop. Their ability to critically assess the existing T&T education system and act in a manner that, to them, changes the nature of education through home-schooling demonstrates an element of critical consciousness (Jemal, 2017).

5.1.7 Final thoughts

This analysis chapter served to articulate the theoretical framework that was ultimately used to provide an explanation of home-schooling in this context. Synthesizing selected CP concepts showed how home-schooling, as presented through the parents' constructs, is demonstrative of liberated pedagogy in praxis. It navigated the interconnections between choosing and doing home-school and how these processes and actions can be cited as transformative and liberating. Interestingly, the child/ren's circumstances and the parents' experiences and thoughts about life and education intersected to reveal an attitude and value about education. There is an interrelated belief and value system that blankets and sustains their choice to home-school with the facets of transformative education elucidated through these parents' home-schooling dialogue. Their reflections on the process of choosing and doing home-schooling bring key elements of challenge and change to life. Moreover, the conversing home-schooling discourse with key CP constructs provided a useful

lens through which to better understand this alternative educational practice and the present possibilities.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research endeavor sought to explore and better understand why parents were choosing to home-school their child/ren within a context where attending mainstream school is the norm. Notably, the reasons presented were an interwoven triad of circumstances, experiences, and ideologies. These all factored into why parents of this study decided at varying junctures in their child/ren's lives to walk an alternative educational path through home-schooling. However, the more profound answer to the research questions resonates in the recognition that more than simply choosing a different educational site, or in some cases rejecting the brick and mortar school altogether, their home-schooling constructed education from a different ideological and pedagogical lens. In essence, their home-schooling understood the learner, the learning environment, learnings, and outcomes differently; it was built on their constructs of education, compared to what they perceived was offered in the mainstream setting.

Home-schooling is presented in this instance as an educational site that positions the learner as central to the learning process. Their respective child/ren learners were not merely recipients of educational instruction or information, but were integral to the entire learning system. Their routines and practices demonstrated an educational culture that transcended what they felt was presented in the mainstream system, the backdrop to their home-schooling. The parents' discourse unveiled a deep desire to have more significant input into the educational and life pursuits of their child/ren, aligned to the educational ideals that they envisioned. Though the articulation and rationalization of the source of these ideals differed, there were notable connections in the home-school journey. Parents of this study took very conscious and deliberate steps to provide an educational experience that, for each family, indemnified the trajectory that they envisioned for their child/ren. That path was not solely educational; it considered the kind of human beings they were creating and the type of world they were preparing for.

In so thinking, their notion of education and learning moved beyond textbooks, passing tests and academic subjects. It was about preparation for

life, and while learning subject-specific matter was part of that ethos, their multi-pronged, practical educational approach proved to be closely aligned to what education ought to be. In essence, the decision to home-school was more than a different way of conceptualizing and enacting education. The findings in this study demonstrated the possibilities of transformative education in alternative educational and geographical spaces. It presented home-schooling as a transformative educational space; beyond simply exploring why parents opt to home-school, the findings unveiled the deeper meanings behind these reasons.

My initial thoughts entering this research endeavor were personal. I operated within a context where I was privy to many of the public concerns with the T&T education system and was ignorant that any alternative to attendance at school existed. I set out to better understand such an underrepresented alternative educational practice. The aim was to construct a theory of home-schooling in T&T, applying a CGT approach to analyze the practitioners' (parents') discourse. This home-schooling theory would be a foundation for more intentional, data-driven discourse around home-schooling in T&T. The aim was to answer seemingly fundamental questions about the growth of home-schooling, providing insight into an un-researched educational practice in this context. Why did parents feel the need to teach their own? Moreover, what did this mean for the T&T education system?

This thesis has presented home-schooling as not merely an alternative educational path, a different approach to education, but one with transformative and liberating possibilities for learners, worthy of further exploration. Home-schooling is constructed through reflective discourse, where ideologies, practices and pedagogies are carefully thought out under the umbrella of understanding education profoundly and broadly. These reflections present opportunities to explore ways alternative educational constructs, like home-schooling, co-exist within a small society where mainstream educational practices are the norm. It shows that a menu of educational options is possible and, perhaps, there is much that can be learnt and partnerships to be developed with home-schoolers.

There is merit to the practicality, autonomy, and learner-centered approaches of their home-schooling. Embedded is an understanding of not only

why a group of parents have chosen to home-school their children, but an ability to explore the depth and scope of such a decision in the broader educational conversations. Acknowledging home-schooling as a legitimized educational site within this context has far-reaching implications for expanding the educational menu in small societies such as these. By exploring sites such as home-schooling, it allows the exploration of the dynamics of how power, values, experiences, ideology, and autonomy are mediated to enact a transformative type of education that can be facilitated within these spaces.

This study has created a space for further dialogue and research about home-schooling in T&T and by extension the wider English-speaking Caribbean. It has produced valuable data on home-schooling in the educational landscape in this context. From a policy standpoint, it has provided useful, actionable insight into the rationale for choosing to home-school and some of the home-school ideologies and practices, including how they vary from the mainstream setting. During the final stages of this research, a draft education policy was introduced (Ministry of Education [MOE], n.d.). Noteworthy is the fact that there was a dedicated section to home-schooling (unlike previous policy documents), much of which recognized the growth of home-schooling and an acknowledgement of lack of information and needing greater insight. Notwithstanding the global context of home-schooling and the recognition that the practice has not been met by favorable responses, there is an understanding that potential tension may exist between policy makers and home-schoolers. The exposure of home-schoolers may be presenting them for similar scrutiny that is met in other societies. This study has introduced a new lens for exploring alternative educational spaces by bringing to the fore how the construct of education may address some of the inequities in the traditional classroom site. The choice to home-school, as seen in this context, is not only about an alternative educational space/site but an alternative educational philosophy. The infancy and dearth of homeschool research in T&T, however, offers an opportunity to engage in more productive, supportive and helpful mutual relationships between policy makers and the home-school practitioners.

There is a wide array of existing literature that speaks to home-schooling in varying contexts (Arai, 2000; Kunzman & Gaither, 2020; Purwaningsih,

2019). There is also a significant cadre of research on critical pedagogy and transformative and liberated education (Fielding, 2004; Ross, 2018; Taylor, 2012). However, limited literature brings the two into the discussion with intentionality. While researchers like Sarajlic (2019) have cautioned against reducing home-schooling to the transformative education it connotes, there is an opportunity to explore how home-schoolers' rationalization and subsequent practices in specific contexts may have liberating qualities. The findings of this study support the home-schooling literature presented in Chapter 4. It further validates the transformative capabilities and possibilities of home-school.

There are four limitations that are critical to mention emerging from this study, all stemming from the demographic qualities of the participants and a recognition that a different group of home-schooling families could have yielded a varied construct or explanation of home-schooling. This gives further credence to the possibility of developing future home-schooling research in this context.

Firstly, the parents of this study represent a percentage of the home-schooling families within T&T. They are members of an association with its specific home-schooling philosophy, representing only a sample of the membership. Their identities transcend home-schoolers, but for most parents, they were also educators, with first-hand knowledge and information about how the mainstream system operated, from primary to tertiary. This type of insight positions these parents perhaps differently from their home-schooling counterparts. This begs the question of whether the type of emancipatory ideas about education would be constructed and perhaps articulated differently, if at all, for other home-schoolers. What would their home-schooling look like, and what would explain their choices? Added to this is the theorization utilizing only the parent voice. Validation of much of the stated transformative moments of home-schooling would emerge from the home-schoolers themselves. Studies that have honed in on the home-schoolers themselves have gained useful insight into their perspective and experiences with home-schooling (Neuman & Guterman, 2022; Williams, 2016).

Furthermore, it is critical to note the gendered dimension that presented itself within this study. With one father being represented, an interest for further

exploration would be a determination of how and whether home-schooling is perceived differently between the sexes. During the discussions, at least three mothers identified that their husbands were initially hesitant about the home-schooling ideas. This introduces the question of whether women, mothers specifically, were more likely to choose the home-school route than fathers and whether this is connected to the gendered division of labor. The lone father, in the one couple interviewed, openly expressed that his wife undertook the responsibility of home-schooling, opting to leave her job and stay at home with the children. Despite their shared views on parenting and education and their unified decision to home-school, it was ultimately the wife's responsibility for its execution. This seeming gendered division of labor presented within the home-school construct is worthy of further inquiry. All families interviewed were the traditional nuclear family structure, a married couple with children. Again, a point that may have far-reaching implications for understanding how home-schooling looks for each group is that T&T is known to have many family structures, extended and single female-headed households being the most popular. Future research on home-schoolers in T&T should include varied family structures. Finally, as a natural follow-up to the present research would be the inclusion of the home-schoolers' voices, as a means of validating what was raised by parents, but also to introduce new lenses for viewing home-school.

The CGT method was ideal for this research undertaking. It provided an exploratory study in a context where no information was present. The inductive methodology allowed the authenticity of the parent voice to guide the theorization of home-schooling, utilizing interviewing and analytical methods that saw researcher-participants conjunction. The flexibility of the method, and in particular the co-construction of underpinnings, led to the ability to position myself in the research while enabling and ensuring voice to the participants of this study, the parents. In conjunction with our discourse and their dialogue, my notes and memos co-mingled to generate a theory of home-schooling in this context. The explanations for coding, especially for process and not initially for themes, encouraged viewing the phenomenon under study as a series of life-

like actions and processes that can unearth many explanations of home-schooling.

Chapter 7: Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Lancaster University

Title: Mainstream Education or Not? The Growth of Home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University, and I would like to invite you to take part in a research study about the growth of home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether you wish to take part.

What is the study about?

This study aims to explore the growth of home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago through the experiences of families that have selected the home-school option. The overall objective is to understand the reasons these families have chosen to home-school their children in a society where mainstream education is still seen as the popular choice/norm.

Why have I been invited?

I have approached you because I am interested in understanding your reasons for home-schooling your child/children and your overall experience with education in Trinidad and Tobago. I would be very grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decided to take part, this would involve your participation in one or more interviews where we discuss your home-school experience in Trinidad and Tobago.

What are the possible benefits from taking part?

Taking part in this study will allow you to share your experiences of home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago which will contribute to dispelling any myths or answering any questions that may be asked around the practice.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether you take part. Your participation is voluntary.

What if I change my mind?

If you change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time during your participation in this study. If you want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information (=data) you contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you can only withdraw up to two (2) weeks after taking part in the study

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. Your participation will require you to invest 60-90 minutes of your time for an interview.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview I, the researcher conducting this study will have access to the ideas you share with me. If necessary, I may be required to share data with my supervisor. I will keep all personal information about you (e.g. your name and other information about you that can identify you) confidential, that is I will not share it with others. I will remove any personal information from the written record of your contribution. All reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the information you have shared with me only in the following ways:

I will use it for research purposes only. This will include my PhD thesis and other academic publications such as journal articles). I may also present

the results of my study at academic When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas you shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with you), so that although I will use your exact words, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect your anonymity in our publications.

How my data will be stored?

Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will store hard copies of any data securely in locked cabinets in my office. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic).In accordance with University guidelines, I will keep the data securely for a minimum of ten years.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact myself:

Nneka St Rose: strose@lancaster.ac.uk

Or my thesis supervisor: Dr. Cassie Earl**:** c.earl@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Dr. Jo Warin: j.warin@lancaster.ac.uk

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Chapter 8: Appendix B: Consent Form

Lancaster
University

Project Title: Mainstream Education or Not? The Growth of Home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago

Name of Researcher: Nneka St Rose

Email: nneks29@hotmail.com/strose@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within two (2) weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within two (2) of taking part in the study my data will be removed.	☐
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	☐
4. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent.	☐
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	☐

6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	☐
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature   of   Researcher   /person   taking   the consent_____ Date _____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

Chapter 9: Appendix C: Interview Schedule

1. What is home-schooling?

2. How many children do you have and are they all being/have been home-schooled?

3. How long have you been home-schooling? –Was your child/children previously enrolled in public/private school? -What was the experience?

4. How did you make the decision to home-school?

5. Describe your home-school experience.

6. How would you describe home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago? -Are there any noted challenges, unique elements ore nuances to home-schooling within this society? -Is it a movement?

7. How does home-schooling coincide with the Trinidad and Tobago education system?

8. Are more families making the decision to home-school? Why?

9. How would you describe public perception of education in Trinidad and Tobago?

10. How would you describe public perception of home-schooling in Trinidad and Tobago?

11. How would you describe the state/government attitudes towards home-schooling?

12. How would you describe education in Trinidad and Tobago?

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