UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Barbara

Understanding Women's Possible Selves and the Influences on these Selves

at a Private, 4-year, Religiously-Affiliated College

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in Education

by

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March 2016

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February 2016

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The largest thank you goes to my family and specifically to my husband Brian. Your support and belief in me has made this entire journey possible. Not only do you believe that women can effectively teach men, but you believe that they can and should be doctors of education. Thank you for your patience, long-suffering and sacrifices through weekend days alone with the kids and often handling the trying childcare situations. You are a good dad, an accomplished employee, and I am proud that you are my friend and life partner. And thanks to you, Luke and Maya, for brightening my days, for making me laugh, for keeping me humble, and for giving me perspective when I was tempted to live with my blinders on. I hope you know how much I love you and how excited I am to be more fully engaged in your lives and activities in the season ahead. And I am also blessed to have you in my life, dad, particularly for your daily prayers and for being a steady, generous and helpful presence in my life as well as my family's life these past three years.

Every step of this journey was marked by the faithfulness of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am honored and humbled to be called your child. And I am privileged to be surrounded by a village rooted on the rock of our salvation. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear" (Psalm 27).

This dissertation study is dedicated to my mom, Linda Kay Hall Crowell, the driven and passionate woman who raised me to believe that my aspirations could be wild and free and that I was capable of anything I set my mind to. I wish you could be here to celebrate this important milestone with me. You set me up for this success and I am forever grateful.

VITA OF ANGELA CROWELL D'AMOUR
February 2016

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Westmont College, May 2001 (summa cum laude)
Master of Education, University of Vermont, May 2004
Doctor of Philosophy in Education, University of California, Santa Barbara, June 2016
(expected)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Director of Campus Life   July 2007 – Present
Campus Life Office, Westmont College
- Guides the development and implementation of departmental vision, annual objectives, long-term departmental goals and administration of departmental budget
- Develops and implements a philosophy of leadership and learning that grows out of the college mission and vision statements in a manner broadly understood by all campus constituencies
- Instructs applied studies leadership skills course examining personal and interpersonal skills required for leadership
- Develops and coordinates campus-wide leadership training for all student leaders
- Provides advising to officers of Westmont College Student Association and Activities Council
- Provides supervision and staff development for three professional staff members
- Stewards a department budget of $100,000 and oversees student organizational spending of $230,000
- Oversees the development of a comprehensive vision for the First Year Experience and co-curricular programming including directing a 4-day orientation program for 400 new students and a first year retreat for 120 students.

Acting Assistant Dean of First-Year Students   July 2006 – June 2007
First Year Dean's Office, Dartmouth College
- Implemented activities, programs and policies to aid first-year students in their adjustment to a select and diverse college environment through a one-year appointment position in the First-Year Office
- Provided students academic, personal and career advising
- Coordinated all phases of planning, implementation and evaluation for a 7 day orientation program for 1100 new students
- Oversaw budget and allocated funds to departments and programs responsible for orientation programs
- Consulted with faculty members, administrators and parents about individual students and college policies
- Coordinated the First-Year Summer Research program including implementation and evaluation
- Provided counseling and adjudication for students involved in misconduct with the College's disciplinary process.

Community Director   July 2004 – June 2006
Office of Residential Life, Dartmouth College
- Directed a residential community of 320 students through the management of community events, staff, student concerns, facilities, administration and relevant services
- Provided counsel, advising, referral and resources for students regarding personal and academic matters
- Supervised, oriented, and evaluated 13-18 undergraduate student staff and 1 Graduate Advisor
- Established community programming goals and directed, supported and evaluated student programming efforts
- Collaborated with Residential Education staff to select, place and train approximately 120 students each year
- Maintained residential community budget of $20,000 and handled office supplies and purchasing procedures
- Responded, managed and followed up on crises and emergencies at the hall/community level.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Professor, First Year Seminar on Leadership   Fall, 2014 & 2015
- Instructed first year college seminar focused on leadership development
- Facilitated robust issues based discussions on controversial current events.

Participant, Presentation Boot Camp at Westmont College   Spring, 2015
- Honed extemporaneous and planned speaking skills with individualized tools and feedback
- Practiced the art of theatrical engagement of a variety of audiences.

Participant, Women's Leadership Development Institute   June 2010 – June 2010
Through the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU)
- Explored the latest leadership literature and research to develop professional leadership capacities
- Studied case studies and best practices from leadership experts in preparation for administrative leadership.

Participant, Leadership Santa Barbara County (LSBC)   May 2008 – May 2009
- Researched and discussed challenging issues facing the Santa Barbara community such as vulnerable populations and homelessness with 25 fellow community leaders during monthly day long gatherings
- Participated in monthly leadership development exercises and readings highlighting topics such as emotional intelligence, change leadership and decision-making.

Coordinator, First-Year Residential Experience (FYRE)   August 2004 – June 2006

- Assisted in the development and implementation of a residential learning curriculum based on new student needs
- Coordinated and taught student staff to facilitate weekly topical floor meetings to share facts and discuss information on topics including academic choices, social life, roommate relationships and sexual decision making.

Social Justice Training Institute, Tucson AZ   December 2005
- Participated in an intensive small group forum with social justice educators to examine the complex dynamics of racism
- Focused on developing personal competencies as a social justice educator in order to be able to design and facilitate diversity awareness experiences
- Developed a more comprehensive understanding of privilege, power, oppression, subordination and domination.

Instructor, How the Media Teach about Diversity, UVM   January – May 2003
- Co-taught a Race and Culture course for 11 students
- Facilitated class sessions and activities centered on diversity education and media influence on the public
- Evaluated student performance via written assignments, oral presentations, discussion and participation.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS
- *Interactive One Day Student Leadership Training Model*   June 2015
  National Conference presentation to 60 participants at ACSD in Chicago, IL
- *Staying Well in Mind and Body*
  Published in Horizon campus newspaper, Westmont College   January 2012
- *Are we Really Called to be Perfect?*
  Westmont College chapel presentation to 1200 students   February 2011
- *The Sabbath: A Matter of Wisdom*
  Primary retreat speaker for 70 student leaders at Westmont College August 2010
- *The Student Experience for Women at Westmont*
  Presentation on focus group research for Westmont faculty, and cabinet April 2010
- *Living Uncomfortably*
  Westmont College chapel presentation to 1200 students   September 2009
- *On the Biblical Basis for Racial Reconciliation*
  Published article in the Westmont College Magazine   April 2009
- *Student Engagement and Success: A Discussion of Best Practices*
  Presentation at Faculty Forum, Westmont College   January 2008
- *Christian and Secular Institutions: Sharing Best Practices*
  Conference presentation to 100 participants at NASPA/ACPA   March 2007
- *Helping Students to Understand the Reality of Religious Pluralism in the United States*
  Religious Pluralism Conference presentation to 100 participants October 2006
- *Students of Faith on Campus: Distinguishing Friend From Foe*
  ACPA Convention presentation to 200 participants, Nashville, TN March 2005

- *Behind the Scenes at the University: Community Developers Discuss Interactions with Students*
  Comprehensive Masters Thesis paper and presentation, UVM   February 2004
- *Bursting the Bubble of Conformity: Exploring New Perspectives at Christian Colleges*
  Independent Study and presentation, UVM   May 2004

AWARDS
- Jane Higa Award for Academic and Co-Curricular Partnership, Westmont College, Santa Barbara, 2015
- Dean's Award, Westmont College Commencement, 2001
- Santa Barbara News Press Student Athlete of the Year, 2001
- NAIA All American Soccer Player, 1999, 2000

ABSTRACT

Understanding Women's Possible Selves and the Influences on these Selves

at a Private, 4-year, Religiously-Affiliated College

by

Angela Crowell D'Amour

While women now outnumber men in college attendance rates, the gender gap in occupations, salary and leadership persists. The purpose of this study was to extend the research on college women's future thinking by exploring the possible selves and the influences on these selves of women at a private 4-year religiously affiliated college. The construct of possible selves has been used to better understand individuals' views of their future thinking (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The investigator conducted three focus groups (15 students) followed by ten individual interviews in spring, 2015. Women were asked to share their future hopes, expectations and fears for the next five years as well as any factors or experiences that significantly influenced their future thinking. Women's gender role beliefs were specifically queried as a possible influence. Three major themes and three unanticipated findings were identified. Anticipated themes included women's lack of leadership aspirations, the role of faith in guiding women's possible selves, and the influential role of family and faculty. Unanticipated findings included women's high achievement expectations, adherence to gender role messages to do it all and do it all well, and the influence of study abroad experiences. These findings offer key insights to college

administrators who shape student learning environments to best guide and support female

students in thinking about their futures.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

A Change in Women's Position in Higher Education

Over the past forty years, women have made substantial progress within the higher

education arena. In 1970, women received 43% of the bachelor's degrees granted in the

United States, but by 2010 the gender gap reversed with women conferring 57% of the

bachelor's degrees granted (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013). Between 1966 and 1996, female

aspirations increased from 22% to 41% for graduate degrees (Astin, 1998). A study

commissioned by the US Congress found that "in school and in college, females are now

doing as well or better than males on many of the indicators of educational attainment, and

the large gaps in educational attainment that once existed between men in women in most

cases have been eliminated" (Bae, Choy, Geddes, Sable, & Snyder, 2000, p. 1). Although

men still outnumber women in many Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

majors, women in these fields tend to perform as strongly if not stronger than men on

academic indicators (Beede, Julian, Langdon, McKittrick, Khan, & Doms, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

While women appear to be thriving in education settings, gender barriers persist in

the form of divergence with regards to future possibilities. As women approach academic and

career decision points, they tend to envision future difficulties, even if they view themselves

as currently competent in the academic domain (Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002). This

occurrence is particularly true for women in traditionally male occupations such as

engineering and mathematics but also occurs when considering future leadership and full

time work (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Hartman & Hartman, 2002). Women may be actively

closing off possibilities for themselves as they move from high school to college in light of

anticipated challenges in balancing work with family. A study by Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) revealed that while college men and women were equally committed to work and family, women's family and career commitments were negatively correlated (i.e. commitment to family rose while commitment to career declined) whereas men's family and career commitments were positively correlated. Men tend to see work enabling them to better support and attend to family concerns whereas women tend to see work as a barrier to active engagement with family. Women may perceive a need to trade off work goals in light of family commitments.

These aspirational limitations may be related to women's trajectories beyond the college classroom, which are inconsistent with their classroom success. While women are thriving in educational settings, the gender gap in occupations, salary and leadership persists. The 2011 *Gender Wage Gap* Fact Sheet revealed that in 2010, women earned 77 cents for each dollar earned by men. Although this represents an increase in 18 cents since 1970, equity is still a distant reality (Sandberg, 2013). Women's leadership in corporate America is even more grave; the 2012 *Catalyst Census* reported that women hold only 14 percent of executive officer positions, 17 percent of board seats and 18 percent of elected congressional officials (as cited in Sandberg, 2013, p. 5). And after climbing for sixty years, the percentage of women between ages 25-54 in the American work force has fallen from a high of 74 percent in 1999 to 69 percent in 2014 (Miller & Alderman, 2014). The reason for this reversal is unclear, although it likely has some relationship to women's achievement aspirations and inconsistencies between women's family and work aspirations juxtaposed with a dearth of workplace support and flexibility for working mothers (Stone, 2007).

Gender Role Beliefs

The causes behind these inequities between men and women are complex and multifaceted. Traditional gender role beliefs are one of many factors that could explain the persistence of such inequalities. Gender role beliefs alone are unlikely to cause inequalities; however, they may lead to the justification of such inequalities. Gender role beliefs lie at the heart of much of the current research on gendered aspirational differences. Social role theory, developed by Eagly (1987), states that the work each gender does in society contributes to gender role beliefs out of which people select careers. Each individual holds a complex set of gender role beliefs representing his or her beliefs about the roles men and women should hold in society. Gender role beliefs are constructed both consciously and unconsciously through repeated exposure to social stimuli such as gender role standards, family experiences, close social connections, and religious beliefs, among other factors (Eagly & Koenig, 2006; Newman & Newman, 2011). These attitudes exist on a continuum of full equality between men and women with concurrent spheres of work and family responsibilities, to wholly separate spheres representing a complete division of responsibilities, power, and decision-making. More recent research on gender role attitudes has differentiated between "on top" and "underneath" attitudes, reflecting a potential difference in general or idealized beliefs ("on top") versus personal lived experiences ("underneath") (Hochschild & Machung, 2012).

Gender role attitudes are among the most influential factors that shape individuals' achievement aspirations, particularly college students who are in the process of establishing life and career trajectories (DiDonato & Strough, 2013). Subsidiary factors such as self-efficacy beliefs, the influence of significant others, and stereotype threats also contribute to

the shaping of college student achievement aspirations, among other factors. College men and women often experience distinctive challenges in planning future pathways with men frequently feeling pressure to provide for a family and to pursue stereotypical male occupations such as science, engineering and mathematics, and women commonly experiencing pressure to prioritize family and pursue stereotypically female occupations such as education and healthcare. As of 2010, 80% of US jobs were still gender segregated being held either primarily by women or by men (Weisgram, Dinella & Fulcher, 2011). While gender role beliefs can cause psychological stress for both genders, different achievement trajectories can leave women bearing the brunt of the financial and leadership implications (Eisler, 1995; Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005).

Gender role beliefs have long been studied and on average, Americans have become more egalitarian over time expressing increased comfort with the idea of women working outside of the home and men sharing childcare responsibilities (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004). But while individuals may espouse an increase in egalitarian gender role attitudes, it is likely that these individual beliefs are not being applied to larger societal expectations. A Gallup poll reports that while 92% of Americans would be willing to vote for a woman for president, only slightly more than half reported that the country is ready for a female president (Carroll, 2006). More relevant than exploring gender role attitudes in isolation is the exploration of the factors influencing gender role attitudes and how attitudes are applied in real life situations.

Evangelical Christian Colleges

The influence of gender role attitudes can be magnified by religious beliefs and religious communities, which can have deeply rooted convictions based on sacred religious texts. One such community highlighted in the religious research is the Evangelical Christian

community. Evangelical Christians are typically defined by their adherence to Biblical principles including belief in Jesus Christ as the way to salvation, and a commitment to sharing one's faith (Bryant, 2005; Smith, 2000). Within the Evangelical Christian community, there is a substantial emphasis on gender role ideologies, teaching separate spheres for women and men. In Evangelical Christian settings, the position of full equality for men and women in work and family responsibilities is sometimes referred to as an egalitarian perspective whereas the position of division is known as a traditional or complementarian perspective (Colaner & Warner, 2005). More conservative strains of Evangelical Christianity prohibit women from teaching or having authority over a man and indicate that women must submit to their husbands. The interpretations of Biblical principles regarding men's and women's roles are mixed, leading to a wide variety of perspectives regarding a women's role in the church and outside of the home. A recent study of contemporary Evangelical families found that 90% of contemporary Evangelicals hold symbolic traditional gender role attitudes while living a pragmatic egalitarian lifestyle (Gallagher & Smith, 1999).

The confluence of modern Evangelical ideals and realities on Evangelical college students, particularly college women, can be confusing to say the least. On the one hand, evangelical women may be encouraged to apply themselves to pursue their career and educational dreams, however the ideal and importance of the nuclear family and a woman's role in sustaining that family looms large. Evangelical female college students may struggle to envision how pursuing a high profile career could co-exist with a successful family life and there may be temptation to curtail achievement aspirations in light of potential

incompatibilities with career and family life. Furthermore, the climate of Evangelical

Christian colleges may influence women's gender role beliefs.

Studies have researched gender role attitudes of women at Evangelical colleges using

binary divisions (complementarian versus egalitarian) (Colaner & Warner, 2005; Colaner &

Giles, 2007). These studies have found strong alignment (75% or more) with the

complementarian or traditional perspective where female students have affirmed the

leadership of the husband and the women's primary role within the home and with family.

No research to date has qualitatively examined the influences on future plans and goals of

students at Evangelical colleges. The present study will extend the prior research using a

qualitative approach to explore the influences on the future goals of women at a west coast

Evangelical Christian College that is traditional in its adherence to Biblical principles,

however progressive in its willingness to encourage students to express doubt and to explore

a variety of perspectives and opinions.

Possible Selves

The possible selves construct, developed by Markus and Nurius in 1986 offers a

productive lens through which to examine individuals' ideas of what they might become and

what they are afraid of becoming in the future. This construct has been successfully used to

research gender similarities and differences in possible selves, which will be described

further in the literature review. Possible selves, based on self-knowledge or self-concept,

describe how individuals think about their potential and their future. Individuals' possible

selves are derived from images of the self in the past and present (Roshandel, 2012; Markus

& Nurius, 1986). They are not simply goals for the future but they are based on one's self-

concept and the historical and social context that surrounds the self-concept (Baird, 2008; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

All individuals are said to have possible selves and to be able to reflect upon them. "An individual's repertoire of possible selves can be viewed as the cognitive manifestations of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears and threats" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Possible selves include the ideal or hoped for self, the expected self, and the feared self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). A hoped for self is one that an individual aspires to be whether or not that self is attainable. For example, one might aspire to be president of the United States or a fashion model. An expected self is one that an individual believes she will become based on her current self-concept, such as a teacher, a mother or a good friend. A feared self is one that an individual wants to avoid becoming such as destitute, overweight or overwhelmed. Possible selves provide meaning and organization for future goals and they can serve as the bridge between cognition and motivation.

There are two primary functions of possible selves. First, they serve as motivation for future behavior by moderating personal decision making and guiding selections among future behaviors and choices (Markus & Nurius, 1986). These intentional views of the self for the future shape and direct individuals' attention and expectations influencing what is attended to and remembered. Possible selves also provide a means to evaluate the current self. "Possible selves furnish criteria against which outcomes are evaluated" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 956). For these reasons, Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves construct may be a productive means for examining college women's future plans and goals. This construct allows the researcher to consider what college women hope to become and to avoid based on their self-concept shaped by their gender role beliefs and their cultural contexts. This study

will focus specifically on women's possible selves with regards to future life roles including career, family and further education.

Scope of the Study

The college where the research took place is a private, 4-year, undergraduate, residential liberal arts college on the US west coast comprised of approximately 1300 undergraduate students (primarily 18-22 years old). For the purposes of this study the institution will be referred to as Dayton College. Founded in 1937, Dayton College immediately enrolled both women and students of color. Men only outnumbered women for three years in all of the college's history and this occurred in conjunction with the GI Bill following World War II. Currently, approximately 65% of the undergraduate full-time students at Dayton College are women. Dayton College is a member of The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU), a thirty-seven year old non-profit association that has approximately 120 Christ centered four-year accredited member institutions in North America and 56 affiliate campuses from 19 countries worldwide with a total of approximately 240,000 students (as of 2004). As one of the most highly ranked colleges in the CCCU with a competitive admissions process, Dayton College offers a compelling case for studying the experiences of bright and motivated women on an evangelical college campus.

At Dayton College, approximately 97% of students report having a religious orientation and the religious identification is predominately protestant Christian (System Documentation, 2008; 5% of students identify as Roman Catholic or Episcopalian). The political ideology of the faculty tends to be liberal, students tend to be conservative, and staff tend to be moderates (Knecht, 2012). There are significant differences between the political

stances of first year men and women with 56% of men self-reporting as politically conservative and 48% of women reporting as politically conservative (System Documentation, 2008), with women reporting a greater likelihood of moving toward the center over time from a previously held conservative position than men (System Documentation, 2006). In contrast, women at private, secular four-year colleges tend to move most from "middle of the road" to liberal during their college years (System Documentation, 2006). This Christian college with a socially progressive faculty creates a campus climate where women may be receiving mixed messages about both gender roles and possible selves. The purpose of this study was to explore the influences on college women's possible selves. The research questions that were analyzed in this study included the following:

1) How do college women envision their life role possible selves?

2) How do college women view gender roles and what is the relationship to their possible selves?

3) What influences the development of college women's possible selves?

Definition of Terms

Evangelical Christian – Evangelical Christians participate in many different churches belonging to the worldwide Evangelical protestant tradition. They abide by historic statements of the Christian church including the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Central to the identity of Evangelical Christians is the belief in Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation, the authority of the Bible as the source of knowing how to live, and the importance of sharing one's faith through mission and service (Bryant, 2005; Smith, 2000).

Possible Selves - Hoped for, expected and feared conceptions of the self for the future based on the self-concept and the historical and social context that surrounds the self-concept. For the purposes of this study, women's possible selves for life roles will be explored.

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Life Role - The term used to describe future possible selves in the area of career, family, education, and other life roles.

Gender Roles - Considers individuals' attitudes about their own and the opposite sex's roles and responsibilities in society. Beliefs measure levels of support for a separation of paid work and family responsibilities between men and women (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Gender role attitudes consider the following categories: career precedence, family responsibilities, decision making, leadership, male privilege and the feminine self.

Traditional/Complementarian Gender Role – This position views men and women as having distinctive roles based on gender where the man has career and leadership precedence, authority over the women, and decision-making and women's role is primarily in the home caring for a family.

Egalitarian Gender Role – This position views men and women as equals in relationship, leadership, decision making and home and career responsibilities.

Significant Others – Individuals that are currently or historically highly influential in people's lives. These may include family members, friends, mentors, or professors.

Overview of Method

The current study promoted understanding with greater complexity the influences on conceptions of possible selves of female students at a religiously affiliated college. The study began with three focus groups of five upper-class women (juniors and seniors), and included individuals with diverse academic majors. From these inductive focus groups emergent themes were explored that offered real time information on the possible selves of these college women. Using these initial themes, ten individual interviews followed to explore in

greater depth the influences on college women's possible selves within the next five years at an Evangelical college. This research was conducted in spring, 2015.

Significance of the Study

Sax and Harper (2007) report that drive to achieve tends to decline for women during college and it is not clear why. This phenomenon may be related to different gender role beliefs and confidences but it is unclear how these beliefs play out in an Evangelical college setting. The current study examined the influences on college women's possible selves with specific consideration of the influence of gender roles. It explored how college women view gender roles and related them to conceived of possible selves. It also explored other factors that may influence women's possible selves. While female college students generally report greater opposition to traditional gender roles than their male counterparts, this dynamic is complicated in Evangelical sectors where religious beliefs can highlight and justify gender role differences. Evangelical college students also tend to forge strong and meaningful social connections with like-minded peers and these relationships may play a particularly poignant role in the development of student conceptions of future possible selves (Bryant, 2005).

The current study added to the research literature on college women's achievement in the following ways. First, this study examined women at an Evangelical college, a population that is not typically studied but that offered insight into how faith related gender beliefs play out in practice. This study offered insight on how female students work out and make sense of possible selves in light of gender role beliefs and possibly, their own Christian faith. Next, this study assisted with identification and understanding of other influences on the possible selves of women attending the college. The results of this study have the potential to assist college administrators who shape student-learning environments to consider what may

constrain or encourage women in the development of realistic and encouraging goals for the future.

Researcher's Perspective

Spradley (1979) suggests that all individuals are "culture bound" living in a way that assumes their experiences are normal. For that reason, he cautions researchers to consider how others define the world, instead of assuming all see the world through the same lens. The qualitative researcher cannot completely separate herself from the research. Objectivity is not the aim of qualitative research, but rather recognizing the biases and perspectives of the researcher and comparing and contrasting these with the perspectives of the subjects. It is through constant interaction, analysis and adjustment that qualitative researchers learn and expand knowledge. For these reasons, the researcher will identify her own connections to the phenomena under investigation.

The researcher is an alumna of Dayton College and she has worked at the College in the role of director of campus life for the past nine years. Over these years the researcher has encountered differences in the ways that male and female students approach learning, leadership and future goal setting. These observations have sometimes aligned with and sometimes been distinctive from her experiences of students at secular institutions. In the researcher's experience gender role beliefs have tended to limit women's future career aspirations and family ideals have frequently been prioritized in conversations about women's futures. Additionally, female students' well being has sometimes been compromised in the Evangelical setting due to high levels of stress and concern for how to balance the many demands placed on them. The researcher has come to believe that relationships play a central role in how women at Evangelical colleges approach their current

work and consider their future goals. It is out of these observations and assumptions that the current research was developed. Given the researcher's close connection the community being studied, it was particularly important for the researcher to carefully assess which themes developed from the data itself and which were shaped primarily through the lens of existing assumptions and experiences.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to build an empirical foundation for the current study, the literature review will commence with a theoretical overview of gender role beliefs and gender socialization as they relate to social role theory. Next, the review will take an in depth look at gender and the possible selves construct. This theoretical overview will be followed by an examination of research related to the factors influencing college women's general aspirations as well as their leadership aspirations. Given the current study's focus on a religious institution, the review will continue by analyzing research on the influence of religion on future career goals followed by an examination of the experiences of women at Evangelical colleges. Finally, studies of gender role beliefs and goals of college women will be discussed and the relationship of the literature to the current study will be outlined.

Social Role Theory & Gender Role Socialization

Social role theory is the human development perspective that individuals identify their roles in society and then learn the behaviors associated with these roles (Newman & Newman, 2011). A role is defined as a set of behaviors that is socially accepted or promoted (Biddle, 1986). An individual always has multiple roles or positions, for example as a woman, a daughter, a sister, a Roman Catholic, a college student, and an intern. These roles may be more or less prominent depending on the time or attention required for each role. Based on social role theory, an individual sees what exists in society, what others expect, what behaviors key role models play; and these factors contribute to the internalization of expectations and values related to one's various role identities. The social context is key in the developmental understanding of one's roles and positions.

Gender role socialization is a key area of research within social role theory. In every society there are gender-differentiated roles where people expect one another to behave in a certain way based on gender (Newman & Newman, 2011). The gender socialization process begins at a very young age and continues into adulthood. Gender role standards in the United States have changed dramatically over the past fifty years and women are now, in many spheres, expected to work outside of the home and men are expected to contribute to child raising practices. However, different gender based expectations persist and are evident in assessments such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), used to measure gender role perceptions. Studies using the BSRI indicate that characteristics associated with men and women have not changed much since the inventory was developed in 1974 (Auster & Ohm, 2000; Holt & Ellis, 1998). Items like ambitious, assertive and idealistic are still largely attributed to men whereas items like affectionate, gentle and sympathetic are rated as more desirable for women (Holt & Ellis, 1998). However, most of the items are rated to have at least some value for both men and women and the ratings in some cases are becoming less differentiated.

Eagly and Koenig (2006) have expanded on social role theory to describe the process through which gender role attitudes or stereotypes are developed. Their social role theory of sex differences and similarities suggests that physical differences between the sexes coupled with the socioeconomic needs of the local economy tend to yield a division of labor from which gender role beliefs are derived through a socialization process which yields different behavior for men and women (Eagly & Koenig, 2006). Gender role attitudes can include both prescriptive and descriptive norms both of which foster sex typical behaviors. These gender role attitudes tend to develop from observations of men and women engaging in various

activities. For example, if people tend to see women as mothers, teacher and social workers they will infer dispositions that match these roles such as nurturing and caring. Women tend to be associated with communal values like caretaking, collaboration and sympathy whereas men are typically associated with agency values like assertiveness, independence and mastery (Eagly & Koenig, 2006; Costa, Terracciano & Mccrae, 2001). This communal/agency divide mirrors societal divisions of labor that gives men primary responsibility in the public work force and women primary responsibility with the family. The mechanism of how gender role beliefs influence aspirations might be explained by role congruity theory. Within any context, individuals regularly "assess the ways in which they can gain rewards and avoid costs, given the opportunities and constraints of the current role system" (Diekman & Eagly, 2008, p. 434). Individuals are motivated to align their behavior with the demands of their gender roles.

Gendered behavior that aligns with gender role beliefs can produce positive outcomes for people, whereas role incongruity can have negative consequences. For example, Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins (2004) investigated reactions to a woman's success in a traditionally male job among 242 subject participants. When there was clear evidence of success in a male gendered role, women were rated as significantly less likable than an identical male character. However, when the job roles were gender-neutral, liking was equal. In the same study, women were rated as more likable in neutral or female gendered roles. Likability is a trait that tends to be associated more with women than men; however, women who succeed in male gendered roles are perceived to lose or abandon these qualities. The results of this study have been replicated in other research settings, demonstrating negative responses to men in female gendered jobs such as nursing, and to women in male gendered

jobs such as engineering. Gender role beliefs can be a source of prejudice because people tend to devalue individuals with role incongruent attributes. Anticipating this type of prejudice can influence college students to seek role congruent careers.

Gender role beliefs not only appear to limit the types of professions women consider, they also predispose women to identify family as a important life goal, which sometimes supersedes career goals. Devos, Blanco, Rico & Dunn (2008) examined the extent to which family and academic aspirations are part of the self-concept of college students. They found that women showed a stronger identification with parenthood than with education using an Implicit Association Test (IAT). This test measured women's subconscious biases regarding gender role beliefs. However, men and women equally prioritized education over parenthood in an explicit test. The differences between the implicit and explicit identifications suggest the potential of inner conflict in college women. Recent gender role belief shifts seem to afford women equal aspirations for education, but unequal identification with parenthood may leave women shouldering the responsibility of family in lieu of career pursuits. Implicit self-concept may affect the motivation to pursue career aspirations.

In general, fit to gender role beliefs is a critical motivational force behind the development of aspirations in female college students. Women's aspirations tend to be guided and limited by goals and interests that align with socially supported gendered beliefs. Although there are widespread gender role beliefs, these beliefs are on a spectrum that varies depending on the context. For example, in religious settings such as Christian colleges, community members look to scriptural mandates indicating that women are to submit to men and that women's roles are primarily in domestic affairs and thereby limited in leadership settings. But even in these settings, interpretations of scriptural mandates are mixed leaving

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women to wrestle with difficult gender role questions and often creating indecision about career trajectories.

Gender and Possible Selves

Gender role beliefs can limit conceptions of possible selves restricting behavior from that which is traditionally characteristic of the other gender. Studies of possible selves have found variations in men's and women's identifications of both hoped for and feared selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Men's ideal and feared selves tend to reflect instrumentality (e.g. assertiveness, decisiveness) whereas women's selves tend represent interpersonal qualities (e.g. generosity, helpfulness) (Ogilvie & Clark, 1992). Additionally, women tend to explore more family related issues than do males. Emotional connectedness and social competence appear to be key for women whereas differentiation and autonomy are most frequently reflected in men's possible selves (Cross & Madson, 1997; Knox, 2006). For men, self-esteem has been linked to an individuation process in comparison to others, however women's beliefs in their own competence and effectiveness appear to be realized through their emotional connections to others (Josephs, Markus and Tafarodi, 1992). Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver and Surrey (1991) developed a "self in relation" model asserting that women's self concept is established in and through important relationships whereas men's views of the self are based on separateness and uniqueness. From this model, Jordan et al. (1991) finds that females' possible selves include the views of others including hopes that others have for them. Women also appear to emphasize the importance of validation of possible selves by significant others (Kerpelman, Shoffner & Ross Griffin, 2002).

Recent research suggests that feminine gender roles may be broadening to include traditionally masculine characteristics like independence and decisiveness creating improved

opportunities for females to explore a breadth of possible selves (Knox, 2006). However, these new freedoms can create a double bind for women who may desire to fulfill both masculine and feminine stereotypes that could appear to contradict one another. Can women be both passive and assertive; competitive and community oriented? The attempt to develop qualities that have long been considered to exist on opposite ends of a spectrum can lead to discomfort and impaired well-being for women (Higgins, 1987). A study by Chalk, Meara and Day (1994) found that college women frequently feared both masculine and feminine careers and that these feared possible selves were not balanced with more positive, or hoped for career selves. Males are found to articulate a greater balance between feared and hoped for selves potentially resulting in higher motivation toward career for men (Knox, Funk, Elliott & Greene Bush, 2000).

Not only have women been found to articulate a bias toward feared selves, but these feared selves tend to be more highly salient to females than to males. In Knox et al., (2000) female adolescents rated their feared possible selves (e.g. interpersonal functioning, physical illness) as significantly more likely than boys did. Females tend to have the ability to form very specific conceptions of their undesired selves (Ogilvie, 1987). For females, fears are often related to specific past memories or experiences such as interpersonal conflicts. A study of mothers of young children by Hooker, Fiese, Jenkins, Morfie, Schwagler (1996) found that mothers are more likely than fathers to have feared parenting possible selves including fears of feeling overwhelmed and fears of negative outcomes for the children. It is possible that males are socialized not to articulate fears in the same way as women and therefore their fears may be more hidden. More research is needed to understand possible fears in different settings.

Factors Influencing College Women's Aspirations

A host of factors can contribute to influencing women's aspirations beyond gender role socialization. Three key factors that play a role in influencing college women's aspirations include self-efficacy, stereotype threat and significant others.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is a central and enduring tenet of achievement motivation. Bandura's self-efficacy theory identified self-efficacy expectations as a person's beliefs about his or her ability to successfully accomplish a task or behavior (as cited in Luzzo, Hasper, Albert, Bibby, & Martinelli, 1999). Self-efficacy beliefs strongly influence the pursuit of personal goals and perseverance. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of adversity and to unwaveringly commit to goals and aspirations. When failure strikes, individuals with high self-efficacy tend to attribute failure to external factors such as bad luck or difficult circumstances. Studies of attribution have indicated that males and females tend to attribute success and failure to different sources. Women are less likely to attribute success to high ability than men and more likely to blame low ability for failure as opposed to external factors (Stipek & Gralinski, 1991).

Career and achievement aspirations are strongly influenced by self-efficacy beliefs. Many college students limit consideration of particular jobs and occupational paths because they believe that they do not have the skills or knowledge necessary to be successful in these fields (Hyde & Durik, 2005). College women tend to have lower self-efficacy for traditionally male dominated careers as compared to female dominated careers. For example, women tend to experience stronger beliefs about their ability to succeed in fields such as education and health care whereas, they feel less confident regarding their ability to succeed

in STEM fields as well as certain business and leadership arenas where men tend to outnumber women.

Self-efficacy for career decision-making is a distinctive area of study for researchers. Taylor and Betz (1983) developed a scale called the Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSE) to measure this construct. Social cognitive career theory purports that self-efficacy of career decision-making influences an individual's plans to pursue a particular career (Chung, 2002). A 2002 study of college students by Smith and Betz using the CDMSE revealed significantly stronger correlations between self-efficacy and career indecision for women than for men. The data in the Smith and Betz (2002) study are supported by research interventions that have successfully sought to enhance self-efficacy, which can in turn bolster career aspirations in college women. Luzzo et al. (1999) investigated treatment conditions of math and science self-efficacy enhancing interventions on college students who were undecided with regards to choice of a major. Students who successfully performed a math task yielded higher confidence in their math and science abilities. The math and science career interests of participants who received the interventions were higher than the math and science interests of the control group. Thus, particular self-efficacy interventions can in certain cases, bolster career interests and aspirations.

Bussey and Bandura (1999) contend that self-efficacy develops in the following four ways based on social cognitive theory research: social modeling, graded mastery experiences, social persuasion and by reducing stress and depression (as cited in Hyde and Durik, 2005). If women do indeed experience higher depressive tendencies and they receive limited social modeling and social persuasion for male dominated careers it is indeed likely that women's self efficacy beliefs constrain career achievement aspirations.

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Stereotype Threat

A second factor that appears to influence women's aspirations is stereotype threat. Steele's concept of stereotype threat is a prominent phenomenon as it relates to achievement motivation. Namely, the concept identifies the ways in which negative stereotypes can harm or impair behavior or performance. Stereotype threats have been empirically shown to negatively impact minorities including women. Gender stereotypes prevail in STEM subjects contending that women are bad at math and science. Gender stereotypes also discriminate against women in leadership roles with the belief that women are nice, caretaking and unselfish, but that they lack decisiveness and assertiveness that is believed to be necessary to succeed in leadership.

Stereotypes may underlie differential teacher treatment of boys and girls. A seminal research study by Hall and Sandler (1982) revealed the existence of a "chilly climate" for women in the classroom. In DeZolt & Hull's (2001) research on classrooms, teachers paid more attention to boys than girls and were more likely to encourage academic competence in boys. Numerous articles including those highlighted in a meta-analysis by Kelly (1988) revealed that teachers interacted more frequently with boys than with girls in the classroom, regardless of the gender of the instructor. The classroom climate itself can be subtly biased and when stereotype threats are activated, individuals in this setting tend to perform worse than when stereotypes are not activated.

Stereotype threat and the resulting consequences on performance may be linked to conditional anxiety and self-efficacy declines. Studies seem to indicate that feelings of competence and self-efficacy may come and go depending on the context, the task, and the presence or absence of stereotype threats. However, the impact of stereotype threat on

college women's achievement aspirations can be longer lasting. Cheryan, Drury, and Vichaya Pai (2012) explored the impact of stereotype threat on college women as communicated through stereotypical computer science role models. In a study of 100 college women the researchers explored the impact on women's academic aspirations. Women who were exposed to stereotypical computer science role models, regardless of their gender, yielded an immediate and enduring negative effect on women's interest in computer science. It is unclear, however, whether these effects extend to other academic areas. While stereotype threat is alive and well, most studies do not provide evidence to suggest long-term, multi-year impacts on achievement aspirations unless the threat is pervasive and enduring in the college women's environment.

Historical studies provide evidence that the attitudes of one's peers, particularly male peers with gender role biases, lower long term career aspirations (Angrist & Almquist, 1975). However, more recent studies indicate that only men with whom women are personally invested and with whom they envision sharing a life actually influence career aspirations. For example, Meinster and Rose (2001) explored longitudinal influences of women's dating relationships on vocational career interests. Women involved in dating relationships showed less career interest and it was less differentiated (i.e., women's career interests did not distinguish one area above another). It is not clear that dating relationships cause the decline in career interest, however, it's a correlation that merits further research. Stereotype threats that influence women's aspirations have been shown to come in the form of social networks and parental upbringing as well, which both have the potential to produce long-term constraints on aspirations since these factors are regular and repeated influences in women's lives.

Significant Others

A third factor that influences college women's aspirations is relationships with significant others, including parents, mentors and peers. Women's self-concept is continually being shaped through regular interactions with significant others. Copious research studies point to the influence of parents in their student's development of aspirations and future goals, particularly for daughters (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Li & Kerpelman 2007). One study by Samuolis, Layburn and Schiaffino (2001) indicated that women's identity development was highly influenced by parent attachment, whereas men's development did not rely on parent attachment. Parent perspectives and opinions can strengthen or weaken women's future plans, particularly when parent ideas conflict with emerging adults' notions. An interview study with college women identified parents as key players in the development of women's future goals and self-authorship largely because women trusted their parents to know them well (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005). However, it seems likely that the more connected women are to their parents, the more influential their opinions are regarding future aspirations. In a recent study by Li and Kerpelman (2007) young women who reported strong connections with parents were more upset if their parents disagreed with their future goals and the women were more likely to change their opinions to reflect parents' ideas.

Some research suggests that the significant others considered influential for women's aspirations are linked to academic major. Interactions with mentors and faculty members seem particularly important for women interested in STEM majors. Women who receive positive encouragement from multiple significant others including faculty and mentors are more likely to persist in STEM fields (Rayman & Brett, 1995). Mentors in general are found to expose students to educational opportunities not otherwise considered and by helping

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students stay on task with pre-determined goals. Mentors can also help promote career success by facilitating networking relationships and by modeling what it means to be successful in a particular field (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). However, a meta-analysis of mentoring indicated that mentoring is more relevant to student attitudes and self-efficacy than specifically to aspirations or career outcomes (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008).

Interpersonal interactions with peers are said to be a key contributor to student development during college (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). While many studies have looked at the college context as a whole, there's evidence that "the microlevel interpersonal environments of a college campus are important sites of influence on socialization and student development" (Antonio, 2004, p. 463). Studies of peer influence on student aspirations tend to have conflicting results. Some studies suggest high achieving peers can promote aspirations while other studies suggest that high achieving peers will negatively influence aspirations due to negative comparisons (Marsh, 1991). The combination of the college cultural environment and the student peer group can jointly influence aspirations. One compelling finding about the influence of peers on college women's aspirations suggests that women can be particularly influenced by male peers who express negative attitudes about women's interest in particular careers, specifically traditionally masculine careers (Seymour, Hewitt & Friend, 1997).

Factors Influencing Women's Leadership Aspirations

The research on women's aspirations points to a subset of literature identifying unique challenges to women's leadership aspirations. While women are increasingly aspiring to career and achievement goals, many college women are not aspiring to leadership. In a

2003 study of college women's leadership aspirations, Boatwright and Egidio found that a significant amount of the variance in predicting college women's leadership aspirations was attributable to gender role beliefs, self-efficacy, connectedness needs, and fears of negative evaluation. Women's fears of negative evaluation may be justified for a 2007 study by Ryan and Haslam indicated that women leaders tend to be evaluated less favorably than male leaders, despite similar attributes and performance.

A meta-analysis by Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995) looked not only at gender and leadership but also at leader effectiveness and social role influences. Research strongly pointed to equally effective male and female leaders but suggested that congruence of leadership roles with the leaders' gender influences effectiveness. For example, women were more successful in roles defined in more feminine terms and men were more effective in roles defined in masculine terms. Even terminology within institutions can influence perceived effectiveness and societal expectations about members of social groups including men and women. The Eagly, et al. (1995) synthesis also found that in heavily male dominated environments men appeared to be more effective. Gender biases may have contributed to effectiveness ratings precluding women from having an equal opportunity to prove their competence in male dominated settings. Social psychology research shows that if a group's representation falls below 15-20% then the group is considered skewed and is subjected to overt stereotyping (Kanter, 1977).

A 2014 study by Shore, Raham, and Tilley examined men's and women's aspirations for key life events including leadership at a business college. Of the six life events listed, there were no significant differences between the rankings for men and women in terms of getting married, starting a career, raising children, or contributing to society. However, there

was a significant difference between the average ranking by females and males in terms of climbing the corporate ladder where females ranked this goal significantly lower than males. However, the language of "climbing the corporate ladder" used to represent future leadership may have unintentionally biased the women against ranking this item more highly given the connotations of power and competition associated with the description. Women tend to be socialized against a striving toward power and competition as these qualities stand in contrast to qualities typically desirable for women including kindness, caretaking and selflessness (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013).

Ibarra, Ely and Kolb (2013) described the process of becoming a leader as an iterative internalization of a leadership identity combined with a development of a sense of purpose. These researchers found that the leadership identification process can be rapidly undermined in women due to subtle biases described as second-generation gender biases. The biases the researchers identified included a lack of good role models for women, gendered career paths and gendered work, women's lack of access to networks and sponsors, and double binds based on traditionally masculine ways of viewing leadership that exclude women. Historically, gender role socialization has played a critical role in defining leadership as a masculine endeavor, connecting leadership with stereotypically male traits (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011). One common gendered division of leadership views male leadership associated with agency and female leadership associated with communion (Powell & Butterfield, 1979). Therefore, women leaders who operate with agency are said to be lacking stereotypical feminine traits, however women who operate with kindness, communion and caretaking are not perceived to demonstrate the necessary masculine

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leadership qualities deemed essential for success. These gendered biases are argued to undermine the women's leadership identity development process.

Blackmore's research on women and leadership in her book *Troubling women: Feminism, leadership and educational change* (1999), mirrors Ibarra, Ely and Kolb's (2013) findings. Blackmore sought to explain the source of the bias toward women in leadership by pointing to a lack of role models, isolation on the job, bias in recruitment and promotion, and different job titles and status for equivalent work, among other factors. Blackmore also indicated that women's lack of career planning or intrinsic work motivation was well explained by tracing women's responsibilities at work and in the home. Women may be delayed in considering leadership in the first place. An analysis of men's and women's adult development by Kittrell (1998) revealed that women's long term career goals emerged about ten years later than their male counterparts, contributing to slower pathways for women's leadership. Women may be giving precedence to marriage and family in their late teens and early twenties.

Hacifazlioglu's (2010) small interview based study of female Turkish and U.S. leaders in higher education also noted that identity building for women leaders was a challenging task, however, the participants attributed the challenge primarily to achieving balance based on conflicting home and work demands and to establishing institutional fit. It appeared that the degree and the intensity of the challenges depended on the institution. Perception of institutional fit depended largely on interpersonal relations and at times these relations were strained due to the unanimous responsibility the women reported to serve as mediators between faculty and administration. Interestingly, of the 24 participants in Hacifazlioglu's study, none identified being a leader as their primary or eventual goal.

Instead, they expressed interest and excitement in learning and in being a part of an academic community.

Women may see the pursuit of dual roles including working outside of the home and raising a family as challenging and therefore leadership aspirations may be pushed to the margins of consideration. Further, gender role expectations for women to demonstrate kindness and communion may appear to be in conflict with the traits commonly associated with leadership including influencing others, competition and drive. College women's leadership aspirations can be stymied by personal, cultural and institutional barriers.

Influence of Religion on Career Goals

There are many factors that influence career goals and some of the commonly studied variables include personality, perceived abilities, and work values. Other factors include identity elements such as race, family influence, culture and religion. Because religion is such a core conviction for many individuals dictating not only beliefs, but also values and behaviors it warrants asking how religious beliefs and values guide, direct and influence future career goals and strivings. Emmons (1999) purported the benefit of trying to understand the role of religion in peoples' lives by examining their personal goals. He suggested that goals bridge the gap between religious beliefs and how people carry out these beliefs in their lives. Those who are able to effectively find work settings that align with their religious and personal goals and values tend to have the highest work satisfaction (Hood & Johnson, 2002).

Career development is an on-going, life-long process but it is during college that students' career and life goals tend to be clarified (Story, 2005). College students are typically required to select a major and to narrow their career interests in preparation for

further education or the start of a career following college. For many students the career search path does not simply revolve around the question, "What do I want to do with my life?" but instead it involves broader questions such as "Who am I?" "What do I believe?" and "How do I operate in relationship to others?" These questions are strongly influenced by religious and spiritual beliefs. In the religious realm certain beliefs and divine truths can be prioritized and these beliefs can guide career development. The process of life goal development for religious individuals is not simply about what one wants but what one may believe they have been gifted with and what God wants for an individual (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007; Emmons, 2000; Hernandez, Foley & Beitin, 2011). Emmons (2000) found that the process of sanctification of goals can contribute a sense of expertise to assist with goal striving. Imbued with a sense of the sacred, goals can take on a special significance and power. If a career goal is perceived as "God's will for one's life" individuals can experience increased meaningfulness, attention to the goal, and fulfillment (Emmons, 2000, p. 12). However, the integration of faith into practice is a complex business involving cultural, relational, communal and other distal factors.

Religion directly and indirectly influences life goal development. The vast majority of the influence is indirect through the religious emphasis on values and the factors that connect these values to goal development. Religion influences the value system by which life goals are selected, pursued and organized (Constantine, Miville, Warren, Gainor, & Lewis-Coles, 2006; Roberts & Robins, 2000; Saroglou, Delpierre, & Dernelle, 2004;). Saroglou et al. (2004) explored associations between religion and values in fifteen different countries, with twenty-one independent samples for a total of 8,551 participants. This extensive analysis found that religious people tend to favor values promoting tradition and benevolence and to

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dislike hedonism and values promoting self-enhancement. Additionally, religion can influence gender role beliefs and create particular challenges for religious women in career development (Colaner & Warner, 2005; Colaner and Giles, 2008).

Experiences of Women in Evangelical Colleges

While there is an increasing amount of research on Evangelical populations there is currently limited research on the experiences of women at Evangelical colleges. Three examples of the limited research conducted are described below.

In 1996, the CCCU (Consortium of Christian Colleges and Universities) published an executive summary report on incoming CCCU students based on data from the Higher Education Research Institute. Data suggested that the typical entering student was an 18 year old Caucasian female who was less interested than her secular counterparts in getting a job or making a good deal of money. The data reported that the average female student was strong academically but that her degree aspirations may not align with her abilities. Incoming male students were more aggressive and confident, and female students were more passive, service oriented and less confident. Additionally, female CCCU students experienced overwhelm twice as often as their male counterparts. These findings suggest that the experience and goals of male and female students have differed historically at CCCU institutions.

A dissertation by Schulze (2000) explored how gender role attitudes of students and faculty affected pedagogy, relationships and women's experiences and aspirations at an Evangelical, Liberal Arts College. Findings of the study suggested that men and women experience gender dynamics differently at an Evangelical college and that active and collaboration learning strategies benefited female students. This study also found that while women gave ample thought to their gender and their goals, many women experienced

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confusion, fear or caution about their futures. Female students sometimes sensed themselves as inferior on campus and expressed the need to work harder than male students to prove themselves both within and outside of the classroom.

A 2004 dissertation by Wade studied the perspective transformation of re-entry women at an Evangelical Christian institution. The experiences of ten non-traditional aged female students returning to an Evangelical college after having a family were explored. The qualitative interview study explored the process of transformation with regards to the women's meanings for life, gender role beliefs, and goals after graduation. Wade (2004) presented the transformation process as a four-stage continuum moving from conformity, to self-denial, to agency, and concluding with empowerment. This research aligns with other research suggesting that the process of developing self concept and aspirations can be a lengthy and challenging one, especially for women faced with more traditional, religious gender role beliefs. Wade's research with middle age women suggests that these women land on empowerment, which may or may not be true for more traditional aged students.

Studies of Gender Role Beliefs and Goals of Evangelical Women

Two recent studies examined the effect of two opposing religious gender role attitudes (egalitarianism and complementarianism) on the career aspirations of Evangelical female college students. Evangelical Christian beliefs of male to female relations generally fall into two categories: egalitarian beliefs where men and women have equal roles in relationships versus complementarian beliefs where men and women have equal value but different roles and responsibilities (Colaner & Warner, 2005). The man has biblical headship, authority and responsibility. The complementarian gender role belief can serve to limit women's career aspirations.

Colaner and Warner (2005) surveyed 271 women at an evangelical Christian university regarding their career aspirations and gender role attitudes. While the population largely identified with complementarian beliefs, students who reflected a more egalitarian position equated with a significant rise in both career and in doctoral educational ambitions. Colaner and Warner (2005) found that while women with complementarian beliefs were still anticipating working, they were not aspiring to work. This finding may mean that women with complementarian beliefs will be less satisfied with their career paths and less intentional about the career development process. Their religious beliefs may lead them to minimize the role of work and to prioritize family and faith goals. The Colaner and Warner (2005) study was the first to use the gender role attitude scale and the validity of the scale was not established, therefore these results may need to be examined more closely with alternate scales or measures.

In a follow-up study by Colaner and Giles (2008), 134 women from two evangelical colleges in the US were surveyed in order to examine the relationship between gender role beliefs and mothering and career aspirations of college women. This study used a cross sectional survey design to examine interactions between career and mothering aspirations. The researchers found a small negative correlation between the two goals. Women who aspired to careers aspired less to mothering and those who aspired to mothering aspired less to careers. Women with complementarian beliefs were more likely to have high mothering aspirations however a non-significant relationship was found between gender role beliefs and career aspirations, contrary to the earlier Colaner and Warner (2005) study. The results of the two studies may differ due to the sampling techniques (in the 2005 study participants were randomly sampled and in 2008 a convenience sample was used), or due to the fact that two

different career aspirations scales were used. In the 2008 Colaner and Giles survey, career and mothering aspirations were separated out and assessed independently, whereas in the 2005 study career and life aspirations were examined together. Separating aspirations out in the later study may have heightened participant awareness of the concepts and influenced their responses.

It is likely that Evangelical Christian women who hold differing gender role beliefs may be more or less inclined toward career aspirations depending on their life goals. Evangelical women who are part of conservative churches with complementarian ideologies may need to work to reconcile achievement aspirations with religious ideologies. However, it is also likely that the particular college context and the messages female students receive from faculty, staff and peers in their Christian environments will strongly influence student religious beliefs as they relate to gender roles.

Relationship of the Literature to the Present Study

A review of the existing literature on gender role socialization, possible selves, and influences on college women's aspirations suggests that the dynamic process of developing life goals for college women is multiply determined by internal and external factors. Some of the key internal factors include a woman's current self-concept, her self-efficacy beliefs, and her internalization of gender role beliefs, as well as their interaction with any personal religious beliefs. External factors include cultural influences such as relationships with significant others, stereotype threats, and messages from the existing educational community.

In the present study, the researcher expected to find data consistent with previous research themes related to women's possible selves, gender role beliefs, and factors influencing college women's aspirations. In response to research question one (How do

college women envision their life role possible selves?) the literature suggested that women's possible selves would be related to relationships and focused on emotional connections and social competence (Cross & Madson, 1997; Knox, 2006). The researcher anticipated that the possible selves articulated by the study participants would include the views and expectations of others and that these selves might rely on validation by significant others (Kerpelman, Shoffner & Ross Griffin, 2002). Finally, the researcher expected to hear women articulate a bias toward feared selves and suspected that these feared selves would be more salient than women's hoped for or expected selves (Knox, et al., 2000; Ogilvie, 1987).

In response to research question two (How do college women view gender roles and what is the relationship to their possible selves?) the literature suggested that women would internalize the gender role beliefs in their community and that these beliefs would influence their possible selves (Eagly & Koenig, 2006). The researcher expected to hear gender role beliefs articulating women's roles within the home or family to a greater degree than women's roles in careers or leadership (Devos, et al., 2008). Based on the literature, women were not expected to be aspiring to leadership due to gender role biases, and fears of failure, among other factors (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Shore et al., 2014). Given the setting of the research at a Christian college, the researcher expected to hear a slight bias toward complementarian gender role beliefs where men and women would be believed to have different roles and responsibilities (Colaner & Warner, 2005). Further, the researcher expected to find that participants' gender role beliefs would lead women to be drawn to life role possible selves associated with communal values such as caretaking and collaboration (Eagly & Koenig, 2006; Costa, Terracciano & Mccrae, 2001).

In response to research question three (What influences the development of college women's possible selves?) the literature review suggested that factors such as self-efficacy, significant others, and faith may influence women's future thinking (Li & Kerpelman, 2007; Hyde & Durik, 2005; Saroglou et al., 2004). The researcher expected to hear participants mention the impact of key figures such as family members, peers, and mentors related to their future thinking. While stereotype threat was a prominent theme in the literature, the researcher did not expect this theme to emerge directly due to the study design where women were asked to self-report hopes, expectations and fears. However, stereotype threat may underlie the subject's identification of female gendered careers or life roles (Cheryan et al., 2012).

While women's roles in society have rapidly advanced over the past fifty years, women continue to experience constraints in the areas of personal wellness, leadership, careers, and drive to achieve. Gender role beliefs appear to underlie some of the constraints women experience. Traditional gender role beliefs tend to be more pronounced and salient in Evangelical colleges although a strong awareness of gender biases culturally may afford women at Evangelical colleges support for pursing stereotypically male outcomes such as leadership and success in a work setting. The lack of empirical research on women at Evangelical colleges leaves a gap that this study sought to address through a qualitative exploration of the possible selves construct. The possible selves construct allowed for a juxtaposition of women's hoped for and feared selves as well as an understanding of the influences on these possible selves. The following chapter will outline the method employed to examine college women's possible selves and the influences on these selves at a Christian college.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD

This chapter provides a description of the qualitative approach used to collect data for this study. It begins with an overview of the general methodological design, followed by an in depth articulation of the research questions, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis procedures, and concludes by reviewing the limitations of the study.

General Methodological Design

This study employed a naturalistic research design to investigate the possible selves of female students at an Evangelical Christian college. Naturalistic inquiry explores how individuals operate in real life experiences within natural settings (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain the importance of studying a phenomenon in its natural setting because "realities are wholes that cannot be understood from their contexts, nor can they be fragmented for separate study of the parts" (p. 39). Naturalistic research is characterized by the use of human instruments, purposive sampling, qualitative methods, an emergent research design, and inductive data analysis procedures (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). Categories of meaning are expected to emerge from the data during the analytic process. Through these elements of a naturalistic study, the goal is not to predict women's possible selves, but rather to study the participants in their current college environment and to try to make sense of their hopes and beliefs and what influences the women's possible selves based on participant's explanations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The qualitative methods employed included focus groups and individual interviews. This qualitative approach allowed the researcher to gather a rich and complex understanding of women's possible selves through open-ended questions. Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, and Namey (2005) explained that "the strength of qualitative research is its ability to

provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue" (p. 1).

Qualitative research provides information about the human side of an issue leaving room for differing beliefs, opinions, feelings, and attitudes of individuals. Given the nature of this study and the researcher's interest in how gender role beliefs influence women's possible selves a qualitative method was selected in order to unpack the often implicit beliefs like social norms, religion and gender roles, and values that are held by a population (Mack et al., 2005). In this case, the researcher's goal was to discover emergent themes and patterns related to college women's future goals at an Evangelical college. Hypotheses were expected to emerge during data collection and analysis. The emergent design introduced changes to procedures as new information was collected during the research process.

The study was conducted at Dayton College, an Evangelical, co-educational, liberal arts institution with approximately 1300 undergraduate students. Dayton is known for its twin rails of faith and academics, which are rigorously integrated within the classroom experience. The majority of the student population at Dayton is traditional aged (18-22 years) and 80% of students live on campus. The cost to attend Dayton is high at $52,000 per year with room and board, although close to 90% of students receive some form of financial aid. Currently, approximately 65% of the undergraduate full-time students at Dayton College are women and 35% of students identify as students of color. Dayton is an academically rigorous institution and 93% of the students the college accepts graduate in the top half of their high school class. It was within this institutional climate that the current study was conducted.

Focus Groups

As an element of naturalistic inquiry, this study began with focus groups. Kleiber (2004) suggested, "The major strength of the focus group method is its ability to elicit

opinions, attitudes and beliefs held by members of the sample" (p. 97). In the current study, focus groups were used to help establish preliminary themes in response to the research questions that guided the construction and adaptation of successive interview questions. Additionally, the focus groups unearthed underlying attitudes and socially constructed meanings that provided clues about the Evangelical environment and the gender role beliefs that resided in that environment and their influence on college women's conceptions of their possible selves (Kleiber, 2004). Within the context of the focus group discussions, the interactions and comparisons between participants provided valuable sources of insight into complex motivations (Morgan, 1997). Within focus groups, the data generated is often rich as ideas build and participants seek to explain their thoughts and feelings. Focus groups can produce data not available through interviews as they provide the researcher an opportunity to "listen in" on people's conversations (Kleiber, 2004, p. 97).

Interviews

Individual interviews followed the focus groups after the researcher reduced the data to suggest specific themes from the research questions. Within naturalistic inquiry, interviews are used to gather information from a small, representative sample in order to make generalizations about the population studied (Frey, Botan & Kreps, 1999). Qualitative interviews, also known as open-ended interviews, help the researcher to understand subjects from their own perspectives and to learn how they make meaning out of their personal beliefs and experiences (Brenner, 2006). Kvale (1996) explained that individual interviews are seen as an interactional relationship between the researcher and the informant who are engaged in a process of meaning making (as cited in Brenner, 2006). In this study, the researcher explored how individual college women articulated their future goals and how their

experiences, their beliefs, and their setting influenced these goals. The individual interviews provided insight into how the participants made meaning of their future goals and the influences on these goals.

Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling approach was used as a sampling strategy for this study. The sample selection is purposive in the sense that it including students who had been at the college long enough to have considered life after college and to have had ample time to be influenced by the Dayton community. Additionally, the sample reflected some major classifications of the student body such as a distribution of academic majors. The following sampling criteria were established for the selection of participants:

1) Academic Class: Junior and senior women were represented in the focus group and interview sample. Dayton College has a four-year retention rate of 77% and a graduation rate of approximately 77% within six years of enrollment and therefore, the experiences of upper-class students generally represent two to three years of experience on the Dayton campus. Upper-class women have had ample time to reflect on the influences that have shaped their goals for the future.

2) Race and Ethnicity: The researcher attempted to have the participant sample reflect the college's undergraduate population that is 66% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic/Latino/a, 6% Asian, 1% African American, 6% mixed race, and 8% non-resident or race unknown;

3) Disciplines: Students from a variety of majors were included in the study. The researcher attempted to have an equal number of students from the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences;

4) Age: The age range of the participants reflected the average age of junior and senior students at the college (19-23 years). Students who fell outside of the average age range were not included in the study, as their responses may have unduly reflected their age.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, human subjects approval was secured from the Institutional Review Board at both the researcher's institution and at Dayton College (See Appendix A). To form the sample for the focus groups and interviews, the researcher sent e-mails to nine faculty members (three from the sciences, three from the social sciences, and three from humanities disciplines) and eight administrators who had regular student contact. The faculty contacted were individuals who taught both upper-division major courses and large general education courses. The researcher explained the general purpose of the study and asked the faculty and staff members to recommend three to six women who satisfy the purposive sampling criteria above and who would be able to thoughtfully respond to questions on the topic of interest. The faculty members were asked not to recommend only high academic achieving women, but rather those who would be able to effectively reflect on their goals and life experiences. The researcher reviewed the recommended student pool and made final selections based on most accurately fulfilling the sampling criteria, and avoiding the selection of participants with whom the researcher had a direct advising relationship. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) warned that ethical issues in interviewing most frequently arise out of power differentials between the interviewer and the respondent. The women recommended by the faculty and staff were used to populate both the focus groups and the interviews.

Recommended participants were contacted via e-mail with a request to participate in a focus group, and later a request was sent to solicit individual interview participants. In this

invitation message the purpose of the study was described and anonymity and confidentiality was assured for each participant. Participants in focus groups heard from one another, however participant information used for this study included a pseudonym to protect the identity of the participants. Pseudonyms were assigned to interview participants as well. Students who responded affirmatively to the invitation for focus groups or interviews were included and assigned to a focus group or interview. The researcher requested consent from all participants prior to starting data collection (See Appendix B). Participating women received written and verbal explanations of the study and were informed that the study was voluntary. The participants were also assured of the privacy of the information they chose to share. Finally, all participants were asked to complete a six-item demographic questionnaire prior to the study including questions such as class year, race and faith (See Appendix C).

The researcher began by conducting three focus groups of five students each (see Table 1 for focus group participants). The uneven number of participants in each group was intended in order to avoid "member pairing" (Bion, 1961). Each focus group represented a different academic disciple. Women in the first focus group represented humanities majors (e.g. Art, English, Liberal Studies, and Spanish), whereas women in the second focus group represented the natural sciences (e.g. Chemistry, Kinesiology, and Physics), and women in the third group represented the social sciences (e.g. Psychology, Anthropology and Political Science). This discipline-based approach was used in order to identity any initial salient differences between women with different academic foci.

Each student focus group met for 75 minutes in the researcher's office at the institution. The researcher requested participant's permission to audio record the data collection. Immediately following each focus group, the researcher spent 15 – 30 minutes

jotting down notes and reflections in a process that Patton (2002) refers to as the "immediate post-interview review" (p. 384). This reflection period established a context for interpreting the data and included observations about the interview, how the participants seemed to react to the interview questions, what were the problems, and what appeared to be salient ideas or themes (Patton, 2002). These reflections were noted as emergent, field based observations and were used alongside other data in the analytic process. Analytical categories and interview questions were revised as the study progressed to refine paths of inquiry given the emergent design of the study.

Table 1

Focus Group Participants and Demographics

Student	Class Year	Major/s	Age	Race
Focus Group 1				
Amanda	Senior	English, Communication Studies	21	White
Bianca	Senior	Theatre Arts	22	White
Carolyn	Senior	Communication Studies	20	White
Desiree	Sophomore	English	19	White
Elise	Junior	Liberal Studies, Spanish	21	White
Focus Group Two				
Faith	Senior	Biology	22	Biracial, Latina/White
Gina	Senior	Chemistry, Biology	22	White
Halle	Junior	Kinesiology, Spanish	21	White
Isabelle	Junior	Physics	21	White
Julia	Junior	Kinesiology	20	White

Focus Group Three

Karen	Senior	Political Science, Religious Studies	21	White
Lynda	Junior	Psychology	20	White
Meredith	Junior	Psychology	20	Asian
Natalie	Senior	Anthropology	21	White
Olivia	Senior	Communication Studies, Spanish	21	White

After the focus groups were conducted and initial themes were identified, the researcher conducted ten individual interviews with new subjects (see Table 2 for interview participants). The individual interviews were no longer than 60 minutes in length and took place in the researcher's office at the institution. The researcher intentionally invited students from a variety of academic majors and sought to include Economics and Business majors, as this major was not represented in the focus group sample, yet it was a common major at Dayton College.

Table 2

Interview Participants and Demographics

Student	Class Year	Major/s	Age	Race/Ethnicity
Phoebe	Junior	Biology	20	White
Quinn	Junior	Economics, Business	21	White
Rebecca	Junior	Kinesiology	21	White
Sarah	Senior	Physics and Art	21	Biracial, Ecuadorian/White
Tammy	Junior	Religious Studies, Sociology	20	White
Uma	Senior	Sociology	20	Armenian
Victoria	Junior	Psychology	22	White

Wendy	Junior	Biology, Economics and Business	20	Asian
Yasmine	Junior	Communication Studies	21	White
Zoe	Junior	Political Science, Economics and Business	20	White

Research Questions

In qualitative studies, the researcher articulates broad based questions as opposed to presenting and testing specific hypotheses (Creswell, 2009). The following paragraphs outline the research questions that framed this study as well as the corresponding focus group and interview questions that were posed to research participants (See Appendix D for full Focus Group Protocol). The researcher's two dissertation chairpersons as well as the third dissertation committee member reviewed the focus group and interview protocols for clarity, content and sequencing prior to beginning research.

Research Questions and Focus Group Prompts

Research Question 1: How do college women envision their life role possible selves?

Focus Group Questions for Research Question 1:

1) What do you most wish to do or become in your life over the next five years? (hoped for self)

2) What is most likely to happen in the next five years? (expected self)

3) What are three possible selves you most expect to become? (expected self)

4) What are things you don't want to do or to have happen to you in the next five years? (feared self)

5) Which of the possible selves you mentioned feels most salient to you now and why?

Research Question 2: How do college women view gender roles and what is the relationship to their possible selves?

Focus Group Questions for Research Question 2:

1) What do you think that others expect women to do with their lives?

2) How are these expectations the same or different within the context of a Christian college?

3) What does it mean to be a woman at Dayton College? (social role clarification)

Research Question 3: What influences the development of college women's possible selves?

Focus Group Questions for Research Question 3:

1) What significant experiences or events have influenced your consideration of your future goals?

2) Since you arrived at Dayton, how have your considerations about your future life roles changed?

3) What has most encouraged your hoped for selves?

4) What has most constrained your hoped for selves?

Card Sort

During the focus group and the individual interviews, the researcher invited the participants to complete an aspirations card sort developed from possible selves research constructs used by Kerpelman, Shoffner, & Ross-Griffin (2002) and Osyerman (2004). Kerpelman, Shoffner & Ross-Griffin (2002) utilized a possible selves Q-sort with 41 items drawn from Markus' (1987) possible selves questionnaire. In the Kerpelman, Shoffner & Ross-Griffin (2002) study, women were asked to sort the items into a 9-column board that ranged from "Most Expected" selves to "Least Expected" selves. In the current study, the

researcher selected eleven life role possible selves from among the 41 Q-sort items. The possible selves selected fell into life role categories including career, education and family that defined the scope of the current study. The possible selves selected were further scrutinized and developed using Osyerman's (2004) coding instructions for adult possible selves. The twenty-five participants in the current study were asked to sort the eleven possible selves aspiration cards in order from "Most Important" to "Least Important" (See Appendix D). The subjects were then invited to discuss their top three and bottom three cards and invited to explain why they had placed them in the order they selected. While the researcher was interested in an open-ended analysis of women's possible selves, the card sort tool ensured that women were considering some of the primary life role possible selves identified in the literature as well as providing a method to directly compare and contrast the subject's ordering of common criteria.

Research Questions and Interview Prompts

The focus groups provided an exploratory basis on which the individual interviews were built. The researcher reviewed the focus group data and developed preliminary analytic categories and observations based on the participant's responses to the three broad research questions in light of salient themes from the literature review (See Appendix E for Full Interview Protocol). Listed below are the primary observations from the focus groups that shaped the development of the interview protocol.

Research Question 1: How do college women envision their life role possible selves?

- The language in the focus group questions regarding possible selves appeared to limit women's responses to the vocational realm. For the interview protocol the prompt was expanded in order to access a broader range of responses. For example, in the

focus group the researcher asked "What do you hope to do or become?" For the interviews the prompt was adjusted to read, "What would be the perfect future life?"

- Almost no women identified hoped for selves involving leadership or staying at home with children in either the general hoped for selves category or in the card sort. The researcher sought to explore the rationale behind these omissions in the individual interviews.

Research Question 2: How do college women view gender roles and what is the relationship to their possible selves?

- A preliminary theme emerged regarding societal pressure for women to "do it all" and to "do it all well". In the interviews the researcher inquired specifically about this message and explored it further in order to identify the influence of this emerging gender role belief on women's possible selves.

Research Question 3: What influences the development of college women's possible selves?

- Faith was not directly inquired about in the focus groups and it did not emerge as a common response within the focus groups. Given the setting (a Christian College), the researcher chose to more directly inquire about the impact of faith on women's future thinking in the interview protocol.

- As women discussed possible selves they frequently referenced the expectations of significant others including parents and close friends. The researcher wanted to further explore the influence of the expectations of significant others on women's future thinking.

- Women indicated that some of their hoped for goals had changed during their time at the institution. The interviews provided an opportunity to further explore how

women's possible selves may have changed during their time at the institution and
what factors may have influenced these changes.

- Study abroad experiences and faculty members appeared as emergent influencing
themes in the focus groups and the interviews inquired more specifically about how
these factors may influence women's possible selves.

Data Analysis Procedures

The naturalistic design of this study lent itself to an emergent data analysis procedure
where categories of meaning arose from the data in an ongoing process. Specifically, the
researcher used a construct known as the constant comparative analytic method to analyze
the data. Within this approach, data from the focus groups and interviews were continually
compared with emerging patterns in order to describe or explain the phenomena being
studied. The constant comparative method created an ongoing interplay between the
researcher and the data beginning with an exploration of the research participants'
explanations and extending to the researcher's explanation and reduction of the data into
patterns and themes (Brenner, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The primary strength of the
constant comparative analytic method is the compilation of data into meaningful constructs
that represent and embody participant's reflections and experiences (Ortiz, 2003). The goal is
to describe the meaning of the data in light of the primary research questions.

As the data were collected, the researcher concurrently transcribed the focus group
and interview notes verbatim. Five of the individual interviews were transcribed by a
professional transcription service. The researcher carefully reviewed each of these transcripts
for accuracy. Once transcribed, the researcher actively reviewed all of the transcripts asking
two key questions: first, what topics or issues recurred in the data, particularly in light of the

study's three primary research questions and second, what were the primary differences expressed among the participants? Then, the researcher coded the data based on chunks of text or meaning. Charmaz (2002) described, "in essence, coding is a form of shorthand that distills events and meanings without losing their essential properties" (p. 684). In the first round of coding, the researcher conducted a thorough review of the data using attribute and structural coding. Attribute coding examines essential participant information such as age and major and these demographic variables are examined for patterns of relationship and interaction (Saldana, 2013). Using structural coding, the researcher assigned conceptual phrases related to research questions in order to frame the data. For example, data documenting women's fears were labeled, "feared selves."

In a second round of coding, the researcher employed descriptive codes summarizing in a word or phrase the basic topic of the passage. The researcher conducted a third round of analysis using in vivo coding. Saldana (2013) suggests using in vivo coding as it uses words or phrases from the actual language in the data in order to honor the participant's voices. Final coded categories included both constructed codes based on what the researcher expected to find based on the literature review, as well as emergent categories, which developed directly from participants' language and experiences (Creswell, 2009). The researcher became intimately familiarized with the data by reviewing all transcripts multiple times using the aforementioned coding techniques.

After assigning various codes, the researcher conducted code mapping under the three research questions by categorizing the initial codes. In this process the researcher identified major themes and categories within each theme and continued to condense and adjust codes as she went through the data. During this process, the researcher assembled all of the quotes

directly related to each theme to further inform and analyze each theme. As major analytical themes emerged the researcher compared the data with themes from the literature review in order to test the confirmability and the credibility of the data. The process of coding was complete when the data was effectively classified, ample numbers of "regularities" emerged, and the categories become "saturated" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Categories of meaning that included the largest number of references emerged as major themes and those with few references were considered for grouping under a different theme or were set aside. Finally, the researcher created an initial operational model diagram to assist with categorizing and data analysis. Dey (1993) suggests, "when we are dealing with complex and voluminous data, diagrams can help us disentangle the threads of our analysis and present results in a coherent and intelligible form" (p. 192).

When conducting consensual qualitative research, Hays and Wood (2011) recommended examining themes and domains and performing a cross-case analysis in order to organize the data into categories based on the frequencies of responses. Following their recommendation, the researcher conducted a cross-case analysis of frequencies of occurrences of possible selves response themes organizing the data into three categories (*general, typical* and *variant*). In this study, *general* responses were most common and referenced by 15 or more of the participants. *Typical* responses were slightly less common, referenced by 10-14 of 25 participants. *Variant* responses were mentioned occasionally and referenced by 5-9 participants. Responses referenced by fewer than five participants were considered rare and were not included in the results.

Limitations of the Study

Research on motivations and future goals is complex and multi-faceted. While this type of naturalistic research can be both rich and informative it also has distinct limitations including the following:

1) The participants were part of a small Evangelical college on the west coast and findings may not be transferrable to other populations;

2) Patton (2002) suggests that "future oriented questions involve considerable speculation, and responses to questions about future actions or attitudes are typically less reliable than questions about the present or past" (p. 353). For this reason, the women in this study were asked about their possible selves within a relatively short future time frame (5 years) however, any sort of future speculation has a measure of subjectivity and these speculations can change rapidly. It is possible that this same group of women would offer largely different responses about their possible selves at a different point in time;

3) This research included only student self reports and reflections and was not based on extended out of class observations;

4) Race and socioeconomic status were not directly discussed in this study, though these factors may have had a bearing on the women's possible selves;

5) As a study with a singular researcher, the results are limited to one researcher's observations and analyses and her implicit biases and presumptions.

While limitations existed in the present study, these findings contributed to the literature on college women's possible selves and the influences on these selves as well as highlighting the unique experiences of women at a Christian college.

CHAPTER FOUR – WOMEN'S POSSIBLE SELVES

The purpose of this study was to explore how women at an Evangelical Christian college envision their life role possible selves as well as the influences on these possible selves. The theory of possible selves undergirded the current study (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves describe how individuals think about their potential and their future and these constructs are derived from images of the self in the past and present (Roshandel, 2012; Markus & Nurius, 1986). In this study, the researcher examined college women's possible selves including the hoped for self, the expected self, and the feared self, as these notions guide future behavior and decision-making. The literature review suggested that women's hoped for selves tend to include interpersonal qualities such as helpfulness, as well as hopes that significant others have for women (Ogilvie & Clark, 1992; Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver & Surrey, 1991). The literature on gender and possible selves also suggested that women's feared selves may be more salient than hoped for or expected selves and rated as likely to occur (Knox, Funk, Elliott & Greene Bush, 2000).

The findings from this study have been organized around the three research questions. This chapter presents the findings on how women in the current study envisioned their life role possible selves over the next five years. These results are based on Research Question One: "How do college women envision their life role possible selves?" Results of the aspiration card sort will be presented at the end of chapter four. Chapter five presents findings on what influences the participant's possible selves. These results stem from Research Questions Two and Three: "How do college women view gender roles and what is the relationship to their possible selves?" and "What influences the development of college women's possible selves?" During data analysis, responses were grouped into themes based

on the three research questions. The identified themes are listed in order based on frequency of occurrence from most to least commonly occurring. Responses mentioned by less than five participants were considered rare and were not included in the results.

How College Women Envision Their Life Role Possible Selves

All of the focus group and interview participants were asked to consider their life role possible selves. In order to access women's hoped for selves, the women were asked "What do you most wish to do or become in your life over the next five years?" or "What would be the perfect future life?" In order to access women's expected selves the researcher asked, "What is most likely to happen in the next five years?" Feared selves were identified by asking the subjects, "What are things you don't want to do or to have happen to you in the next five years?" The response themes to these questions identifying women's possible selves are presented below beginning with hoped for selves, followed by expected selves, and concluding with feared selves.

Hoped for Selves

All study participants were asked to consider their hoped for future selves. The three most common categories of responses included the desire to attain a specific career, the desire to serve others, and the desire to grow in one's faith. Some women also noted other hoped for selves including traveling abroad, having a family or getting married, and balancing a career and family.

Attain a Specific Career

Thirteen of twenty-five participants (52%) identified a *specific hoped for career* in the future. The types of careers listed were diverse and varied, but most women expressed some degree of confidence in their ability to attain the specific career they identified. Among

the careers identified were paralegal studies, missionary work, marriage and family therapy, consulting, physical therapy, and teaching, among others. Phoebe, a Biology major, described her primary hoped for self: "I would hope to just be in a classroom with my science kids." Zoey, a Political Science and Economics and Business double major, explained, "I want to eventually do corporate law." Some participants described the rationale behind their specific career aspirations:

> I want to be a health care administrator for very practical reasons. Doctors have to deal with malpractice insurance which is very expensive; lots of overhead costs and being a doctor is not as fulfilling or rewarding or personal/relational as it used to be, or profitable, honestly. So health care administration allows me to work within an organization, within a structure, and kind of have that safety net (Wendy, Biology & Economics and Business major).

Victoria, a Psychology major, reflected, "I would like to be a marriage and family therapist and again make enough money from it that I am able to travel and comfortably live as well I guess."

Some of the women's career aspirations while specific, were not settled and left room for development and interpretation. Bianca, a Theatre Arts major, shared, "There's quite a few different end goals I can see myself in but I know it's going to be a combination of performing and teaching to some degree somewhere." Similarly, Elise, a Liberal Studies and Spanish major commented, "Well I know for sure that I'll be taking credentials next year. After that I hope to work in some type of school setting. I would like to work in an inner city or in bi-lingual education."

While almost half of the women did not express a specific career goal, almost all mentioned career as a prioritized hope or expectation as they considered their possible selves, and career thinking was integral to how the women conceived of other hoped for and expected selves.

Serve Others

An additional theme that emerged in the data analysis regarding women's hoped for selves was *serving others*. This theme aligned with the literature review suggesting that women tend to include interpersonal hoped for selves such as helpfulness or service. Ten of the twenty-five participants (40%) expressed a desire to be serving others no matter where their lives lead. For some of the women this hoped for self was explicitly rooted in faith-based beliefs and expectations:

> I aspire to be involved in serving my community. I've always been driven to reach out and try to have a servant's heart like my church in high school is always really like service, service, service and so I really hope to aspire to be a servant of God in whatever way I think that [plays out]. (Gina, Chemistry & Biology major)

Another participant expressed similar sentiments:

> I was raised in church . . . with a heavy influence toward serving others and being really active in volunteer work and things like that . . . I definitely have this weight of who do I want to be in 5 years. I feel drawn to serving in some capacity even in my job for other people and that's why I've been drawn to maybe non-profit work because I do have this desire to just be doing something bigger . . . like contributing to something bigger than myself. (Carolyn, Communications major)

For Carolyn and a few other women the aspiration to serve others has also influenced the way they conceive of a future career. Carolyn is drawn to non-profit work so that she may serve others. Julia, a Kinesiology major, shared, "I hope to become the type of person that can have an impact on either those younger than me and those older than me but just have an impact in the place that I'm in."

The theme of service sometimes expressed itself in a desire to positively impact the world or to make a difference. When asked what she most wanted to do or become over the next five years, Yasmine, a Communication Studies major, responded, "[I want to] be on my way to doing something that makes a difference." In response to the same question another participant responded,

> So I guess I want to put my focus on being someone who is impacting the people who surround me for good as opposed to trying to save the world which is tempting in a political science venue. You just want to tackle all the hardest problems that affect the most people. (Zoey)

A third participant shared her desire to make a difference in the following way: "I'm really excited about the freeing opportunities to explore and do the next step and impact the world." (Amanda, English & Communications Studies major)

It is suggested in the next chapter that the desire to serve and impact the world was partially attributable to the women's Evangelical faith beliefs and may have been cultivated within their Evangelical Christian college community. It appears that for a subset of the participants, the desire to serve shaped and directed their vocational desires and potentially their future decision-making.

Grow in Faith

Ten of the twenty-five participants (40%) identified *growing in their faith* as a hoped for self. When asked what are the things you hope for, Phoebe expressed, "I certainly hope to continue to grow in my faith . . . and just kind of continue to become a better all around healthy individual and yeah, certainly just grow stronger as a Christian." Another participant named Julia responded, "Mostly I guess I would say that I can in a Christian way be a good disciple and be able to just live a life that is an example to others." One interview participant, Sarah, a Physics and Art major, reflected that her decision to come to Dayton College was based on a desire to grow in her faith and that notion continues to drive her hoped for future self:

> I think moving forward it's a lot more important to me saying, 'What are the spiritual disciplines that I'll be able to build into my life?' 'What are the connections that I can make?' 'What church will I be involved with?' and 'How will I be attempting to grow and pray for the ability to grow and change?'

Several women expressed a desire to *grow in their faith* based on their personal perception of a current lack of faith or discipleship. Focus group participant Gina shared, "I want to be a better servant and disciple; I feel like right now I'm a little bit off the track on my Christian path and so I would hope that I can be redirected through my career maybe be put back on the path."

The idea of career appeared to be intimately connected to faith as women considered their hoped for selves over the next five years. Isabelle, a Physics major, responded,

I hope to by that time have more of an idea of what God wants me to do with my life and how I can serve Him with all of the passions that I have and the goals that I have for the future.

In the same way that women's hoped for self of *serving others* guided career thinking, the desire to grow in faith influenced the way some women considered future careers. Interviewee Yasmine stated, "I mean, vocationally, I believe that no matter what, my vocation is to live a Christ-centered life in whatever path I go and to glorify God in whatever I do, but career-wise, or job-wise, I'm still figuring that out." Faith was a salient theme for the participants both as a hoped for self and as an influence on the women's future thinking about life role possible selves. Faith as an influencing factor will be discussed further as a response to research question 3 in chapter five regarding influences on women's possible selves.

Travel Abroad

A subsequent theme related to women's hoped for selves related to *travel or going abroad.* Nine of the twenty-five participants (36%) expressed a desire to *travel abroad*. Focus group participant Halle, a Kinesiology and Spanish major, shared one of her hopes over the next five years:

I want to be able to travel, I want to be able to see new things, I want to be able to learn new things, whether that's in a school setting or just on my own, adventuring can mean so many different things for me.

Similarly, Desiree, an English major, responded that self-sufficiency and going abroad were two of her biggest goals for the future. Some of the women, like Victoria, expressed that life would feel incomplete without traveling or seeing the world:

Definitely traveling because it just puts it on my radar more and I know that I won't

feel as happy if I'm not going to new places so definitely – it's kind of a big part that

I will cling on to for my future. I'm definitely not going to let that go too easily. I

definitely want to travel.

Some of the women's desire to *travel abroad* seemed to stem from a global

institutional emphasis. Four of the participants shared that this desire derived (at least in part)

from the college's global focus. Interview participant Uma, a Sociology major, expressed,

"Dayton really has a lot of programs that go traveling and reaching out to different people

and so I feel like if anything that's something I want to do more." For some women, traveling

abroad as an undergraduate has inspired them to continue to travel, but for other students, the

fact that they did not get to study abroad in college has inspired their future desire to travel:

I kind of just want to experience more of the world for a little bit . . . I didn't get to go

abroad, I didn't get to do all these things and just to be able to experience something

besides that would be enough for a little bit. (Julia)

While about a third of the women participating in the study named travel abroad as a

hoped for goal, few women had any concrete plans on how to incorporate this aspiration into

their future lives. The idea of travel seemed appealing to many women but as other

aspirations and realities were revealed, women were not always confident in their desire to

fulfill this hoped for self. This sentiment was reflected in Victoria's response to the question,

"What do you see in your future?"

Being realistic isn't my forte. I mean I think I have a lot of choice in how my future

looks but I guess I couldn't guarantee that I would be doing all of that. But I think I

could make it happen if I wanted to. Maybe the traveling part probably not as much

as I want to; I don't think that that will actually happen as much as I want it to.

The desire to travel abroad may reflect a young adult cultural phenomenon that one

woman referred to as "wanderlust." To this participant, the idea of travel abroad or adventure

while valuable, was not a prioritized aspiration partially because she sees the negative

implications of the cultural idea of "wanderlust":

> I do think my semester abroad has kind of changed my perspective on that because I
>
> see how tourism is beginning to change Uganda and it's really sad to me and my
>
> parents tell me how tourism is starting to change Vietnam and to change their core
>
> values and that's really sad. I mean when you cross boundaries you break down those
>
> boundaries and in some ways that's beautiful and in other ways you loose a lot of
>
> things. (Wendy)

The hoped for self theme of *travel abroad* is influenced by personal factors as well as

institutional factors and cultural factors, and one that is worthy of further exploration.

Have a Family/Get Married

The fifth theme that emerged in the data analysis was the theme of *family and/or*

marriage. Nine of twenty-five women (36%) identified family as a hoped for self and eight

of twenty-five women (32%) identified marriage as a hoped for self. It is likely these

percentages would have been higher if the time frame for consideration extended beyond the

next five years of their lives. For many participants, their hopes for *family and marriage* were

expressed together. When asked "What are your hopes over the next five years," Phoebe

responded, "Well, I aspire to get married because that's fresh in my mind right now and then

I do really aspire to have a family someday." Karen, a Political Science and Religious

Studies major, shared, "getting married and having a family are the things I'm most looking forward to in life and those to me, those are the most fulfilling." Similarly, Julia shared, "I would love to be married or like start on that track just because I love my family and I love family life and so it would be cool to be able to start that."

Some women felt relatively confident identifying *marriage or family* as hoped for selves, while others expressed greater hesitation for listing marriage as hoped for selves. This hesitation is expressed in Tammy's response, "I mean I would love to get married within the next five to ten years but that's, again, not necessarily in my court." One woman shared that her list of hoped for selves was contingent on the level of control she felt in achieving those selves and therefore, she placed *marriage and family* lower on the list. Some of the women who did identify marriage as a hoped for self also indicated that they were in a serious dating relationship. However, more often, those in dating relationships identified marriage as an expected self, rather than a hoped for self. This idea will be further explored in the following section on expected selves.

A handful of women prioritized family over marriage, suggesting that family could be independent of marriage. For example, Halle shared, "I put family before getting married because I guess I could like adopt children if I didn't have a husband." Another focus group member, Lynda, Psychology major, indicated, "if I can't have kids then I'm going to adopt foster kids." The idea of family as a whole seemed to be a more salient hoped for self than marriage however, when the researcher asked why marriage was not mentioned in focus groups, one respondent shared,

I feel that we're not allowed to talk about that especially like, I mean I do have a boyfriend but as a single person if you say, 'oh, I'd like to be married' it's like

shameful or something. But I think that most girls want to get married at some point; maybe not in 5 years. (Olivia, Communication Studies & Spanish major)

Both career and family were salient themes stemming from women's hoped for selves. The next theme will explore how women expressed a desire to balance or live out a variety of hoped for selves in the future.

Career, Family and Balance

As the participants considered a variety of future aspirations, several commented that if they could have everything, it would be the perfect life. One respondent by the name of Phoebe commented, "Oh man, I just want to do all of these things." The idea of balance was suggested as an antidote to what women perceived as competing interests for their future time and attention. When asked about her hopes for the future, focus group member Faith, a Biology major, responded,

> I think what first came to mind is balanced in the various aspects of my life, so being successful in my career while also starting a family and somehow balancing those and also balancing personal care a little bit better than I've done sometimes here at Dayton.

Interview participant Yasmine described her own parents as role models for the balance she hoped to emulate,

> I don't see it as being either my career or my family. I think, I mean my parents did a fabulous job of balancing that and yeah, they probably – I don't know, but being that they're all able to give us, my two sisters and I, great school opportunities, then we really had the ability to do what we wanted. So I would love to be able to do that for my future family as well.

Some women shared plans for hoped for futures that provided a shared approach to work and family life, like Rebecca, a Kinesiology major, who commented,

> My dream would be work part time and then part time be with the kids. But it would
> be a priority that my kids had that nurturing family feel, or whatever. So whether that
> be me provide it or my husband provide it that would be a priority, but that would be
> great if both my husband and I could work part time and both do those roles equally;
> at least in my head right now.

By identifying work and family life balance as a hoped for self, there was an implicit acknowledgement that pursuing both a career and having a family might be difficult at times, but many of the women seemed to be aware of that challenge and still identified both family and career as hoped for selves. Twenty-nine percent of the study participants, or seven out of twenty-five specifically discussed balance or the desire to have everything, which seemed to include career, family, and personal space, however balance required some tradeoffs, including a lack of career-related leadership aspirations which will be discussed further under the card sort aspiration results.

Expected Selves

All study participants were also asked to consider their expected future selves. The difference between expected and hoped for selves was simply a matter of interpretation for the respondents. There were some categories of responses that overlapped. For example, some women who listed getting a graduate degree as a hope also listed it as an expectation. However, there was more of a variety of responses in the hoped for selves category compared with the expected selves responses. The hoped for selves category appeared to allow women to dream more broadly about what could be as opposed to simply what is most likely to

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happen. The three most common categories of responses of expected selves included the expectation to get a graduate degree, the expectation to get a job, and the expectation to get married, in order of frequency of responses.

Get a Graduate Degree

Data analysis revealed that obtaining a *graduate degree* was an expected self of at least fifty-two percent (13 of 25) of the study participants. An estimated fifty-percent of Dayton graduates attend graduate school so while this expected self percentage seemed high, it is fairly consistent with the reality of graduate school attendance. The women's language around this expected self was primarily descriptive. For example, women described completing graduate programs in order to achieve particular career goals. Interviewee Zoey stated that in order to obtain her career goal of becoming a corporate lawyer she would do a dual program to get her JD and MBA. In response to the question, "What do you most expect to do or become over the next five years?" Victoria responded, "To get a Masters or Ph.D. You have to have a Masters to go into therapy anyway so that's kind of a given there." Focus group participant Natalie, an Anthropology major, shared, "I think that 5 years from now I would have liked to go to grad school and to have been able to do research."

Some women not only expected to be in graduate programs, but they had confirmed or partially confirmed graduate study plans. For example, Faith commented, "Well I'm starting in medical school in the fall, so 5 years from now I'll be beginning residency or ending medical school so that's probably what I'll be doing." Interviewee Uma shared, "I'm planning to go to grad school and I'm actually going to be applying June and starting in September." Other women were less certain about their future plans but anticipated that their future would likely include graduate school. Olivia listed expected plans including paying off

debt, working in some capacity and going back to graduate school. Zoey expected to go to graduate school, but recognized that her plans may change: "My expectation right now is to go to graduate school but I also expect that my life will change radically in the next five years." Isabelle mused, "I hope to be enrolled in a graduate program and I have no idea what that's going to be yet, but I have too many ideas and I hope to choose one and the right one and then I'll be involved in it in 5 years."

The data reflect primarily loose expectations to attend graduate school and for some a general lack of specificity regarding programs and courses of study for the women. It is possible that these women's expectations flowed out of an institutional expectation to pursue graduate studies. Specifically faculty may be influencing women's thinking behind their expected future selves. When focus group participants were asked how likely it is that they will achieve their hoped for or expected selves, one student shared the following:

> Some days I'm more confident than others. Especially in making a decision immediately about what I want to do; some days I think yep, I'm going to do this one and the next day I think no, I can't do that; who told me I could do that? I guess my professors encouraging me especially to going onto the grad/Ph.D. track immediately saying you can do this and I say, great, people see that in myself but I also have to be able to see that in myself often enough to believe that I can actually do it. (Bianca)

The influence of faculty will be discussed further under research question three which explores the influences on women's possible selves.

Get a Job

The data revealed that eleven of twenty-five (44%) participants expected to *get a job* within the next five years. By combining this data with the hoped for selves data of obtaining

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a specific career sixty-four percent of women in this study either hope for a specific career or expect to *get a job* within the next five years. Students that do not fall into this group include those going immediately to graduate school or those who plan to travel abroad. Some of the women who expected to get a job after graduation expressed an awareness of a financial pressure to do so. For example, Olivia shared,

> I'm a pretty hard core realist so it's hard for me to say things that I expect that I don't know for sure are true today; so like starting with really concrete easy things, I expect to have paid off some student loans, I expect to be working in some capacity that pays me and it might not be a lot but those loans are a lot.

In response to the question of what she would most likely do or become in the next five years, one focus group member stated,

> I guess mainly the only thing I'm sure about in the next 5 years is that I'll have graduated college and be doing some sort of work in some city somewhere on the planet; I will be here doing something; hopefully I will be getting paid, right? (Desiree)

Some of the students experienced internal, financial and family pressures to be employed and self–sufficient upon graduation from college. Quinn, a Economics and Business major, remarked, "I do expect to get an offer this fall. I'm going to do everything in my power to make that happen." Self-sufficiency was a minor theme in the hoped for selves category and emerged in conjunction with the expectation to *get a job* as reflected in Halle's comments:

> I do want to be financially successful but my definition of that was my next thing on the list but that's not necessarily meaning that I'm really rich; it just means that I can

support myself and in supporting myself I can work towards being able to support

others financially.

The sub-theme of self-sufficiency will be furthered explored in the feared selves category

where women more often referenced the personal stakes of not being able to support oneself

as a fear.

Get Married

Data analysis revealed that seven of twenty-five women (28%) expected to be

married in the next five years. Six of the seven women who identified marriage as an

expected self in the next five years were currently in dating relationships. In response to

being asked what she expected to happen in the next five years, focus group participant

Carolyn responded, "I've been in a long term relationship, so probably marriage, but we'll

see." Similarly, Olivia shared,

I do have a pretty serious boyfriend and we've been dating a good amount of time and

so I wouldn't want to date for almost 7 years or something so if we're still together I

would expect to be probably very newly married.

One woman who was asked specifically if marriage or family was part of her expected path

shared,

I'm less comfortable saying I hope that in 10 years I will be married and pregnant

with my first child. That because that's something that involves another person that I

can't necessarily anticipate meeting ever or meeting in the next few years I have a

harder time being like that's what I want, that's what I expect to happen. (Sarah)

The data indicated that some of the women in serious dating relationships expressed

reservations about listing marriage as an expected self in the next five years. Some of the

women experienced a sense of pressure to *get married* that appeared to be related to the Christian sub-culture at the institution. As Bianca reflected on her expectations she shared,

I think that's something [marriage] being in this community has kind of skewed my perspective on; I don't want to be jaded but it's made me just feel like there's a certain expectation to where I'm at in my life right now and I think, 'oh you've been dating for this long and you're Christians therefore you have to get married right now' but that's not always what's going to happen so I think it's going to happen, it's just I'm interested to see how my perspective on that changes when I get out of this community and the kind of hype and the strange obsession that I feel like people have with this.

Focus group participant Carolyn expressed similar reservations about the timing of marriage:

I've been in a long relationship and so for him marriage for me I'd like to put it off a little more; I feel like in the next five year my hopes would be to get married eventually; that's something that I'd love to do; how soon, that's such a big question.

The data indicated that an expectation of marriage for the participants was sometimes expressed with caution and an awareness of the pressure of timing and community expectations. Additionally, participants sometimes hoped for or expected to *get married*, however, those individuals not currently in relationships did not experience a sense of control related to this future self.

Feared Selves

All study participants were asked to consider their greatest fears for the future. In order to access women's immediate feared selves, the researcher asked, "What are the things you don't want to do or to have happen to you over the next five years?" and "What are your

greatest fears for the near future?" In some cases, the participant's fears were the opposite of their hopes or expectations. For example, women who identified a hope for self-sufficiency by attaining a specific career also tended to fear a lack of self-sufficiency. The data revealed that the majority of the subject's fears emerged from a fear of failure or settling for a future life that was less than they or others' expected. The women also expressed concern about unclear pathways ahead. Less salient, although mentioned by several participants, was the fear of moving home or a lack of self-sufficiency, as well as the fear of disappointing significant others in their lives; specifically parents or family members.

In both the focus groups and the interviews, participants were asked whether hoped for or feared selves dominated their thinking about the future. Ten of the twenty-five women (40%) expressed mixed feelings about the future, whereas nine of the twenty-five women (36%) experienced primarily anxiety or fear in thinking about the future. Only five of the twenty-five women (20%) expressed that they felt primarily hopeful about the future (one participant was not counted in this total, as her comments did not indicate a clear response to this question). The theme of feared selves dominating future thinking was expressed in the following subject's comments:

> I feel like I'm making every decision based on fear . . . I'm doing things because I'm afraid that, I'm afraid that I'll disappoint myself if I don't keep going on the path that I marked out for myself; I'm afraid of disappointing my parents; I'm afraid of being perceived as a failure; I'm afraid of not, yeah, just like, I'm afraid of not being smart enough, I'm afraid of choosing a career that isn't thought of as a good career or a safe career or a prestigious career by other people in the world. I feel like I'm making a lot of decisions based on that. (Halle)

Whereas Halle's feared selves dominated her future thinking in almost all realms, other women distinguished between a hoped for self in one realm versus a feared self in another realm. For example, Faith distinguished between the career realm and the personal realm:

> I think for me it's a lot between fear and hopes. Day by day and that also depends on what area of my life I'm thinking of. I feel like career wise I tend to lean more on the hope side; I can do this; I can get involved in this; I can work in this area and that just seems; I feel like that area is more dominated by hope right now, but more of the personal life aspects there's much more fear; oh, what's going to happen, I don't know; you guys may all know this but I've been dating a guy for over 2 years and next year I'm going to Loma Linda and he's staying here and it's like, what's that going to look like; how's our relationship going to play out after Dayton and that area is much more dominated by fear.

Regardless of how thinking about the future made the women feel, the fear of settling or failure was expressed by almost all of the study participants. This theme will be described in the following section.

Settling or Failure to Achieve Goals

Twenty of twenty-five participants (80%) expressed a fear of failure or settling in the future. The motivating factors behind this fear varied from subject to subject. Some women worriedly anticipated having to give up future career or life goals for financial reasons:

> I'm very afraid that I will have to give up on theatre-related endeavors and feeling fulfilled creatively and artistically and as a person and have to settle to get a job because I have no money. And that could very likely happen; that's scary. (Bianca)

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Another focus group participant, Olivia, expressed a similar fear of settling for a job she would not enjoy simply to pay the bills:

I'd say I fear working somewhere I hate; I don't think like I fear not having any sort of money, well sometimes I do but, I think just like, having to take a really crummy job that I hate in order to pay the bills or whatever and I hate that I think that because it can be quite humbling to work just to do good work and provide for yourself and your family but I don't want to be stuck in a job that I hate forever.

While some women specifically mentioned financial pressures as the anticipated cause of the need to settle, others simply worried about getting stuck in an unfulfilling career. When asked "What are the things you don't want to do or have happen to you over the next five years?" Desiree replied, "I think I'm most afraid of getting stuck in any way shape or form whether that's like in a place that I really don't want to be or with a job I don't want to be in." Rebecca also feared getting stuck in a particular profession, "Fears that I'll get locked into one profession and not be able to change it and feeling stuck in it." Rebecca shared a recent experience she had that brought some of her fears of getting stuck to light:

How I see myself is very, it's a gray cloud right now for later. So many unknowns but I do know that the idea of working in one setting in the physical therapy clinic sounds like a prison to me and sounds very stifling and that I need variability and something to keep, something that's changing or moving or some sort of excitement and change and maybe there is that but I just haven't seen that yet, um, yeah, like this is kind of off track a little bit but over Christmas break we were playing a family game and I don't know, one of the questions was that my family had to answer about me was where do you see Rebecca at in 10 years and they wrote physical therapist, married

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with kids and I about died when I heard that not because those are bad things but because it's so predictable and it sounded so boring because it's so predictable and yeah, I don't know why that really bothered me.

While many of the women feared an unclear pathway ahead, others like Rebecca feared settling for the predictable path.

In some cases settling was a fear because the women expected it would limit their capacity to effectively utilize their talents. Elise expressed this fear and noted that she might be inclined to settle due to others' expectations of her:

I'm really fearful of settling because I'm a high achiever and I want to achieve things that are engaging and active and something that I'm really passionate about and I'm worried that I'll choose or make decisions based on what other people want instead of what I feel I should be doing or feel led to just because other people are telling me that. I'm afraid of settling or afraid of not taking those risks and I feel like those risks can be harder to take when you're out and you don't know what the monetary gain will be if you make this decision or that decision.

While some women recognized they might not land immediately in an ideal career, various participants worried about squandering their time and talent. Interviewee Yasmine's feared self was expressed in the following way:

I don't want to feel like, to find myself in a situation where I feel like I'm wasting my time. . . Yeah, I don't want to find myself five years out just kind of being like, 'wow, what have I been doing?' Because I feel like post grad it's really easy to be like, okay, sweet freedom for a little bit and then kind of get stuck in that.

The fear of settling was profound for many participants and expressed itself in multiple ways. Focus group member Carolyn also feared settling and wasting her gifts:

Just being in a job where I feel like it's worthless or I feel really frustrated with it and I come home and it's like, "what am I doing with my life" like during these hours of the day. Yeah, I just think that's one of my biggest fears within the next few years is just ending up doing something where I'm wasting my life or I'm wasting precious years doing something that's not impacting the world or that's you know, that's just pointless or whatever it is.

As women expressed their fears of settling for less than hoped for careers, a few of the participants expressed that the institution itself may be a source of the pressure women feel to maximize their talents. Within one of the focus groups, as women shared their fears of settling, one participant reflected,

I think going to Dayton and getting your degree and spending so much money to get that education and then leaving Dayton there's so much pressure to get that career and to go do something with your life and to go do something significant. (Julia)

The data suggested that women at the college might be internalizing implicit or explicit messages from the institution to impact the world and find the best use of their talents. When Yasmine, an individual interview participant, was asked how her future goals or thinking have changed since she arrived at Dayton, she responded,

I guess I – coming to Dayton I was kind of okay just living my life. I'm going to go do what I do, whatever. But now I definitely have this idea like I have the knowledge and the ability to go out and change the world. And I really feel like I have a desire to do that now. In whether it's, you know, large scale or small scale. (Yasmine)

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When the researcher asked Yasmine how this message about changing the world had impacted her career or vocational calling, she replied,

> I'm trying to take baby steps. I think at a place like Dayton there's kind of this idea where everyone achieves so much when they're so young. And it's like right out of college, like you're going into doing these great things and there are people who go right out of college and do great things, but I think there is also the sense that 'it takes time' gets lost a little bit.

The women in this study appeared to be feeling the immediate pressure to go out and use their talents to change the world and they feared not living up to this calling.

Unclear Pathway Ahead

Fifteen of twenty-five participants (60%) shared feared selves based on unclear pathways ahead. This theme expressed itself in three separate ways: fear of a lack of structure; fear of the unknown; and fear of making a wrong choice. For some of the women, the fear of a lack of structure in the future left them feeling stressed and overwhelmed. When asked how thinking about the future made her feel, focus group member Bianca responded,

> I enjoy structure, the structure of school and the idea of not having a structure in life is both freeing and so overwhelming. I can literally move to Denmark tomorrow and no one would stop me, you know what I mean? There's no limit which is great but also, I'm the kind of person that needs more structure and so that can also be a little overwhelming.

Similarly, focus group member Carolyn shared, "Now it is just all gray and you just jump out into something that like is a little bit terrifying, so, yeah. I like it within the structure, but otherwise it makes me stressed." The data suggested that the fear of a lack of structure was

related to participant's sense of a lack of control. Some of the women's sense of self-efficacy in achieving their future hoped for selves was undermined by their fear of an unknown future. Olivia shared how thinking about the future made her feel, "I would say out of my control so for better or for worse, I'm a senior as well so sometimes that gives me a lot of anxiety but sometimes it's really exciting." Interviewee Zoey expressed a similar sentiment regarding a lack of structure and control for the future, "I'm a planner kind of person so I like to have all my ducks in a row and the future is one of those things that's constantly changing and you can't plan for." The data revealed that these women feared a lack of structure in their future and they felt stymied by this reality.

Women also expressed fear of the unknown, a second subtheme under the domain, unclear pathway ahead. Focus group participant Halle shared,

I felt that I came into Dayton feeling very clear about the direction I wanted to go after college and had a very clear and outlined plan about just the steps that I needed to take to become a physical therapist or become an athletic trainer and now I have no idea if that's what I want to do so I'm just worried that I just feel so directionless, I'm worried that I won't have a direction still when I'm out of college and that scares me a little bit.

Often, the fear of the unknown was related to career pathways, but two women specifically expressed fear of the unknown in the realm of marriage. For example, Karen shared,

I like have I have a fear that I won't ever get married and I'd really like to get married and I mean, in the next 5 years I'd like to be in a relationship at least, like on the way, but yeah, I would include that one too because that is something that when I like bring it up with my friends or my parents or other adults in my life they always kind

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of laugh, because they're like 'Karen, of course you're going to get married' and I'm just like, 'you don't know that.'

The data suggested that the fear of the unknown was in some cases, linked to other salient fears including the fear of moving home and the fear of making a wrong choice. When asked what she didn't want to do or have happen in the future, Rebecca's response highlighted some of the connections between these feared selves,

[I fear] not going anywhere and being stuck in my parents' house and feeling completely lost with no direction, or I have a fear of going into a profession for mere comfort or financial stability and kind of missing a calling; I think that's a bigger fear; I mean some time at my parents house would be kind of nice. Yeah, I think the biggest thing is I'm afraid of missing like a bigger thing for me because of my fears or wants to be comfortable or to have everything planned out and controlled.

As the women thoughtfully described their fears of unclear pathways ahead, the fear of making a wrong choice was paralyzing for some participants. Bianca shared,

The thought of making a decision that will change the direction that I go in my life is really terrifying because what if one of the options was better than what I picked and how am I supposed to know.

Even for the women who described a relatively clear vocational path ahead, there were concerns that they may one day discover they made a wrong choice. For example, Faith shared,

I think one of my fears is that I'm going to get to medical school and not want to be there halfway through. I feel sure now that that is what I want to do and I feel sure now that that is where God wants me but I've heard of lots of other people that have

gotten into medical school and then after a couple of years they think I don't want to

do this or why am I doing this. There's so many doctors that are practicing medicine

who say they wish they had chosen something else. So that's a fear that on some level

I've made the wrong decision and that I should have gone public health.

The data from this study suggested that second most compelling feared self for these college

women was the fear of an unclear pathway ahead expressed though fear of a lack of

structure, fear of the unknown, and fear of making a wrong choice.

Moving Home/Lack of Self-Sufficiency

Seven of twenty-five participants (28%) communicated a fear of moving home or

lack of future self-sufficiency. In essence, these women were concerned about having to rely

on parents or family members after college. While some of the concern seemed to be based

on parental expectations, the majority of women who expressed this fear seemed to do so

based on a desire for independence. When asked to identify some of her fears for the future,

focus group participant Meredith, a Psychology major, shared,

Yeah, I think my probably biggest fear is that I'll have to you know also go back

home, I mean which wouldn't be that bad, I live in LA, but I don't think that anything

in my past would lead me to believe that that is the case; I don't want to be financially

dependent on my parents . . . I just really value my independence so I yeah, that is

like a fear of mine and something that again, like will motivate me to make sure that

it doesn't happen but yeah, it's still something that I think about.

This desire for independence and self-sufficiency was further reflected in Desiree's

comments regarding her fears for the future,

There's a lot of things floating around but one thing that I'd really want to be is self-sufficient. I think just because I know a lot of people move back home and I know that's a really viable option to save money but I really when I think about it, I really want to be on my own.

The data suggested that women might fear the perception of moving home more than the reality of living at home after college. There seemed to be a 'cultural' pressure influencing women's desire for independence and freedom from parents or family. This pressure may not exist in other cultures. One focus group participant grew up outside of the United States and she reflected a different perspective on family living situations:

When I'm in America really, I hate the fact that I feel like I'm being told what to do versus I would be choosing this freely because when I go to Asia and stuff like that and I see the family dynamics there and I love it so much that, I mean it's different like multi-generational, the grandparents are going to be taking care of the grandkids and everyone's living at home versus like for us it's like eww, I don't want to go live back home so it's really difficult. (Natalie)

Within this theme of responses entitled, "fear of moving home or lack of self-sufficiency," there was a subtheme based on a desire for independence and control. Some of the women felt that moving back home would equate to severing them from the independence and control they desired. When asked about her fears for the future, interviewee Rebecca shared, "[I have a fear of] not going anywhere and being stuck in my parents house and feeling completely lost." The women's perspective on the potential of moving back home was one of fear and closure rather than one of restoration and preparation for what might come next. These perspectives seemed to be influenced by the broader U.S.

culture, and possibly by an achievement culture at Dayton College. This notion of an achievement culture will be explored further in the discussion chapter.

Disappointing Others

Five of twenty-five participants (20%) communicated a fear of disappointing loved ones. These women felt pressure to achieve particular standards after college and feared that by not achieving these goals or standards they would let others down. Much of this fear appeared to derive from women's own expectations for themselves projected onto others. Interviewee Zoey was asked what expectations her family and friends have for her future and she explained,

> A lot of expectations are very high expectations. Yeah, definitely in my family there is a lot of high achievement expectations. I mean it's not usually verbally communicated as much. There's just kind of that they expect you to do well because you've always done well and we've trained you to do well and so it's not like, it's not oppressive but it's there. It's always been part of – and it's part of my personality too to honor my family through my own achievements.

Zoey went on to describe how her family's expectations have influenced her thinking about the future,

> I think it definitely contributes a lot to that anxiety that I want to meet all their expectations. I have really high expectations for myself as well that I'm constantly pushing myself to be more. And I think that's rooted in that, being really blessed so I'm constantly wanting to attempt to do that all the time. But in thinking of the future – I don't know, it makes me afraid of failing or like not doing what people have in mind for me.

Zoey was not alone in articulating her fears of letting others down. Yasmine described how family members' expectations were a source of both encouragement and fear, referring to feeling privileged and the weight of that privilege for her future life:

It's been encouraging having people who believe in me that I can do that but then that also becomes overwhelming feeling like if I don't do that I'm letting people down. And I mean that's something that I, like a standard I hold myself to the most. Knowing that I am very privileged, very privileged, so I want to use that privilege to do something. So yeah, sort of like that stress of, 'oh my gosh, am I letting people down?' Like am I abusing the things that I've been given growing up?

The data seemed to suggest that by virtue of having been granted a good education various women felt obligated to accomplish something worthwhile with their education. Not doing so would lead to both personal disappointment as well as the potential disappointment of friends, family members, and even God. This belief that one must effectively steward personal and educational gifts may originate from an oft quoted Biblical passage in Luke, Chapter 12, verse 48: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (New International Version), to which some respondents referred.

While at times the fear of disappointing others came from women's internalized expectations or pressures, sometimes the fear of disappointment came more directly from family member expectations,' as was the case for Gina,

Yeah a lot of family pressure. For me, I come from a family of teachers and so they are kind of like, oh, ok, so you're pursuing this [being a physican] and they're kind of like, we'll see where you go and I'm kind of maybe taking more like a handle and I

don't know, my family is now holding me in a higher caliber because of what I'm

pursuing and it just adds a lot more heightened pressure and so, fear that if I fail what

will that, I don't know, just, this sounds terrible, but that they'd laugh at me.

This type of pressure that Gina referenced was weighty and may have contributed to an

unhealthy form of fear or anxiety. The literature indicated that feared selves will drive

individuals to take action to prevent those selves from becoming a reality, but in some cases

if the fears are extreme, they could serve to paralyze women from any robust future action.

Card Sort Exercise

In the context of the focus groups and the interviews, the researcher employed a card

sort inviting subjects to place eleven possible selves aspiration cards in order from "Most

Important" to "Least Important" (See Table 4 for Card Sort Results). The results of the card

sort confirmed the open-ended interview and focus group themes regarding hoped for

possible selves. Namely, career aspirations, were at the top of the list. Fifteen out of twenty

participants (60%) placed "Using my gifts or talents in a future career" or "Enjoying a future

career" in the top three most important possible selves. Following closely behind were

women's desires to serve others in their communities. In the card sort, twelve of twenty-five

women (48%) placed "Being involved in serving my community" in the top three possible

selves, similar to women's high placement of serving others in the open-ended question

responses.

Growing in faith was the next theme in the open-ended response portion, however

this possible self was not represented by a card and therefore cannot be compared. The

"Adventure" card, which can be likened to the "Travel Abroad" theme, was prioritized next

with eleven of twenty-five women (44%) placing it in their top three. Finally, getting married

and having a family were placed in the top three cards by nine and seven of the women,

respectively (36% & 28%). In the open-ended response section, having a family was

prioritized slightly above getting married, however the opposite was true in the card sort.

This prioritization could reflect women's underlying desire to get married before having kids.

Table 4

Card Sort Exercise Results

Possible Self Aspiration Card (n=25)	Number of times cards were placed in top 3
Use my gifts and talents in career	15
Enjoy a future career	15
Be involved in serving my community	12
Adventure	11
Get Married	9
Have a family	7
Leader in my field	2
Leader in my community	2
Financially successful	1
Graduate Degree	1
Stay at home with kids	0

While much of the card sort data confirmed the open-ended response data regarding

women's aspirational or hoped for possible selves, the card sort also brought to light the low

prioritization of two salient identities in the literature: "Leadership" and "Stay at home with

kids." The data in the current study suggested a strong negative stigma against becoming a

stay at home mom for the study participants. Only one subject placed being a stay at home

mom in her top three aspirations during the card sort. Remarkably, twenty of the twenty-five

participants (80%) put "Stay at home with kids" in their bottom three possible selves. Focus

group participant Halle described her choice to place "Stay at home with kids" in her bottom

three cards,

> I do not want to stay at home if I have children; I do want to be involved in their
>
> lives, obviously if I have children . . . I think being a stay at home mom is a great

thing; and I definitely want to be involved with my kids and stay at home maybe for a

couple of years but I don't want; I don't know, I just hate to think that this cycle is

going on where girls only think that they can be a stay at home mom.

Halle's reflections suggested that the act of "Staying at home with kids" was not undesirable,

however the impact of selecting or seeking such a lifestyle before a career seemed to

necessarily negate women's empowerment and freedom, ideals that she valued. Women's

gender role beliefs, which will be described in the next section, appeared to weigh heavily

into how women viewed being a stay at home mom. Noting the low placement of "Staying at

home with kids" in the focus group card sort, the researcher inquired directly about women's

reasons for placing this item low in the card sort during individual interviews. In response to

this question, Quinn responded,

> For a lot of different reasons I don't want to be a stay at home mom. I guess the top
>
> one is I don't think it's where my gifts are effectively used. I was a nanny two
>
> summers ago, I worked 60 hours a week, I was… at least. I was there every day, all
>
> day. I was the mom. The mom was not in the picture as much due to some other
>
> circumstances and so, yeah, I got to see pretty much what it was like to be a mom.
>
> And it was difficult for me. I came up with some coping methods. There were three
>
> kids between the ages of 5 and 10 and they were very sweet and I definitely grew to
>
> love them, care for them, but I just didn't really look forward to being with them. . .
>
> So there's that, just the fact that I don't think it's where I'm meant to be based on my
>
> skills and personality.

Quinn went on to describe another reason that she does not want to stay at home with kids,

"There's also the fact that kind of conversely my skills are really well utilized, I think, in a

professional office setting." Finally, she described a third rationale for her thinking about not

wanting to be a stay at home mom, which is consistent with Halle's values based objections,

> And then the last element is that I'm just sort of against it on principle. I shouldn't
>
> have to stay at home and care for my children just because I'm a woman and that's
>
> what women do. I can do whatever I want. And having kids is not a required
>
> component to my happiness in life and my fulfillment as a woman. And I'd be
>
> perfectly happy and satisfied if I had no kids and didn't get married and just pursued
>
> my career. I can imagine it would be pretty lonely at times but yeah, having kids and
>
> a family's just not a priority. And the fact that I have a boyfriend with whom I'm
>
> deeply in love and the fact that he wants kids means I probably will have kids and I'll
>
> be fine with that, but that's just the way it happens.

Halle and Quinn's sentiments were shared by a majority of the study participants, although

not all women felt as strongly as Quinn did about the matter. For example, when Rebecca

was asked about her placement of being stay at home mom in the bottom three of her card

sort she replied,

> I'm hoping to have kids and when I do have kids I hope that I'll make a mature and
>
> wise decision and I think when I am a mom things can change you know, but um,
>
> right now staying at home does not appeal or at least staying at home for the whole
>
> day. I would love to stay at home for half of the day and also then have something
>
> outside of my little world to connect with other people and get out of my little world.
>
> My dream would be work part time and then part time be with the kids but it would
>
> be a priority that my kids had that nurturing family feel, or whatever. So whether that
>
> be me provide it or my husband provide it that would be a priority, but that would be

great if both my husband and I could work part time and both do those roles equally;

at least in my head right now.

For some of the women, they expressed that their gifts and talents would not lend themselves

to being a stay at home mom; for others they simply did not count on becoming a mom so the

placement was low; for others the low placement of the stay at home mom possible self was

related to gender role beliefs about women's empowerment. This theme will be discussed

further in the following chapter on research question two regarding gender role beliefs.

Another salient theme in the literature review was women's leadership. The

researcher was interested in exploring college women's possible selves related to leadership

to understand if these women were aspiring to leadership roles and if they were not aspiring

to leadership, what were the reasons. The women in this study generally were not aspiring to

leadership. Twenty of twenty-five participants (80%) put either "Be a leader in my field" or

"Be a leader in my community" or both in their bottom three aspirations. Only two of

twenty-five participants (8%) placed "Be a leader in my field" or "Be a leader in my

community" in their top three aspirations. One of the women that placed leadership in the top

three was an Economics and Business major and the other was a Chemistry and Biology

double major. The Economics and Business major described her placement of "Be a leader in

my field" as the second most important item in her card sort:

The second one is I aspire to become a leader in my field. Um, I've always wanted to

be; I have this desire to be important and to be respected, um, and that is important to

me, yeah. That's kind of sad. (Wendy)

When Wendy reflected on her leadership aspirations she concluded her rationale was lacking

and she expressed feeling embarrassed and ashamed. While it is possible that Wendy

observed that her own rationale for leadership was suspect, it is more likely that gender role

expectations for women to be nice, caretaking and unselfish may have influenced her critical

reflections regarding her motivations (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013).

When focus group participants explained the placement of "Being a leader in my

field" or "Being a leader in my community" in the bottom three of their card sort, the data

suggested that some women viewed leadership aspirations as a desire for fame, power or

success. Amanda explained,

> I aspire to become a leader in my field; as I was thinking about that one I was just
>
> like, I'd like to do my job well and do good but I don't need to be on the cover of *Time*
>
> magazine.

Similarly, Olivia shared, "I have as my third to last, I aspire to become a leader in my field

just because I want to do good work but I don't feel the need to be the best." These

sentiments led the researcher to directly inquire with interview participants about their

perceptions and definitions of leadership. If women weren't aspiring to leadership, the

researcher hypothesized that it might be due to the exclusive or negative way that they

viewed leadership in the first place.

The researcher's hypothesis was partially confirmed by the data. Some women's

definitions of leadership did exclude their consideration of their aspirational selves as

leaders. For example, Uma responded to the question about the definition of a leader as

follows,

> I felt like it was someone that's in charge of other people and kind of telling them
>
> what to do so I don't know, I felt like it's good to have the role to be directing but I
>
> felt like being a leader is more telling people how they should be doing stuff; like I

don't want to do that. Especially in a career because then people are the same age and

people want to do their own thing.

Sarah described leadership and her own lack of desire for leadership in the following way,

I'd say the way that I perceive that [leadership] is more in terms of attempting to be a

forerunner and an encourager in doing something big and I don't know that I

necessarily need to be that person or one of those people that is the mover and shaker

or at least not in every or several ways.

Tammy described a leader as an up front and isolated individual,

From this I was assuming kind of like head honcho; you're someone who's, I don't

know, being part of... being head of the problem solving or head of the… just you're

kind of like an up there, kind of singled out, was kind of what I initially… but then as

I kind of was verbal processing… that doesn't have to be the case. So I don't… I'd

rather use my gifts and talents in a community than to aspire to specifically be a

leader.

For Tammy, using her gifts and talents in a community was mutually exclusive with being a

leader. Her future possible selves were so strongly oriented toward community that this

definition naturally excluded her from thinking of herself as a leader in the future.

Other women's definitions were vague and fuzzy and some women's definitions

shifted as they reflected on what leadership meant. For example, as Phoebe began to define

leadership she began with a description that naturally excluded her, however she

reconsidered when thinking about leadership in her field of teaching:

I think what comes to mind at least in community [leadership] is like, being very

vocal and organizing things and kind of being the go to person. I think if I were to

find it in my field it would just be a consistent teacher, a person who is steady who

maybe kind of counsels others and I think that would be important to me more so than

my community which I put behind, and so I'll switch that.

As Phoebe considered her own updated definition of leadership within her field, she observed

that she might be more inclined to aspire to a participative and mentoring based leadership

model. When Victoria was asked about her low placement of leadership aspirations on the

card sort, she also expressed a shifting definition, and ultimately more openness to the idea of

leadership,

I think that's just kind of an innate thing in me. I've never really been a leader. It's

interesting I guess. I don't know. I've always kind of been intrinsically motivated but

kind of done my own thing. I've never really had the drive I guess to lead others. I

guess I'm just kind of independent and I don't know I don't like to be controlled

myself and I don't really like to control others. And leading is not necessarily

controlling and I really admire leaders. And I think I could be a leader. I guess I'm

just thinking of this as like a leadership position. So I guess maybe I interpreted that

wrong but, yes, if it means a stand up person or an exemplar, then yes then I do aspire

to be that. I guess I was just thinking a leader position so maybe I took that a little too

literally. So I definitely do aspire to be someone that people look up to and be

someone that, yes, has definitely mastered my field and definitely as involved in my

community. So, yes, I don't know. I feel like I kind of interpreted that wrong.

The data from these women's leadership definitions seemed to indicate that women's first

impressions when they think of leadership are directive or autocratic leadership models that

often exclude the ways that women envision their own leadership gifts.

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A third group of women had leadership definitions that went beyond directive and autocratic models to reflect more participative and collaborative leadership models. However, among these women, there was still a lack of desire to pursue leadership. Yasmine's description of leadership is a good example of this phenomenon:

I'd define a leader as someone who inspires people to want to do their best and like if I'm thinking about the leader of a company or something, it's someone who doesn't so much rule over the company with, you know, people have to meet their deadlines because they'll get in trouble if they don't, rather someone who inspires people to meet deadlines or wants them to want to come to work and work their hardest. So yeah, like a leader who will take responsibility and make sure that everything is getting done but in a way that isn't really overbearing. . . I'm not the sort of person who, I would never like put myself forward as a leader, I guess I would say. I have friends who will be like, 'okay, you should be in charge of this because' they know I'll get things done but I feel – I don't know if this is just me being a middle child and therefore a little bit more, be the behind the scenes kind of person, but yeah, I enjoy leadership positions when I'm given them.

Yasmine and other women seemed to lack a vision for seeing themselves in leadership roles, despite being encouraged to serve in student leadership capacities on campus. Similarly, when Rebecca, a sports captain, was asked how she would define being a leader she responded, "Maybe someone who knows or is in a more forward state of experience or something; someone who has experienced a little more than others and can humbly be an example to other people." However, when asked if she could ever see herself in a future leadership role, she replied,

I just haven't, for right now in my life, that sounds very appealing and I'm enjoying

being an upperclassman and a leader in things but I can't really see what that would

look like in a profession; I see myself working under people and not maybe starting

my own business; that doesn't appeal to me.

One significant barrier to these women seeing themselves as leaders was telling people what

to do. In their minds, telling others what to do meant being an expert or knowing everything

and this may have struck the women as arrogant. The women seemed to feel more

comfortable receiving instructions and working as part of a team. As Tammy was completing

the card sort she reflected,

The thing with some of these leader ones is as much as I am a leader, in certain ways

I'm also kind of more of like a background person, so I think, I don't know, that's a

little convoluted in my mind because you can be a leader without being a leader.

The women were hesitant to aspire to a more traditional form of leadership that may

not let them shift between follower and leader roles. For Tammy, there was also the sense

that service was her first calling and that leadership would only be prioritized if she felt like

that was the channel through which she could enact her desire to serve: "I'd rather aspire to

serve than be a leader. And if that serving comes in a leadership position, great. And if it

doesn't, then that's my place." Given that almost 50% of women placed "Be involved in

serving my community" in their top three aspirations, and only 8% placed "Being a leader in

my field or community" in the top three, the data clearly reflect that women have a much

stronger orientation to future service than to leadership.

The aspiration card sort results supported the participant's open-ended responses

which suggested that women's primary hoped for selves include career aspirations, service

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aspirations, family aspirations, and aspirations to adventure or travel. The card sort results also indicated that women place a low prioritization on leadership aspirations as well as aspirations to become a stay at home mom. Chapter six will extend the discussion on the implications of these findings in light of the literature.

Summary of Possible Selves Findings

According to the possible selves theory, all three categories of future selves (hoped for, expected and feared) motivate and guide future behavior and decision-making. The researcher organized the response themes into one of the three categories identified in the methods section (*general, typical and variant*) based on the frequencies of participant responses. Examples of *general* response themes included the fear of settling and failure to achieve goals, as well as the fear of unclear pathways ahead. Examples of *typical* responses included the hope of attaining a specific career and the expectation to get a graduate degree. *Variant* responses included the hope of getting married and having a family, as well as the fear of moving home or a lack of self-sufficiency. Responses referenced by fewer than five participants were considered rare and were not included in the results.

Table 3
Possible Selves Response Themes and Cross Case Analysis Frequency of Occurrences

Possible selves and response themes	Frequency of Occurrences
How college women envision possible selves?	
Hopes	
Attain a specific career (13)	Typical
Serve others (10)	Typical
Grow in faith (10)	Typical
Travel abroad (9)	Variant
Have a family (9)	Variant
Get married (8)	Variant
Career, family and balance (7)	Variant
Expectations	
Get a graduate degree (13)	Typical

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Get a job (11)		Typical
Get married (7)		Variant
Fears		
Settling or failure (20)		General
Unclear pathway ahead (15)		General
Moving home/lack of self-sufficiency (7)		Variant
Disappointing others (5)		Variant

In the current study, the women's most salient hoped for selves included the desire to attain a specific career, to serve others, and to grow in their faith (See Figure 1). Women's aspirations to serve others in the future were consistent with the literature suggesting that women's hoped for selves often include interpersonal goals such as helpfulness. It is likely that the participants will take action to prioritize these hoped for selves in order to bring them to fruition. There were examples of women's future selves guiding behavior in the data as participants described specific careers and they steps they would take to achieve these careers. Women's primary expected selves included getting a graduate degree and a job (See Figure 2). As women envisioned their future selves working and getting a graduate degree these cognitive manifestations are selves the women are likely to approach and pursue. Finally women's primary feared selves included settling or failure and unclear pathways ahead (See Figure 3). These selves are likely to direct women to avoid settling for less than what they hope for and to forge clear pathways ahead. With the current understanding of the hoped for, expected and feared selves of Evangelical Christian women, the next chapter will examine the influences on these women's possible selves.
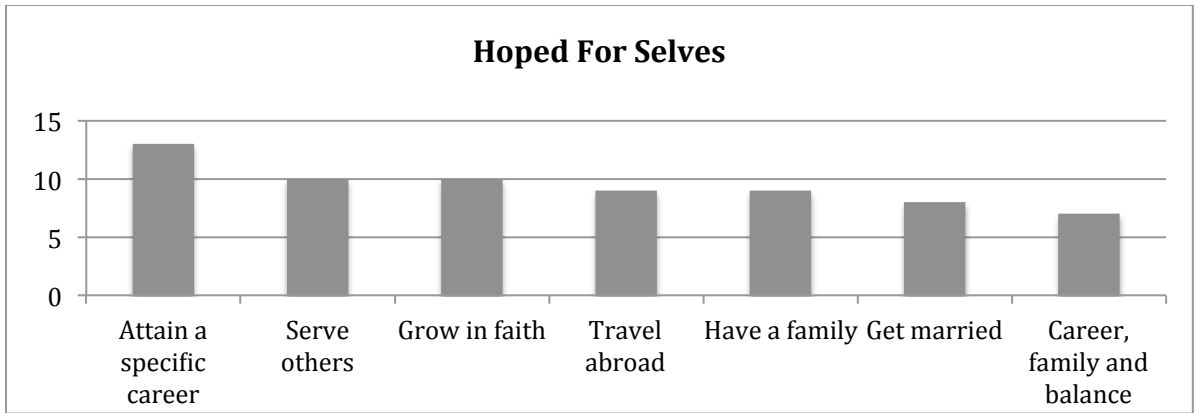
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Figure 1. Cross case analysis frequency of responses of hoped for selves themes (n = 25).
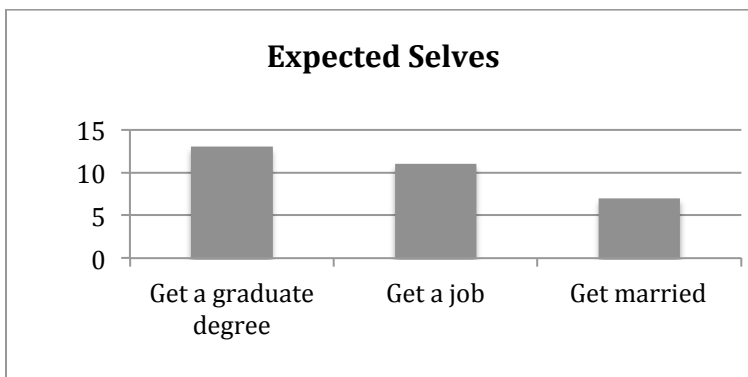

Figure 2. Cross case analysis frequency of responses of expected selves themes (n = 25).
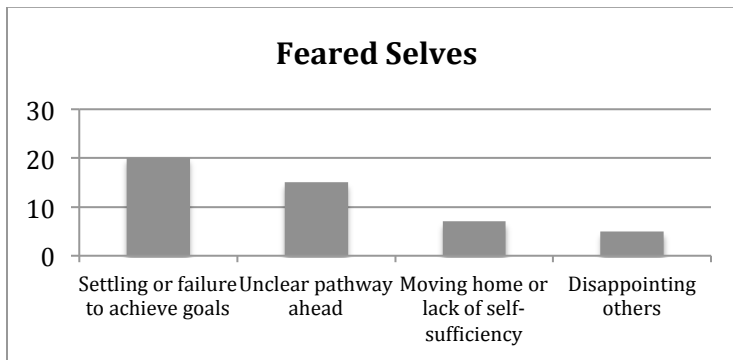

Figure 3. Cross case analysis frequency of responses of feared selves themes (n = 25).

CHAPTER FIVE – INFLUENCES ON POSSIBLE SELVES

How College Women View Gender Roles

In addition to exploring women's possible selves for the future, this study also examined how college women view gender roles and the relationship between these views and women's possible selves. Gender role beliefs represent one's attitudes about the roles men and women should hold in society, including jobs and roles within the family. These beliefs are developed both consciously and unconsciously through exposure to lived family and social experiences, religious beliefs, and gender role standards, among other factors (Eagly & Koenig, 2006; Newman & Newman, 2011). In the current study, the researcher sought to understand college women's gender role beliefs by asking participants what society expects women to do with their lives. The literature suggested that gender role attitudes are among the most influential factors that shape individuals' achievement aspirations and therefore, the researcher hoped to better understand college women's gender role beliefs and how they shaped their hoped for, expected and feared selves (DiDonato & Strough, 2013).

Within the focus groups and the interviews, the researcher began the conversation about gender roles by reflecting that gender role beliefs have changed substantially over the past fifty years and are still changing. After this brief introduction, all participants were asked to consider what society expects women to do with their lives. Participants were also asked what it means to be a woman at Dayton College. Based on the literature review related to women at Evangelical colleges, the researcher expected gender role beliefs to strongly reflect family values and women's future roles as wives and mothers. While being a wife or mother was identified by eight of twenty-five participants (32%), more salient gender role beliefs included doing it all or being superwomen (68%), mixed gender role messages (60%), and

messages of women's empowerment (52%). These four primary themes related to women's

gender role beliefs will be discussed in this chapter. The latter part of the chapter will discuss

additional influences on college's women's possible selves including family, faculty, study

abroad, faith, and self-efficacy beliefs.

Superwoman

When asked what society expected women to do with their lives, seventeen of

twenty-five women (68%) discussed having or doing it all including roles such as wife,

mother, and successful career woman. Not only did the women suggest a societal pressure for

women to do it all, but a pressure to do it all well. Focus group member Faith reflected,

> Yeah, I feel like it's either stay at home mom or work part time or else it's have it all
>
> and somehow be able to have the perfect family, the perfect marriage, multiple kids,
>
> the perfect job and like go to every single school event and go home and make dinner
>
> every night and it's just doing everything and so I feel like there's kind of this idea
>
> that women are still responsible for the home completely and if they want to go work
>
> too, then that's great and they should do that but they're still responsible for the home
>
> and the kids just as much as they were when they were stay at home moms whereas
>
> guys don't have the same responsibility socially.

While the women were not asked specifically about gender role expectations for men, some

of the women like Faith did express differing gender role expectations for men in the home.

If women pursued a career they also felt a societal expectation to take primary responsibility

for care of the home and family, whereas the women believed that men would not have the

same responsibilities in the household. Halle expressed this sentiment in the following way,

"If you want your career that's fine but you also have to take care of everything at home and

your family, so that's the truth." Gina also expressed differing gender role expectations for men and women in the household,

> I still think there's a heavy weight on you as a woman, like you might have that career like higher than your husband but you're still expected to be home and take care of all the extra house stuff, but I hope that that would change.

The data indicated that the prevailing gender role belief for these women was an unrealistically high standard for women in the home, the workplace, and sometimes in the realm of physical attraction as well. Olivia described this expectation as follows,

> I think women are being advocated for working, but it's not like men are being advocated to stay at home and somebody has to care for the kids and the house and it's just all women so I just see so many women especially moms especially in the church sadly just so tired because they're pulled in every which way all of the time and yeah still also, you know, men can gain a little weight in their middle age and they're never looked down upon but if women do that they're not good wives or moms or role models and yeah, I think that the standards are high for women and it's really sad.

> Given the salience of the superwoman theme in the focus groups, the researcher inquired more specifically about the theme in the interviews saying, "Some say that women are now expected to be superwomen and do it all and do it well. Do you perceive this expectation and if so, how does it influence your thinking about your future goals?" The women's responses almost unanimously reflected an agreement with the gender role pressure to be superwoman. Only one interviewee responded to this question saying that she had never really felt pressure to be superwoman. She could understand how others might, but this

was not her experience. This subject's experience differed from other women's experiences in that she was graduating early and getting married in the next month. She also knew that she would be going into teaching. This subject was further along in knowing what her future would hold regarding life roles. She had also been surrounded primarily by male students during her time at Dayton, whereas most other women had primarily female influences. It is possible that some of the societal pressure that these women felt came from other women. When asked if she perceived the expectation to be superwoman, interview participant Zoey responded,

> I think women expect women to be super human. I don't think the male culture does
> as much. . . But I don't think the expectation on the male side is quite as there. I think
> men would be satisfied if we did one of them really well. And depending on what
> man you ask they would have a particular preference of which one. But I think
> women want – we want to do it all and we want to do it all well.

The sources of women's gender role beliefs regarding pressure to be superwoman are likely multiply informed.

The researcher sought to understand how gender role beliefs influenced women's possible selves. The data suggested that the gender role belief pressure to be superwoman left the participants feeling overwhelmed and perhaps contributed to the feared self of settling or failure. If the standard for women is doing it all and doing it all well, then a prevailing feared self might include not living up to these expectations in one or more realms. When asked what society expects women to do with their lives, Meredith shared,

> I think that women are now expected to be all things to all people . . . society says you
> can do whatever you want but you still have to be at home, you still have to take your

kids and if you don't you're not a good mom and things like that; you know even

health related things like to be successful in certain positions you have to you know,

be fit like you have to be pretty, you have to you know, you just have to have it all, so

I think that's not maybe an accurate picture of what it looks like to be a modern

women or maybe it is an accurate picture but maybe that needs to change because I

think that's too much for any one person to manage so, yeah, I think yeah, I think

that's the trend that I've been seeing.

Meredith went on to describe the superwoman standard as unrealistic and she vowed not to

adhere to the standard,

I read about the morning schedules of 20 women CEOs, right and it's the same thing

though, you know, which is crazy, like it's the actual standard, you know, so um, like

a lot of women waking up at like 4am, checking all of their news feeds, you know,

being informed and then going to work out and then waking up their kids and making

breakfast and all this stuff and it's just like wow, something's gotta give, you know so,

I think more than conforming to that, I kind of have been looking at like where's the

weakness in that structure. . . I'm not going to do all that stuff.

Other participants acknowledged the costs of trying to live up to a superwoman standard

suggesting sacrifices to one's physical and emotional health as well as the health of family

life.

The data suggested that women are drawn to the gender role message of being

superwoman, however, they also recognize the subversive nature of this sentiment for overall

well-being. Yasmine reflected on the theme of being superwoman, acknowledging the push

and pull of such a message,

Yeah, there's a lot of pressure to get married but also to have an amazing career and be really smart and interesting and well-rounded and you feel like you're being shaped to be this perfect, you know, 'she sings, she dances,' you know, 'she is part of the Honor Society of her major, was on Chapel Band, candidate for major honors, but she also is an amazing girlfriend who's getting engaged to her boyfriend of three years' and yeah, it's like this ideal perfect person that I feel like everyone secretly wants to be, but also rebels against it in little ways.

In response to the pressure to be superwoman, some of the participants, acknowledged a conflict between career and family compatibility. Wendy shared, "I don't know how practical it is for us to want to do it all because that's just too hard until like, I think our husbands and our fathers or whatever step up." Overall, thirty-two percent of the women expressed gender role tensions related to conflict between life role goals such as being a mother and pursing a career.

Particularly for the women interested in science careers there was a sentiment that doing it all was impossible. Sarah, an aspiring physicist shared,

I think too many careers make it impossible to be both. You know, you can either be a mom who's involved in your children's life and in their development or you can be successful in your career and you have to decide which or if you're going to give up on one for a while in order to do the other better.

For that reason, Sarah had steered away from a career in architecture, which she perceived as incompatible with family life in lieu of a career in physics. Isabelle, another physics major, shared a similar sentiment, "I think that the expectation at least of this society in America for now is stay at home mom or not science career." Isabelle found herself wrestling with the

tension between her desire for a family and a science career, although because family was not an imminent reality, she was in the midst of pursuing a career in science. One of the outcomes of a superwoman gender role belief was in some cases, particularly for science women, a motivation to choose or prioritize either family or career:

> So I want to get my career started before I get married and have a family. But if you get married and have a family right now then it's going to be harder to navigate a career, yes, because you're still juggling everything and you don't know how to do either. (Victoria)

These themes align with women's hoped for selves desiring career & family balance. The participants were keenly aware of the pressures associated with doing it all including different dispositions and traits required for different roles and how the required dispositions can be in conflict at times. Wendy summarized this sentiment effectively in the following reflection,

> I think of the women who do pursue a professional career I think that they are still expected to be wonderful moms and wives and if you slip up at work people judge you more than they would if you were a man or let's say you step back from your work for a year or two- people will judge you more and it's just it's harder I guess; I don't know and people want you to be so many things all at once because as a female I feel like I'm supposed to be warm and empathetic and squishy and soft you know, but if I'm going to be in the professional world, like if I want to be an executive then I have to be a go-getter and ambitious; I have to be, I don't know, I have to be against that and I have to do both and I don't know how to do that because that's unreasonable.

The data indicated that the vast majority of participants experienced gender role pressure to do it all and to do it all well. These perceived pressures were often internalized, leaving women feeling overwhelmed and fearful of failure or settling in one or many realms. Other participants simply acknowledged that they could not do it all and experienced conflict between career and family goals as well as uncertainty about how to balance these hoped for selves in the future. Women pursuing careers in the sciences appeared to be most at risk for perceived conflict between career and family plans, and this experience is consistent with the literature and reasons why some women chose not to pursue STEM fields.

Mixed Gender Role Messages

Most of the discussion regarding gender role beliefs in this study revolved around two central beliefs: (1) women are expected to get married/have a family and (2) women are expected to work and be successful outside of the home. Each of these gender role messages will be outlined individually in this chapter. As women described the gender role messages that they had received at Dayton College, it became clear that most women had received mixed gender role messages, such that some segments of the population emphasized becoming a wife/mother and other segments emphasized pursing a career or vocational calling. Generally, these mixed gender role messages were received as a positive element of the Dayton community because women heard different perspectives and felt empowered to choose from among the multiple messages.

When asked what others at Dayton expect women to do with their lives, focus group member Gina shared,

> I get a vibe from Dayton that there are a lot of strong independent women who are like ready to like forge forward and take their careers and go out there and yeah, but

then yeah there's the whole other side of like doesn't mean the ring by spring you're

going to immediately become a mom and like get a house at the same time but I do

get conflicting thoughts.

Interviewee Rebecca shared,

There are definitely different sides. Maybe some more conservative people that would

say staying home with you know, family is you know, ultimately more important and

then there's the gung ho girls at this school who are like, 'take charge of your life and

be the boss in everything' and neither of those really appeal to me. Yeah, I don't

know it's . . . such a mixture.

Some women described the conflicting messages coming from Dayton as representing

traditional and non-traditional Christian values. The traditional value was described as one

emphasizing marriage and family values whereas the non-traditional value empowered

women's work outside of the home. These views were also referred to as complementarian

and egalitarian perspectives within the Evangelical Christian community. The

complementarian perspective emphasized differing roles for men and women such as men in

the workplace and women in the home, whereby the egalitarian perspective emphasized that

men and women have equal roles in the home and community. Bianca described the gender

role messages she had received from Dayton in the following way:

There's like a co-existing like opposite the conservative traditional Christian views

are present but also this more modern less traditional view is also celebrated so it's

like you get both perspectives of the traditional home model and the non-traditional

home model and traditional values and non-traditional values and I think it's just;

sometimes I feel like the campus or people on campus push one way or the other but I

think that they also leave it open to you to decide which you align with and you can

find a meaningful existence in whatever you do choose to fall into.

Similarly, when asked what does it mean to be a woman at Dayton, Desiree shared,

It just really depends on who you talk to whether you're going to be getting a really

feminist view or very complementarian view of; yeah, because I've talked to people

and I've had classroom conversations with people who like totally believe in gender

roles that define you rather than like you can succeed those gender roles and I've met

others who say that's the dumbest thing I've ever heard and like I think that both

parties are well meaning and I've seen a lot of dialogue which is cool but it just

depends on who you talk to because the perspectives both exist together in tension on

campus.

Participant's perspectives on mixed gender role messages may have been influenced by a

high profile Dayton campus program in Spring 2014 entitled, "Women in Church

Leadership" that presented a balanced yet compelling debate on the complementarian versus

egalitarian perspectives.

Although not universal, the data on mixed gender role perspectives suggested that

faculty or the college in general might be the source of messages expecting women to work

and to be successful outside of the home, whereby peers may be the source of messages

expecting women to get married and have families. Focus group member Carolyn expressed,

In my experience I've had a lot of strong female professors that have empowered me

and been very 'you're getting an education for a reason so do something with it' and

'you're strong capable young women' and so I feel like I've really gotten that message

from them but I don't hear any combating it with how do I deal with family or what

do I do family wise I just don't hear much of that from them; it's more so about education and getting a job; but then I feel like the opposite is just a lot of my friends is the obsession with marriage and having kids that's where I get the combating perspective as everyone is like, I don't know, it's like this empowerment from the professors, I'm going to go out and work, but like all there is in life is to get married and have kids like from students, so it's just this weird thing.

While faculty were said to be empowering women to use their gifts and skills in the world, there was a sense from Carolyn that faculty were not addressing the conflicting pressures to work and have a family and how women might be able to do both effectively. Wendy also experienced different gender role messages from the college (faculty and staff) than she did from fellow students, "I think the student body has certain expectations, but Dayton as a college is kind of different, I don't know how to explain that." Victoria echoed this two-part message in her comments,

Well I definitely think there's a high expectation for getting married and probably about having children. But also about having good careers and I think above all that's the sense I get from the Dayton professors. Maybe the girls themselves as well, at least the girls I know. But yes, there still is a very big prevalence of whispering and I want a man in my life, yeah, so that's definitely not diminished at all but I think that ambition has increased for sure.

Overall, the women seemed to value the mixed messages they received about gender role beliefs in the Dayton community as reflected in Tammy's comments, " I feel like I've gotten a spectrum here, which has been really cool, actually, now that I think about it." These mixed

messages are received as permission to pursue where they feel God is leading, either in the home, the workplace or in both settings.

Women's Empowerment

While many of the study participants reported experiencing mixed gender role messages within the Dayton community, thirteen of twenty-five women (52%) expressed that gender role messages from society at large were strongly focused on women's empowerment. Zoey responded to the question, "What do you think society expects women to do with their lives?" by saying, "I think society expects them to be productive. And what that means is getting some of their own accomplishments that are measureable by society." The empowerment theme was implicit in Tammy's response as well who shared, "I think it [society] also does glorify women that are breaking gender barriers or the stereotypes, just because we like to be progressive and not to be repressive." Gina shared, "I just really get the strong independent woman vibe." Focus group participant Lynda echoed this societal message of women's empowerment,

> I think it just really depends on who you talk to but I think more recently for the less
> conservative side of things people are pushing for women to be in the work fields,
> from the documentaries I've seen and that sort of things which I mean I think it's great
> I think we should have women leaders and so I kind of like that there's been a little bit
> more push for women to be educated and not rely on a man to support them
> financially.

The women did not express many personal sentiments related to their articulation of an empowering societal message for women. One woman's comments in a focus group suggested that women may enter Dayton concerned about the mixed gender role messages

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but that these concerns may be addressed through community programming. Elise shared the following thoughts in response to the question, "What messages have you received from the Dayton community about what it means to be a woman?"

> Empowerment. [others agree] In Clark, I hosted a women's event last night talking about identity and it was so fun to hear from Dr. Green and Jennifer Gavison and Dr. Muller (all faculty names are pseudonyms) and a lot of questions with the dichotomy and a lot of freshman women are struggling with that at Dayton; what do I do because you hear you are empowered and I definitely feel that and obviously the egalitarian view of women in the church and that's a common issue and it's very prevalent here; I feel like pushing women to believe in themselves and to find your identity and to understand that you can do things and that we are able to pursue what the Lord has gifted us and that we are encouraged to and I think faculty come alongside you and support you in that so I think it's a very empowering culture with some conflictions [sic] between certain male perspectives and students that are adverse and certain male perspectives that can make the conversation appear different.

Elise eluded to the idea that there may be some resistance to the message of women's empowerment within the Dayton community from male students, who may expect women to stay at home.

The data reflected that one possible outcome of the women's empowerment narrative is a stigma against becoming a stay at home mom. This idea was referenced earlier in response to women's comments in the card sort regarding their low placement of the "Stay at home with kids" card. When reflecting on the gender role messages that she has received from society, Victoria shared,

Well from what I've experienced, the people in my life have had pretty high

expectations of what women can do and can be. And a lot of the women in my life in

general have been very driven and wanted to pursue careers that were pretty

ambitious and that they loved. Yes, so I would say, yes I had a pretty strong exposure

to people who think that women should have equal opportunities and shouldn't just

get married and have children and be a stay-at-home mom.

Interviewee Rebecca shared, "I would say that I feel more expectation to go and do something for myself and you know, make myself something but not to an overwhelming amount." In response to being asked about a possible pressure for women to do it all and do it all well, Rebecca shared that she does feel this message from society and that,

I think it has affected my pride and there's a pride thing with staying at home because

that says you, I don't know, are letting go of opportunities and I think that it would

take, I'm kind of going on rabbit trails, but I think it would be hard for me, it would

be a sacrifice that I'd have to work through to give that up for my kids.

Another participant built on this idea when she described what society expected women to do with their lives,

Seems like there are more stigmas around being a stay at home mom than there used

to be. If you say oh, I'm a stay at home mom, I'm a homemaker, there's a little bit of

judgment that goes on, what Dr. Essa might call societal invalidation or something,

like your role isn't really contributing. You just sit around and make crafts and

there… whenever someone says oh, my wife's a stay at home mom, there's always

some kind of… or some qualifier, like but she used to be a neuroscientist when she

was in grad school at an ivy league. This literally happened the other day, and

someone was like what does your wife do. Oh, she's a stay at home mom but she

used to so and so. So that's kind of interesting. So obviously society doesn't expect

them to do that, and women who pursue careers in science and medicine, I would say,

are very well respected.

The women in this study seemed to limit consideration of a possible "Stay at home with

kids" self due to gender role attitudes that stigmatize such a future aspiration. Women may

anticipate having a family and staying at home with kids, however, this possible self may not

be articulated in light of negative social stigmas.

Wife/Mother

While a minority perspective, eight of twenty-five women (32%) articulated that

gender role beliefs, particularly at Dayton or in the Evangelical Christian community still

preference women's role as a wife or mother. Elise shared,

In the Christian field especially I would say stay at home and be a mom and a wife

instead of anything else and that's something I've had to learn to grow in my opinion

of because it's something that's very traditional in my church and I really respect it

and I don't see anything bad about it but as most of us have put, stay at home; I think

we value having children but not necessarily giving up everything; it's not giving up

everything; it's such a touchy subject but being able to pursue other things with

children.

In response to being asked what society expects women to do with their lives, Faith, a focus

group participant and aspiring doctor, suggested,

It's the idea of the woman always, like she still needs to be able to take care of

everything at home and all that is also more common in the more conservative

Christian circles especially in the idea of women being submissive to your husbands

and stay at home type of stuff cause in the church I grew up in I heard that a lot and

people would be like, oh, you want to be a doctor and I was like yeah, [laughs] so I

feel like it also depends on what you mean and who you are talking about.

The gender role messages these women articulated about being a wife or mother tended to

originate in their homes or communities prior to arriving at Dayton. Regarding what gender

role messages she received, Wendy shared,

I think in the context that I had grown up in, like suburban context that I've grown up

in, stay at home mom with maybe a part time job, involved at her kids school doing

PTA or something like that, that's what it's called right? Being a great cook, baking a

lot, um taking your kids to soccer, some sport, you know.

At Dayton, gender role pressures seemed to exist for some women regarding getting

married. When asked what others at Dayton expect women to do with their lives, Yasmine

described a pressure that she feels is salient in the community and gave an example of a

student returning from a week-long spring break service program at the college,

Get married. It's huge. Whether people believe or not which is everyone. There's a

joke that you know, "ring by spring" is a joke. And it's like we all laugh but secretly,

a girl comes back from the week with a crush and ends up getting married. Yeah,

there's a lot of pressure to get married.

Focus group participant Amanda, similarly explained the pressure to get married in the

Dayton community,

There's this obsession with wedding culture and it's like everyone people like

Pinterest and my roommate got married and she's always on Pinterest, which is great

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because you need to plan for your wedding but still, it's like there is that culture of

weddings or like I don't know, so that can be another rhetoric coming just from

people who are at the place that they are getting married but like Elise said, maybe

putting that pressure on people who aren't in the place to get married that can be

another conversation thing.

While Quinn did not internalize the pressure to get married, she did identify marriage as a

focus for her peers,

I definitely have a number of friends who are husband hunting and see themselves

being stay at home moms or something, or leaving their careers and marrying well so

that they can do that because I think that's what a lot of their moms did or wanted to

do or tried to do or something.

The data suggested that women who come from more conservative Evangelical families or

churches may be particularly inclined to feel gender role pressures to become wives or

mothers. Additionally, gender role pressures to get married may exist within the student

subculture at Dayton College. These gender role pressures may cause some women to shift

their hoped for selves temporarily away from career pursuits in favor of finding a spouse or

getting married.

Summary of Gender Role Belief Response Themes

The participants in the current study had little difficulty identifying the gender role

messages they perceive from society and their Evangelical college regarding what women are

expected to do with their lives. The beliefs they articulated were heavily focused on

expectations for women's success in the workplace and in the home. Figure 4 depicts cross

case analysis frequencies of gender role belief response themes. While the women received

mixed messages from the institution regarding gender role beliefs, there was an overarching sense of empowerment paralleled by a pressure for women to be successful in all realms. These pressures contributed to women's salient fears of settling for less than what they hoped for. Table 4 depicts gender role response themes and categories based on frequencies of occurrence. The most common response themes categorized as *general* were mentioned by at least 15 of the 25 participants and included the pressure to be superwoman and the mixed gender role messages the women received from their institution. A *typical* gender role belief, mentioned by 13 participants, was a theme of women's empowerment. Finally, less typical and considered *variant* was the theme of women's role as a wife or mother. The data suggested that gender role beliefs have a strong influence on Evangelical Christian college women's possible selves. The following section will describe additional factors that emerged within this study that influenced the participants' possible selves.
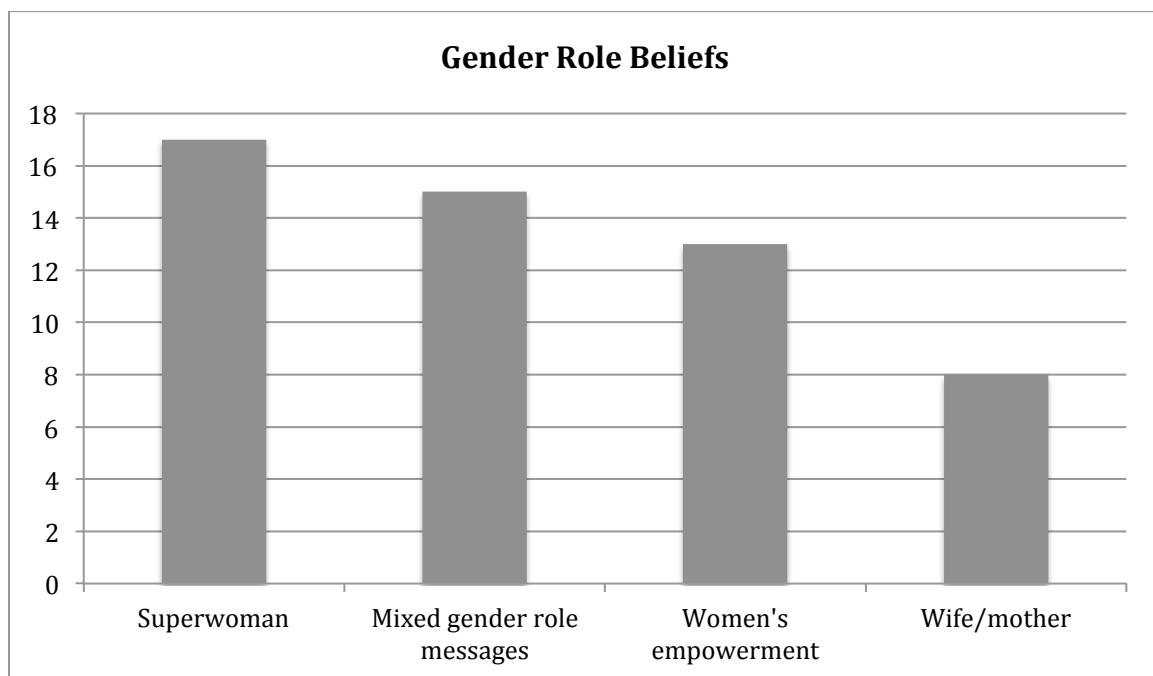

Figure 4. Cross case analysis frequency of responses of gender role belief themes (n = 25).

Table 4

Gender Role Belief Response Themes and Cross Case Analysis Frequency of Occurrences

Response themes	Frequency of Occurrences
Superwoman (17)	General
Mixed gender role messages (15)	General
Women's empowerment (13)	Typical
Wife/mother (8)	Variant

Additional Influences on Women's Possible Selves

The third and final research question guiding the current study focused on exploring what factors beyond gender role beliefs influence the development of college women's possible selves. The researcher sought to understand other primary factors influencing the subjects' thinking about the future. The literature review suggested that primary influences on college women's future aspirations may include self-efficacy beliefs, stereotype threat, significant others, and religious beliefs. Three out of four of these factors emerged as themes in the current study, with the exception of stereotype threat, which might have been difficult to detect since all of the data was self-reported by women who may not have intentionally reflected on this type of indirect threat. In the context of the focus groups, a few preliminary themes emerged including the influence of family expectations, faculty encouragement, and study abroad experiences on women's possible selves. These factors were more directly queried in the individual interviews. Overall data showed that the majority of participants (76%) were influenced by faculty and family members, followed closely by study abroad experiences (68%), and faith beliefs (52%). A lesser, though still salient theme was self-efficacy concerns, specifically the presence of self-doubt or mental health issues, experienced by 44% of the participants. These five themes will be discussed in the following section.

Family

Nineteen of twenty-five women identified family as primary influencing factor in the ways that they thought about the future. The data suggested that family influenced women's future thinking through role modeling (56%), through their expectations about the women's futures (48%), and through their encouragement (32%). The way that the participant's parents lived their lives influenced the way that these women conceived of their own futures. Consistent with the literature, parents are key players in women's self-authorship because their perspectives and experiences shape women's future plans (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005).

The data indicated that parents' experiences shaped the way that these women considered their futures. Bianca reflected,

My mom was the only working mom in our neighborhood so a lot of this is like her reflecting on all of her friends who now have no kids in the house and have no skills and no degree and nothing to do with their lives versus my mom who has had a job for my whole life; it's hard for me to separate my views about women working or being in the home from her views because of being the only family that did it that way in the community that we grew up in.

In her case, Bianca saw her own mom working outside of the home and it influenced the way she envisioned using her own gifts and talents in the workplace. Similarly, Halle was influenced by her mother's work experiences,

I really respect my mom for, I mean she took some time off while she was a mom of young kids and she took some time off with me, but she is a very driven career woman and she is a radio talk show host and she pulled herself up by her bootstraps and came from very, very poor beginnings and was able to make something of herself

and so I really respect that and I would hate to think that she worked so hard to get

where she is only so that I could sacrifice me having a good education and me having

all these having all these opportunities for me to be a stay at home mom.

Alternately, Phoebe was inspired by her mom who home-schooled her and her siblings,

I was home schooled growing up so my mom was very much a stay at home mom

and it worked very well in our family and so when I think about it I think, oh yeah,

that would just make sense.

Phoebe was one of the only participants in the study who expressed a primary hoped for self

as a stay at home mom.

In Wendy's case, she described how her mom chose to stay at home with her and her

brother and how she perceived that decision playing out in her family's household,

When my brother was born my mom quit working and decided to be a stay at home

mom and I'm not sure my dad, I don't know. I'm not really sure how he felt about that.

Culturally that's a very normal thing to do but at the same time I think he kind of

judged her for not being able to do both.

Wendy expressed a very strong hoped for self as a successful career woman and could not

see herself staying at home if she had children. Isabelle described her family dynamics in the

following way,

My dad's like a genius; he has a Ph.D. in Electrical Engineering and I saw that my

older siblings didn't necessarily disappoint him but they really hurt him with the

struggles they were going through and I was like, 'I have to be the one, science, I will

do it' and that's kind of why I chose a science career; I thought I'm going to make dad

proud, I'm going to get the good career, I'm going to be able to support them when

they retire and that's still a major motivation for me and which is why I think I'm

having such a hard time finding a passion in science cause even though I'm good at it

because I have my dad's genes though that's probably not something that I would

have chosen to do if it wasn't for the circumstances I was placed in.

Isabelle's future career path was heavily influenced by her father's role model and by the

internalized pressure she felt to not let her father down, as she perceived her other siblings

had done. Other women expressed similar stories about how their parents' paths had shaped

their own thinking about the future.

The data also revealed that families shaped women's possible selves through their

expectations for their daughters. When the women perceived an expectation from their

family members to achieve a particular goal, that pressure could be received as both

motivating and daunting. For Gina, the expectations from her family felt daunting,

My sister is English/Theatre major kind of like came out of Dayton with zero lack of

motivation and so it's always just been like, alright Gina, you're going to support

everyone at retirement, it's like great, so you're in the sciences so because Jackie will

be the one to help out but you'll be the financial person so it's a lot of stress like that.

In Tammy's case, she felt a long-term calling to be a missionary in Africa, however her

grandmother regularly expressed an expectation for her to be serving locally in the United

States,

One of the hard things is my… one of my sides of grandparents, my Grandma keeps

saying, Tammy, the girls need you here. I tend to be kind of the role model type of

person for younger people. I'm an old… I'm oldest of four siblings; that's kind of my

personality and… or when I'm on a team. I mean I'm kind of mama duck, making

sure everything's going okay. And my Grandma just… she's mentioned a couple of
times Tammy, people need you here; people need you here. And that's been really
hard to hear, especially when it's… I'm not doing it just because I feel like I just want
to go over the fantasized version of mission work over in Africa.

The expectations Tammy experienced from her grandmother caused her to second guess her
own career interests.

For a few of the women, they shared that their parents expected them to pursue a
graduate degree. Most of these women seemed to align with their parents' expectations in
identifying a hoped for or expected self that included graduate school, although the timing
was not always consistent with the women's desires. For Lynda, she hoped to go back to
school however, she would have preferred to take some time off after college,

When you ask what I expect to be doing my answer almost changed because for me
the expectation from my parents is that I'll go and get my masters when I'm done
which is; I'm fine with because I want to be a therapist but there's no question of like
a gap year.

Meredith seemed to adopt her parents' expectation for her to go on to graduate school, "But I
think for most of my life my parents have always pushed me to go the grad school route and I
love school so I mean, I could definitely see that in my future."

While some women mentioned specific expectations family members had for their
futures, other women mentioned a more general pressure they felt from family and friends'
expectations,

It's hard because I think of other people in my life and what they want for me and I
feel like [others agreeing] what my parents would do or what my boyfriend would

want or what my friends would want and so thinking well I need to put this up here

because that's important to this person and it should be important to me and it's

amazing how others influence us and what impact that has on us. (Elise)

Bianca shared a similar sentiment that prioritizing hoped for selves was challenging due to

competing expectations from significant others in her life,

It's hard because we are so influenced by these experiences we're had and how others

have prioritized it and how my parents prioritized my list and how my grandma

prioritizes this list and I know how my boyfriend prioritizes this list and they're all

different for how they do it themselves and so how do I mirror those people and how

much have they influenced how I do myself and I think I can see that in here.

Family members' expectations for these women's futures influence the ways they conceive

of their hoped for, expected and feared selves. For some women, not living up to family

members' expectations would mean disappointment:

If I've failed to meet the expectations I've created in other people then I would feel

like a disappointment. They definitely do want me to have a stable career, preferably

two houses down from them, and start saving for retirement as soon as possible.

That's definitely what they want for me. (Quinn)

To a lesser degree, family members' encouragement served to influence the women's

thinking about the future. Phoebe shared,

I'm pretty close to my parents and they've always been super supportive of whatever I

choose to do so they'll you know, they kind of expect that I'm going to thrive in

whatever condition I'm in for my future.

Victoria shared an inspiring narrative about the way that her parents encouraged her thinking about the future,

> I think my parents really instilled a sense of, I don't know, kind of a go-getter mentality in me. They were very good enablers in that sense. They really let me know that I am capable and competent and if I put my mind to something and follow through with it and work hard then I can most likely do it if it's not outrageous. And yes, they really encouraged me and listened to me when I talked about my interests. And I think they were really hesitant to put any concrete expectations of a career path or anything so they really let me have free reign in choosing what I like to do. And even when I kind of expressed that I was feeling direction-less and didn't really know what I was passionate about, they were really careful not to kind of I don't know slip in their own passions and try to direct me themselves. They just kind of helped me to stand on my own two feet without doing it for me.

This type of encouragement was reflected in Uma's experience with her family as well,

> They [family] want me to do something that I'll be successful in but at the same time it's like, it's not always going to be about success it's got to be about something you love doing too. So definitely my family is very encouraging and they want their kids and grandchildren to actually go to school and get educated. . . I think it's like just knowing that people want you to be successful and reach your goals. I feel like having them at my base is really supportive.

Uma went on to share that one specific interaction with a family member had inspired and encouraged her current career goal to become a paralegal and possibly a lawyer,

When I was 5 or 6, my uncle had told me that he wanted me to continue school and

he wanted me to go into the law field so I think that most of my influence comes from

him and then he passed away a couple of months after that. So, I have a video of him

telling me that and I think that's just one of the biggest things that pushes me because

he saw something in me at that young of an age and I thought maybe that's what I'm

supposed to be doing and then when I started taking classes and learning about it I

thought that's what I actually want to do and so I think he has the biggest influence

from when I was younger.

While only one-third of the participants specifically mentioned family encouragement as a

factor in their thinking about their future, it is likely that many of the women experienced

supportive and encouraging family dynamics that enabled them to be in college in the first

place.

Faculty

Of all of the influences mentioned by the participants the most compelling and

profound stories were those of faculty members encouraging women's future selves. Much of

the encouragement faculty provided was of a general nature where the students simply knew

the faculty members believed in them, saw their gifts and talents, and encouraged them to use

those talents in future careers. For example, Victoria described the encouragement she felt

from one of her faculty members,

She also just helped me to kind of, I don't know, I guess implicitly too but just

believed in me. Yes, that really was a beautiful thing for a student who wants to

launch herself out. So I think that professors that believe in you are giving students a

really rare gift and I think that helps them go a really long way because yes it's just - I

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mean someone so accomplished, like Dr. Caldwell has done so much and someone

like that seeing something in you and seeing that potential and confirming it is so

powerful to me.

In a similar way, Rebecca expressed the encouragement she felt from her professors to be

able to achieve her future goals,

But there have been faculty that have been encouraging like go do the best that you

can do whatever that is; not specifically being at home or being a boss or something

but challenging us to go out there and like live fully and do whatever that is fully.

Focus group participant Bianca felt so encouraged by her professors that she jokingly

questioned whether faculty were programmed to share the same encouragement with

everyone,

There are definitely faculty who I want to think if they are telling me these

encouraging things because they actually see these things in me and it's not their job

to tell me these things, you know [laughing] and sometimes you wonder, everyone

here is so smart and successful, do all the professors tell them all these amazing

things?

The literature suggested that faculty frequently play a key role in supporting women

students, particularly in STEM fields (Rayman & Brett, 1995). Two particular women's

narratives reflected that women at Dayton felt supported by faculty in their pursuit of science

careers. Isabelle, a physics major, shared,

A lot of my friends who went into the sciences who are women at other colleges have

been discouraged because of the faculty and they just don't feel valued and people are

like, 'oh, you're going to get married and get pregnant and drop out so you're not

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really worth it in our program'; at least I don't take a lot of other science courses other

than Physics, but Dr. Joly in physics is like, totally a feminist; [all laughing] it's great

to have like, have that support and I know that he'll probably be a support system of

mine for a really long time and just to feel valued in like that I am smart and I can

make a difference even though I'm a woman, which is what my friends hear a lot at

other colleges so I think that's like, I think I can't speak for other faculty in other

science programs but I think at least for the Physics ones they're very accommodating

and they value women as much as they value the men which I think is a big factor

too.

Faith reflected on the support she experienced in the Biology department while pursuing a

career in medicine,

Dr. Bithell starts a lot of his semesters talking about how, cause we always do a

history of Biology in whatever subject we're talking about, and he says, yes, they're

all white men, but that's hopefully not how the future will be, but he says a lot about

the systemic reasons why women haven't had the opportunities to make these

discoveries but that we need to be changing that in science today and he makes that

point so clear and I've always felt so supported by all of the Biology faculty and now

I consider a lot of them friends.

The encouragement women felt was not limited to the sciences. In fact, women of all

academic majors expressed encouragement from faculty members, and some expressed

career specific support and encouragement,

I have another professor who used to be a consultant, which is what I want to be, and

he's been a huge part of my life; I've had three classes with him just in the last year.

He's also the advisor for my club. And yeah, I've gotten to talk to him a lot, and I

think he's helped give me a realistic view of the industry and the tasks and the

workload, and advice about how to get in a little bit. And yeah, who he is has also

helped shape my understanding of the industry and the type of person that succeeds in

it. (Quinn)

Dayton College may be particularly well suited to provide the types of faculty-student

relationships that positively influence women's possible selves for the future. As an

undergraduate and residential institution with a faculty/student ratio of 12/1 students are

encouraged to get to know faculty outside of the classroom and faculty are supported in

investing in students' lives both at Dayton and beyond.

Some of the participants in the study expressed that faculty influenced their future

thinking through their expectations for the women or as role models. Focus group member

Bianca shared,

It's a very high achieving environment, yeah, but I think not facetiously so, I think it's

an authentic investment in individuals, in each student and actually cultivating that

person to figure out what their strengths are and encouraging them once they've kind

of figured themselves out more and the process is still happening.

Yasmine described her experience with a Communications professor,

Dr. Cipriano says before her class she says, 'I am actively trying to destroy the

student that I was.' And so she says, 'I will seek you out and yeah, we may get along

really well but I'm going to ruin you if you don't like,' she's like, 'I will not let you

do what I did.' So yeah, there's this, I really respect professors who will push their

students really hard and you know, not give out an easy A – which I don't think there

are any professors at Dayton that do that.

This female student's experience with her faculty member demonstrated her professor's

commitment to students' long term thriving. This professor expected students to learn from

her own past errors and held students to that standard thus encouraging women's future

pathways.

As role models female faculty members were identified for their ability to balance

work and family life. Victoria identified her advisor as a role model that encouraged her own

future goals,

I don't think that the two [work and family] have to conflict. Like, Dr. Cuno has two

kids and a husband and she is a part-time therapist and a part-time professor and I

don't know, she makes it all work. So you can definitely have both.

The data reflected that faculty particularly influenced the ways that participants envisioned

their hoped for selves, encouraging ambitious future career goals and participation in

graduate programs.

Study Abroad

The most surprising and unexpected theme of influence that arose in the study was

the impact of study abroad or off campus experiences on the ways that participants

considered their futures. At Dayton College, about 70 percent of students spend a semester

off campus or overseas. Study abroad programs transformed the ways that the participants

thought about the world and therefore, their place in the world. These programs also raised

important existential questions that frequently re-oriented women's future paths.

Study abroad transformed the ways that participants thought about their lives and the world in a variety of ways. Some of the women's reflections were more general in nature,

I studied abroad in Mexico and that was life changing and just the people that you come in contact with and the surprises that you have in each of the interactions with different people; and it's a very transformative experience. (Elise)

For Rebecca, her experience studying abroad in Mexico awakened a cultural love that shaped the ways she envisioned her future path,

I realized a love for seeing people different from me and I liked, I discovered that I love that challenge of pushing myself to know other people and it's very rewarding to know different kind of people and I don't know if I would want to move back necessarily but I know that it did kind of awaken my cultural love or a love for cultures and encouraged my love of learning languages. I LOVE learning languages and it's very rewarding to feel like you can enter into someone's world through another language it's really powerful.

While these women's experiences studying in Mexico did not translate directly into a particular hoped for or expected future self, the transformation in their ways of thinking and the passions the experience awakened in them were salient enough to discuss as women reflected on their future pathways. For example, Yasmine's experiences in Istanbul and in Ireland inspired the ways she conceived of her future,

Yeah, it really made me recognize the privilege that I have and also now that I have this knowledge and if I have the ability to travel and change the world and help people in conflict and reconciliation; that's totally something I want to do and I love traveling and so yeah.

For some of the women, their experiences abroad strengthened their sense of self-efficacy as they navigated complex challenges on their own. Sarah grew up abroad and has traveled extensively since then. As she reflected on her abroad experiences she shared,

I grew up partially overseas so I'm a third culture kid and my parents were missionaries in both Costa Rica and Honduras growing up so I went to school in Honduras and I have traveled extensively since then and I've lived on my own in Madrid and 45 minutes outside of Paris. . . I'd say that that has had really important implications for my future but more fundamentally that was really defining in terms of who I am even now, which of course plays into who I'm becoming and who I'll be in the future. So I would say that living overseas has been really formative in terms of my identity which indirectly influences career path stuff.

Zoey discussed how her experience in Northern Europe developed her confidence in her problem solving skills,

So you are there alone and you've got to catch a train and you've got to figure it out. And you know, you realize you're a competent person and you figure it out. And that's a huge thing to learn about yourself. It is so often that you do have those kind of like, well I'll just Google it or I'll call my parents or whatever. And it was 'nope.' You use as much Greek as you can and figure it out. And that was a huge learning experience for me. And it continued when I was in northern Europe, being comfortable, trying to act as a community and problem-solve through those things. I think that's the major thing, it didn't really affect my – as far as future goes, I think that's a huge thing to know about yourself going into your future because it means that even if there are no resources around you, you have a lot of resources that you've

accumulated through yourself like you're not living at Dayton but all the things

you've learned from Dayton are still acting as knowledge and skills that can help you

navigate in the future even if the safeguards of Dayton aren't there.

The data suggested that women who study abroad may be better equipped with the

confidence needed to approach unknown situations in the future. Victoria developed a

strengthened ability to sit with complexity and unanswered questions through her off campus

experience in San Francisco,

So I guess being there also kind of gave me a more dynamic way of thinking about

the world I think. I think San Francisco really helped me become more able to sit with

complexity instead of having an absolute right or wrong or, yes. I definitely, I guess I

never really saw the world as black and white completely but even less so after San

Francisco. Like a, it really taught me to critically think and not just take anything, I

mean yes not just soak everything up like a sponge or take it a face value but to really

grapple with something and that there really are no easy answers to the big questions.

One of the most profound influences of study abroad on women's possible selves was

the way it shifted their way of thinking about what was most important in life. Wendy

studied in Uganda where she witnessed her value and identity was derived from who she

was, rather than what she did for the first time in her life,

When I was in Uganda there was no way I could show people my resume and explain

what it actually meant and what I've done. Here, I've had two internships; I'm always

in student leadership. I have a good resume, I really do I know that and that is such a

big source of pride. And I didn't have that in Uganda and my family didn't like me

because they thought I was smart. They liked me because they thought I was funny

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and because I was thoughtful. And because I would go get water from the well when we needed it and already like I'm slipping back into the same ways of measuring myself and others which is so sad so just seeing people for people I wish I could do that better and I think that will be a lifelong struggle.

For Halle, her interest in science lost some of its value after studying abroad in Spain where her love for cultures blossomed,

Well, I studied abroad and that threw a huge wrench into my life and I really developed a passion for Spanish and cross cultural communication and just I don't know, racial issues, ethnic issues, so many different things and yeah, I fell in love with Mexican culture because that's where I lived and living a different lifestyle than the lifestyle in the US so going abroad again has become a passion of mine and just I don't know, yeah, I just feel like my passions shifted and I'm still interested in sciences and I'm still interested in kinesiology but I don't know, I feel like I've lost its value a little bit or its value has gone down for me in terms of what's really important in life.

Faith described a similar experience studying abroad in Spain where she began to question her life-long goal to be become a physician, after discovering a very person centered Spanish culture. She feared a medical career might mean living to work, rather than working to live. However, Faith found a compromise in her future plans by pairing public health with medicine. She shared,

My time in Spain that has completely shaped my entire outlook on everything . . . my time in Bolivia and Spain really set in stone both my desire to go into medicine and my desire for public health and my desire to do both of those with, and in Spanish

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speaking communities and so now I really want to focus on preventative medicine

around the border and it's like those two things were very informative in shaping that,

shaping my appreciation for Latin cultures regardless of what country they are; like

not just Chilean or Spanish but all of them and yeah, just have really shaped where I

want to be in the US and what I want to be doing and how I want to be seeing and

prioritizing my life and how I want to be doing that.

These women's study abroad experiences transformed the ways that they thought about the

world and how they would contribute to the world in the future.

Study abroad experiences also raised important unanswered questions for various

participants. For Wendy, her time in Uganda caused her to ask,

What are we actually going to these Christian liberal arts colleges for; really so we

can do the same thing as everyone else. Climb the social ladder, right? Except with a

Christian perspective? So what difference does that perspective make? And are we

willing to say no to let's say, a raise or a promotion so that we can stay in the same

place we've always been and stay faithful to that community? And so they have this

phrase called 'succeeding the empire.' Are you willing to succeed the empire and not

subscribe to what's normal? So that's been really challenging coming home. I'm

having a mini-existential crisis.

Gina described her experience in Europe where she had time and space to find a separation

from the busyness of life on campus,

I enjoyed my time and saw so many cool things like the culture there until I got back

to Dayton and was just like, alright, so here we go, what are you going to do now and

I was in this like big slump and was struggling through so much . . . but studying

abroad definitely was the big eye opener.

For Quinn, her study abroad experience in Haiti raised poignant questions about privilege

and caused her to question how she might use her gifts to meet some of the world's needs,

Well I mean Haiti was a pretty powerful trip, definitely stirred a lot of thoughts about,

I don't know, silly things I guess, like white privilege and things that I was… I

needed to find a way to deal with somehow because they felt problematic. Like I

couldn't really live comfortably knowing what I have that was just completely

undeserved and unearned when they work 50 times as hard as me and have barely

enough to eat once a week. That was extremely difficult. And it was also difficult to

understand how they didn't want our help; they hated us just because we were rich

and white, that prevented us from being able to help them sometimes. It was

extremely difficult. So it's definitely still something that I think about, trying to figure

it out to figure out what I can do with my life to somehow reconcile that cognitive

disjunct I guess.

Finally, for Zoey, she spent most of her life planning for a career in domestic policy work,

however after traveling internationally, she reconsidered her domestic trajectory,

This past year I've done a lot of travelling internationally, and a lot of my just free

time has been sucked into interesting parts of policy that I wasn't expecting that are

internationally focused which has been totally opposite to what my entire education

has been previously. So I don't know if that's going to impact what I end up wanting

to work in, if I end up working internationally or in something else. So it hasn't really

changed my plans but it has thrown me in a different direction within that spectrum of opportunity.

Study abroad experiences had a profound influence on the way that the participants considered their future trajectories by transforming their thinking and raising important existential questions about life and their interaction with the world. These experiences appeared to broaden women's hoped for selves and enriched their sense of self-efficacy.

Faith

Faith was another significant influence on the women's development of possible selves. Thirteen of twenty-five participants (52%) identified their faith in God as an important element of how they thought about the future. The women's faith served as an anchor as they considered uncertainties in their future paths. Faith also oriented some of the women to a service mindset. Phoebe discussed how her faith served as an anchor,

> My faith kind of just anchors me to a peace and to Christ and so I know that whatever happens ultimately I will be with the Lord and that relationship will continue and He kind of has my back and so sometimes my thoughts start to spiral into 'I don't know where I'm going to live and what I'm going to do and if I'm going to have any friends' and I can always come back to ahh, but of course if Jesus is with me it's all going to be ok. My faith kind of provides an anchor.

When asked if her faith has influenced her thinking about her future, Zoey responded,

> It [faith] comes into play a lot just because uncertainty pushes you towards wanting some kind of certainty and God can kind of be that constant. And I guess, in the long term, that's where I put my faith that I know that I'm consciously pursuing God's will

for me and if I'm doing that then eventually God's plan is going to be revealed and

that's kind of where my faith in the long term kind of comes I think.

A few of the women shared that thinking about their future necessarily involves trusting in

God's goodness and His provision for their lives,

It's impossible for me to think about my future without thinking about how, you

know, like vocation or how listening to God's calling and that I've, especially this

week – I don't know what the deal is with the end of the year but especially this week

I've come to realize I don't know how I could survive without having a god to trust

in. And, you know, praying for discernment about direction I'm going to take. So,

yeah, it has entirely influenced how I think about my future and sort of even my

ability to accept the path that I'm called to or the path that I go down. (Yasmine)

Faith in God also helped some women to prioritize people and service in their future

thinking. For Quinn, her faith redirected her attention to people and relationships:

Well when I think about my life, I see it as very short and transient, and there are

certain things that I need to prioritize that I wouldn't naturally want to prioritize, but

because I know that I only have a few short years to be here, I think we've been

taught what the most important things are by the Bible and, yeah, definitely feel the

desire to make those priorities.

Quinn elaborated on the elements she had prioritized for her future in light of her faith: "The

things I wouldn't naturally prioritize. People, family, relationships. I mean they're important

to me and I like them, but I think if I didn't have an eternal mind I wouldn't care as much."

For other women, faith naturally directed their future paths toward service. Olivia put

it succinctly when she said, "I put I aspire to be involved in serving my community as first

because I think of all of them [cart sort items] that's the thing that Jesus calls us most to do." Similarly, Carolyn shared, "I was raised in church and I was raised with a heavy influence and toward serving others and being really active in volunteer work and things like that." For many of the women, their orientation to service was directly correlated with their faith. When Tammy was asked what had most influenced her thinking about her future she shared,

> I'd say my Christian education has been a huge one. And you're called to serve;
> we're called… some people are called specifically to go out, and I think that was
> huge. And I think God and the Holy Spirit has really shaped my heart towards that.

For Isabelle, her faith not only oriented her toward service but it also shaped her desire to become an expert in her field in order to give qualifications that would lend support to her belief in God,

> But I want to be serving other people in some way and bring the light of God to other
> people through what my career is and that's one of the reasons I want to get a
> doctorate because I want to say, hey, my qualifications are just as good as yours and
> so you can't tell me that I don't have reasons to believe in God because I have the
> same qualifications as you.

Faith served to influence the women in this study by serving as an anchor in a time of uncertainty and by orienting women's future hoped for selves toward service.

Self-Efficacy Concerns

Eleven of twenty-five participants (44%) expressed self-efficacy concerns in the form of self-doubt or mental health issues. While most of the women experienced strong support and encouragement from faculty and family, at times they doubted their own ability to live

up to these expectations. When Bianca was asked if she believed she could achieve her hoped for selves, she responded,

> Sometimes I think I can totally do that right and at other times I think I'm not prepared at all to do any of that; who am I to be telling other people how to do something? I am still, I have a lot to learn still myself. I can't start teaching other people yet. It's encouraging that other people see strengths in you but it's also frustrating when I don't always see them in myself or I feel like I have an expectation to live up to that I don't know if I can reach; like ohh, my professors think I can do this; my parents think I can; sometimes I think I can but other times I think I'd feel miserably and not even try.

When Karen thought about the future, she was primarily overwhelmed and doubted that she could be successful in her future endeavors,

> I think I'd say overwhelming because I mean I guess I was trying to find a word that could kind of describe both because half of the time I'm so worried and it can kind of turn into feeling like I'm inadequate in terms of like, oh my gosh, I'm not going to be able to do the things; you know, I'm going to be just like sleeping on my parents' couch, you know.

One of the focus group participants, Olivia, had difficulty identifying her hoped for selves, since she struggled in the past defining herself by what she did and not by who she was which yielded self doubt, "I think I struggle with this question because I want to define it in what I do and not in who I am and I've learned that that can be problematic in my own self esteem."

For other women self-efficacy concerns emerged as a result of mental health issues such as anxiety disorders, depression, and bipolar disorder. Three of the twenty-five women (12%) openly shared about their struggles with mental health disorders. All three participants were science majors. Halle, a kinesiology major shared,

> I've been suffering from a lot of depression this past year and that has completely changed my self confidence in sciences and my natural skill set is not in the sciences but I chose science to kind of prove to myself that I could do it and I was interested in it and I just yeah, I wanted to push myself and challenge myself in that and so just my self efficacy is really taken a hit in this last year.

Similarly, Gina, a chemistry and biology major expressed that her confidence was undermined due to her anxiety,

> I've just recently been medicated for anxiety so I've just been not like I've just been kind of out of it and no way of not being able to; just lacking confidence in everything I used to be good at and not really sure.

This type of self-doubt led women to question their hoped for selves and at times yielded the emergence of a feared self characterized by failure. And while more rare, serious mental health disorders were particularly influential in the ways that women considered future possible selves as was the case with Sarah, a physics major,

> But more specifically what has affected my thoughts about career is what of I kind of alluded to earlier about health stuff. That's the biggest factor and honestly the biggest limitation and obstacle that I have to not only think realistically about but that does affect what I choose to do . . . I have bipolar 1 so I take medication and I'm like a

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pretty seriously disabled person in that regard, although I'm very high functioning and

normally do really well, there are really high stakes for making bad choices.

The data from the current study supports the literature suggesting that self-efficacy concerns

influence college women's aspirations by limiting women's confidence in their ability to

achieve hoped for selves and by bolstering the salience of feared selves.

Summary of Influence Themes on Possible Selves

The two most commonly referenced influences on college women's possible selves

were family and faculty members. (See Figure 5 and Table 5 for frequency of occurrence of

influence response themes & categories). The high frequency of occurrence at which women

identified the influence of family and faculty members led to its categorization as a *general*

theme. Family and faculty members influenced women through the expectations they held

for the women, through the encouragement they offered to the women, and through role

modeling particular lifestyles or traits that the women either hoped to emulate or to avoid.

Another salient, albeit unexpected influence on women's future thinking was their study

abroad experiences and the ways these experiences transformed the women's ways of

thinking as well as the questions they raised for these women. This response theme was also

categorized as *general*, as it was mentioned by 17 of 25 participants. Faith was identified as a

key influence by 13 of 25 participants and is therefore considered *typical*. The women's faith

in the current study served as an anchor as they considered uncertain future paths and it

oriented them to a service mindset. Finally, self-efficacy concerns in the form of self-doubt

or mental health issues influenced 11 of 25 participants and undermined their belief in their

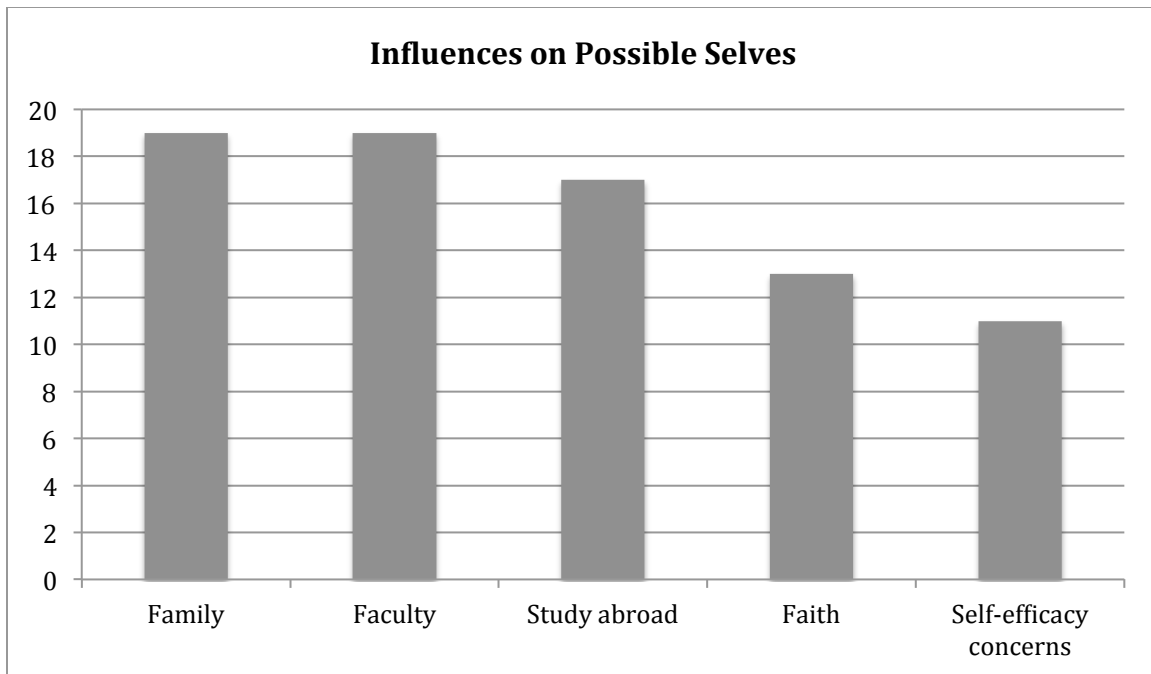ability to achieve hoped for selves. This theme is also considered *typical.*

Figure 5. Cross case analysis frequency of responses of influence themes (n = 25).

Table 5
Influences Response Themes and Cross Case Analysis Frequency of Occurrences

| Response themes	Frequency of Occurrences
Family (19)	General
Faculty (19)	General
Study abroad (17)	General
Faith (13)	Typical
Self efficacy concerns (11)	Typical

Visual Representation of Research Findings

The general research findings in the current study could be represented through

Figure 6: Visual representation of research findings. The figure's circular shape above a

cross represents the standard symbol for women indicating that the study was conducted with

women. The eye embedded within the circle is symbolic of the study's focus on women's eye

toward the future through the construct of possible selves. Within the eye to the future,

women's hopes, expectations and fears are identified. Fears are placed in the middle

representing the salient role they play in women's thinking about the future. Most women

expressed either mixed feelings about the future or primarily fears for the future. Few women

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expressed primarily hopes as they considered their futures. Hopes and expectations share the white of the eye indicating the common connections between women's hoped for and expected selves. For example, many women hoped and expected to get married and to have a family, and women hoped for specific careers while they expected to get jobs.

The terms listed in the circle surrounding the eye represent the primary influences on women's possible selves. The larger items in bold including faculty, family and gender role beliefs are the more influential themes with study abroad and self-efficacy concerns representing lesser influences. Faith is displayed on the bottom of the model to represent the role it plays serving as an anchor in many of the women's lives and directing their orientation toward future service. It is important to note that the placement of faith as a foundation does not indicate that it was the most influential factor. Figure 6 may be a good access point through which to discuss the research findings.
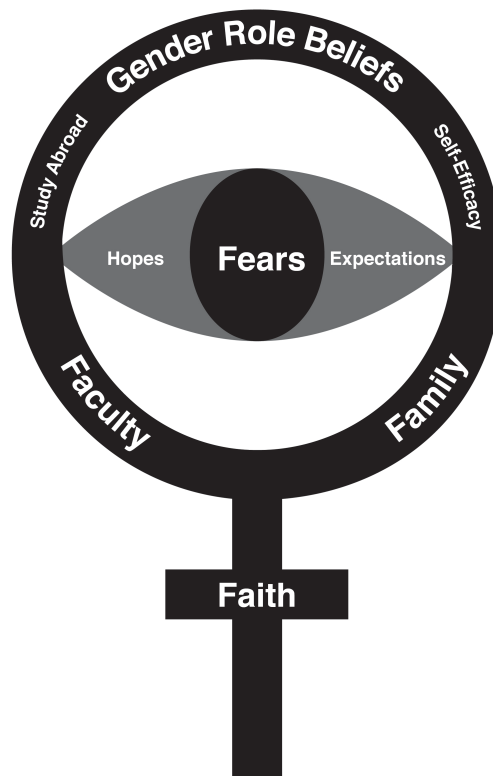
Figure 6. Visual representation of research findings

Chapter six that follows will discuss the results of the study in light of the theoretical framework, the literature review, and the three primary research questions guiding the study. The chapter will also suggest applications of the findings and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study sought to understand women's possible selves and influences on these possible selves at a Christian college. This chapter will discuss the researcher's synthesis and evaluation of the results of this study in light of the study's three research questions, the literature review, and the possible selves construct. The discussion will conclude with suggestions for applications of the research to practice and recommendations for future research.

Discussion of Major Themes

After reviewing the results of the current study, the researcher identified three major themes as well as three key unanticipated findings related to women's possible selves and the influences on these possible selves at Dayton College. Theme one describes the lack of leadership aspirations that the women articulated and possible rationale for the absence of a vision for leadership. Theme two articulates the role of faith in guiding and supporting women's future possible selves. Theme three discusses the highly influential role of family and faculty on the participant's future thinking. In general, the literature supports and corresponds with the patterns of these three themes.

Three key findings were not anticipated when the current study was created. The first finding was characterized by the high achievement expectations the women in this study experienced and the pressure they felt to quickly and effectively utilize their talents in the future. The second finding describes a deviation from traditional gender role beliefs. The women in the current study did not primarily identify traditional or complementarian gender role beliefs about women's role in the home, but rather were challenged and bolstered by gender role messages to do it all and do it all well. The third finding was that study abroad

experiences were a significant influence on the ways that women thought about their futures. The literature review did not suggest study abroad as a possible influence on women's achievement aspirations or on their possible selves.

Lack of Leadership Aspirations

The women in the current study were generally not aspiring to leadership. Eighty percent of the participants placed leadership aspiration cards in the bottom three of eleven aspiration cards behind career, family, marriage, adventure and service. Only two of twenty-five participants placed leadership in their top three aspirations. These findings are consistent with the literature suggesting that although women may be well suited for various leadership roles, they tend to lack aspirations for leadership (Ibarra, et al., 2013; Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Shore, et al., 2014; Hacifazlioglu, 2010).

Ibarra, et al.'s (2013) research found that the leadership identification process can be rapidly undermined in women due to subtle biases described as second-generation gender predispositions. These biases include a lack of good role models for women, gendered career paths and gendered work, women's lack of access to networks and sponsors, and double binds based on traditionally masculine ways of viewing leadership that exclude women. In the current study, the participants frequently referenced strong faculty encouragement and mentoring as well as support in pursuing both stereotypically male career paths (e.g. physics and business) and stereotypically female career paths (e.g. education and health care). The women appeared to have good role models and access to sponsors and they were encouraged to pursue a variety of gendered career paths. Although the women were encouraged to pursue and succeed in a variety of careers, this encouragement did not translate into leadership aspirations. Of the four second-generation gender biases noted in Ibarra, et al.'s study, the

double bind appeared to be the key factor limiting the participants from seeing themselves as leaders. In many cases, the women's leadership definitions necessarily excluded the ways that they envisioned the use of own gifts and talents. Their leadership definitions included telling others what to do, being the best, or being out front and independent. These stereotypically male traits associated with agency, autonomy and power were not compelling to the women in the study (Koenig, et al., 2011).

In the current study, many of the women discounted leadership placing it low in their aspiration card sort. However, when participants were asked about their placement of the card and how they defined leadership, a few women shared an immediate stereotypically masculine view of leadership that was self-excluding only to reconsider and broaden the definition to include themselves. The simple act of asking women to define leadership for themselves was a powerful tool for a change in perspective for some of these women. The implications of this finding will be discussed further in the applications section at the conclusion of this chapter.

The findings in the current study indicated a lack of appeal for leadership positions. Many of the participants had served in student and community leadership roles and expressed comfort and confidence in these roles, however, there was little desire or vision to pursue future leadership. Leadership positions were seen as acceptable if the women happened to land in the role or were asked to serve in these positions; however, pursing leadership was unappealing. One possible rationale is that the women in the current study were influenced by their Evangelical faith beliefs to value the virtues of humility, gentleness and patience, and these virtues may have been seen as antithetical to a vision of leadership that is based on fame, power and success. This is consistent with Saroglou, et al.'s (2004) study that found

religious people tend to favor values promoting tradition and benevolence and to dislike hedonism and values promoting self-enhancement. Many of the women's definitions of leadership alluded to an understanding of leadership based on an assertive and self-serving model. The women in the current study were largely drawn to serving others and the categories of service and leadership did not overlap in their minds. They seemed to lack the ability to see how leadership might inform or benefit their inclination to serve.

Another possible explanation for the lack of women's leadership aspirations in the current study could be a factor of the women's high achievement expectations and their correspondingly high fears of failure or settling for less than their hoped for selves. Leadership was generally viewed as an unnecessary addition to an already ambitious set of future goals for these women. Pursing leadership might equate to sacrificing goals in other areas such as family, career, or service, which the participants valued and prioritized. As described in chapter 1, Friedman and Weissbrod's (2005) study revealed that while college men and women were equally committed to work and family, women's family and career commitments were negatively correlated (i.e. commitment to family rose while commitment to career declined) whereas men's family and career commitments were positively related. While women in the current study did not necessarily articulate work as a barrier to active engagement with family, they did express concern about balancing the two perceived to be competing demands. With these concerns in mind, leadership was articulated as an unnecessary goal to an already high-perceived pressure to be superwoman and to do it all.

One of the key studies in the literature exploring college women's leadership aspirations identified the following four psychological variables as key predictors of leadership aspirations: connectedness needs, gender role beliefs, self-esteem, and fears of

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negative evaluation (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003). In Boatwright and Egidio's study, participants with higher connectedness needs expressed higher leadership aspirations. While not queried directly in the current study, the idea of community and a desire for connectedness to others was high among the participants. Participants frequently discussed their connections with professors and family members and some women mentioned a desire to find a close community after graduating. The desire for connectedness for the subjects was envisioned through service, family, and communities and did not appear to bolster leadership aspirations. While not conclusive, the data seemed to indicate that participants in the current study with high connectedness needs also had low leadership aspirations. In general individuals with an interest in strong and meaningful relationships with others may be more inclined to leadership than those who lack an interest in these relationships, however not all individuals desiring connectedness may naturally be drawn to leadership.

Self-efficacy was another psychological predicator of women's leadership aspirations in the Boatwright and Egidio (2003) study. Participants with higher self-esteem were more likely to identify leadership aspirations. It is possible that the women in the current study lacked the confidence to pursue or be successful in leadership. Self-efficacy beliefs including self doubt and mental health issues appeared to influence participant's possible selves and were mentioned as a concern to almost half of the subjects; however, self doubt did not appear to hold the participants back from aspiring to careers or expressing expectations to attend graduate school. So if self-esteem was a factor in limiting women's leadership aspirations in the current study, it was likely a concern in conjunction with other precipitating factors.

For participants in the current study, gender role beliefs, limiting definitions of leadership, high achievement expectations, and Evangelical faith beliefs appeared to contribute to the women's lack of leadership aspirations. However, more focused research on leadership aspirations is necessary to better understand the interactions between these factors.

Faith Foundation Guides and Supports

In the current study, the results of the demographic questionnaire (See Appendix C) indicated that the women unanimously agreed or strongly agreed that their Evangelical Christian faith was important to them. It was surprising that none of the women rated their faith as moderately, somewhat, or not important. These data gave an indication of the strong Evangelical Christian beliefs held by the participants in this study. The participants' faith beliefs substantially influenced their possible selves by serving as an anchor at an uncertain time in their lives and by orienting the women to a service mindset.

The women's hoped for self of serving others appeared to be a goal both motivated by and sanctified by the women's faith. As women described their desire to serve others, many mentioned the origin of this desire coming from messages they received from their churches, from other faith communities like Christian schools, or simply from knowing God and His will for their lives. This finding is consistent with prior research indicating that religion influences the value system by which life goals are selected, pursued and organized (Constantine, et al., 2006; Roberts & Robins, 2000; Saroglou, et al., 2004).

Duffy and Sedlacek (2007) suggested that future goal development for persons of faith depends on what God wants for an individual. In the current study, many of the women felt God's leading to serve others in some fashion in their future. The participants also articulated a hoped for self to continue to grow in their faith. Emmons (2000) found that the

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process of sanctification of goals could lead to a special significance and power for those goals including increased meaningfulness, attention to the goals, and fulfillment. The women in the current study prioritized service and faith growth as hoped for goals that had meaning beyond themselves because of their significance to God and to their Christian communities. Service in particular, was seen as a critical task because it meant contributing to something bigger than one's self. The data from the current study are consistent with the literature suggesting that faith guides future goal setting.

The women's faith not only oriented them to hoped for selves of serving others and growing in their faith but faith also served as an anchor for the women as they considered uncertain futures. The women expressed feeling a sense of peace in knowing that God was constant and good and loving and that He would provide for them. Some of the women mentioned relying heavily on prayers to God for discernment for the future. At times, this sense of peace and trust in God's provisions seemed to limit the women's active striving for career discernment. The students articulated a trust in God's providence but some women did not take that belief further to describe steps they were taking to pursue various life role options. It is possible that the women's sense of God's provisions might have led to complacency on some occasions, and to a lack of exploration of next career or life steps. However, it is also possible that the rigorous academic climate of Dayton and/or women's socioeconomic status played a part in the relative complacency some women articulated about their future paths. A link between trusting in God's provisions and complacency did not appear as in the literature review and would warrant further research.

Highly Influential Family and Faculty

The two most frequently mentioned influences on women's possible selves in the current study were family members and faculty. While these two influences were multi-faceted, they most compellingly served as a source of encouragement for women's hoped for possible selves. These findings are consistent with research showing that the primary markers of resiliency for women were other-orientated such as appreciation from others and support from friends and family (Christman & McClellan, 2012). In contrast Christman and McClellan's study found that men's primary markers of resiliency were found to be more self-oriented factors such as personal adaptability and exercise. Not once in the current study did the subjects mention personal adaptability or exercise as an influence on their future thinking in the midst of fears of an unknown future.

In the literature, family was consistently identified as a compelling influence on the development of young adults' achievement aspirations (Creamer & Laughlin, 2005; Li & Kerpelman 2007). In Creamer and Laughlin's (2005) research, parents were identified as key players in the development of women's future goals and self-authorship primarily because women trusted their parents to know them well. In the current study, the influence of parents and family was compelling, yet in a less direct manner than the literature suggests. For example, the women interviewed suggested that family influenced them primarily through role modeling and only secondarily through communicating expectations. The women were strongly influenced by their parents' career and life paths and women with mothers that worked outside of the home were regularly mentioned as role models for women in the current study.

The women in the current study were conscious of the expectations of significant others in their lives but did not always know how to prioritize others' hopes for their lives in light of their own future goals. Li and Kerpelman's (2007) study reported that young women with strong familial ties were upset if their parents disagreed with their future goals and the women were likely to change their opinions to reflect their parents' ideas. For a few of the subjects, their family member's expectations were inconsistent with their own aspirations and this was a source of stress and pressure for these women. While the women in the current study did not mention changing their own goals to align with parents' expectations, some did express a feared self of disappointing others and the existence of that fear suggested future action that might avoid disappointing others. It is unclear whether that means that these women might seek to align their goals with loved ones' expectations, to convince others' that their goals were more appropriate, or to pursue another course of action altogether.

A remarkable seventy-six percent of the women in the current study specifically identified faculty members as highly influential on their future thinking. Many women referred to faculty as part of the driving force behind their expected self of attending graduate school. It is possible that this percentage was artificially high due to selection bias. Subjects were selected based on recommendations from faculty members therefore all women in the study were personally known by at least one faculty member.

The influence of faculty members on the women at Dayton College was profound and perhaps somewhat unique. The institutional setting, a small, undergraduate, residential, liberal arts college is designed for students to have a high level of interaction with faculty both inside and outside of the classroom. Many professors live in campus housing adjacent to the campus and it is not unusual for faculty to invite classes of students over to their homes

for dinner. Students can frequently be found taking their professors to lunch through a program sponsored by the student government. The data suggested that these types of interactions are a significant source of encouragement for women's hoped for selves, particularly in the career and graduate school realms.

Much of the existing research exploring the influence of faculty on college women relates to women in STEM majors. A study by Rayman and Brett (1995) indicated that women who received positive encouragement from multiple significant others including faculty and mentors were more likely to persist in STEM fields. While STEM oriented women in the current study felt strongly personally encouraged and supported by their faculty, there also appeared to be a strong commitment on the part of STEM faculty members to broadly and intentionally encourage women in a public as well as a private manner through lectures and statements about the value of women in the sciences. The findings on the importance of faculty in encouraging STEM majors is consistent with the literature.

In the current study faculty were identified as important role models for the students, specifically female professors that had family commitments. Some female students pointed to female faculty mentors as evidence that they could pursue both career and family successfully. Tenenbaum, et al. (2001) found that mentors such as faculty can help promote career success by facilitating networking relationships and by modeling what it meant to be successful in a particular field. The faculty in the current study not only modeled what it meant to be successful in a field, but also what it looked like to successfully pursue a career and have a family. However, the participant's comments suggested that faculty leaned heavily toward empowering women to pursue career and graduate school goals and perhaps

did not spend sufficient time discussing how female students could successfully navigate pursuing career and family hoped for selves concurrently.

A 2008 meta-analysis of mentoring by Eby, et al. indicated that mentoring is more relevant to student attitudes and self-efficacy than specifically to aspirations or career outcomes. The current study suggested that faculty mentoring was critical to both self-efficacy and aspirations. Many women referenced the confidence they felt faculty imbued to them through faculty members' belief in these women's capabilities and this confidence translated into specific career hoped for selves as well as expectations to attend graduate school. These findings may not be applicable to larger institutions where faculty may not have the opportunity to invest as intentionally in women's lives and future thinking.

High Achievement Expectations

The first unanticipated finding of the study is that the women placed high expectations on themselves and felt various pressures to put their talents to work immediately after college to make a difference. Many women identified the hope to attain a specific career or the expectation to get a graduate degree within the next five years. Twenty of twenty-five participants (80%) expressed a fear of failure or settling in the future, particularly in the career realm. This drive to achieve is inconsistent with previous research indicating that women's drive to achieve tends to decline during college (Sax & Harper, 2007).

The findings from the current study indicating high achievement expectations for women suggest a significant aspirational change from Holland's extensive qualitative study of women's achievement aspirations at two colleges in 1990. Holland found that the majority of the women studied were leaving college with dramatically scaled back career aspirations in exchange for relationships and a focus on marriage. In Holland's study, the women

commonly succumbed to cultural pressures to base their value off of their physical

attractiveness and their ability to garner attention from the opposite sex. The current study

suggested movement in the opposite direction whereby the participants became more focused

on career and job success as they progressed through college. These differing findings may

be due to a number of factors including different institutional climates, different gender role

messages, different populations, or simply shifting cultural expectations. It is notable,

however, that the current findings emerged from an Evangelical liberal arts college where

more traditional, Biblical messages about women's roles in the home have historically been

paramount.

As articulated in chapter 1, a study by Friedman and Weissbrod (2005) revealed that

while college men and women were equally committed to work and family, women's family

and career commitments were negatively correlated (i.e. commitment to family rose while

commitment to career declined). In the current study the women articulated a desire to find

and achieve balance in their future related to work and family. Work did not appear to be in

conflict with family, however the gender role pressure to be highly accomplished and

successful in both realms as well as the pressure to be the primary care provider was

expressed as a tension and a barrier for the women. The current study extends the literature to

suggest that unrealistic gender role beliefs (i.e., to be superwomen) may underlie the tension

women feel related to dual work and family pursuits.

The possible selves literature suggested that women's self-concept is established in

and through important relationships and that females' possible selves include the views of

others including hopes that others have for them (Jordan, et al., 1991). In the current study,

the results indicated that the participants were strongly influenced by their relationships with

family and faculty members who in general, had high expectations for their lives. Family members expected women to pursue and achieve the goals they had set out for themselves and faculty encouraged the women to continue their education believing that they were strong and capable. It is not surprising that the women in this study seemed to adopt the hopes that significant others had for their lives. The outcome, however, was that many of the women felt anxious and fearful about the possibility of not achieving the goals they had identified. They were fearful of settling for less than what they hoped for.

The majority of the women expressed a compelling fear of settling for less than what they hoped for or failure to achieve their goals. These fears were more salient than hopes or expectations as women considered their futures. These findings are consistent with the literature suggesting that women articulate a bias toward feared selves and that these feared selves tend to be more highly salient to females than to males (Knox, et al., 2000). The gender role beliefs women in the current study articulated regarding societal pressures for women to be superwoman and to do it all well might have contributed to the feared selves that they expressed. The women expressed a pressure to be successful in both work and in family settings and in many ways that pressure felt unrealistic to these women.

In the current study, the women expressed more of a sense of agency with future work selves than with future personal or relational selves. While some women identified marriage or family as a hoped for self, many others did not, suggesting these relational selves were largely outside of their control or sphere of influence. These findings may be related to traditional gender role expectations within the Evangelical Christian subculture where men are expected to take the leadership role in relationships (Gallagher & Smith, 1999). This lack of agency with future work or relational selves may also be related to Diekman and Eagly's

(2008) research which suggested that within any context individuals assess how they can be successful and avoid failure based on the current role system. This idea, known as role congruity theory may explain the women's orientation to future work selves, based on the lack of control they feel around future relational selves.

It is likely that the Dayton College context, in which the women reside and learn, contributed to the subject's high achievement expectations. The participation in an academically rigorous setting and the associated pressures to make something of oneself seemed to translate into a fear of settling and wasting one's talents. The pressure these women felt may be partly based on a sense of responsibility due to the privilege of a good education.

In the current study, the women's high achievement expectations and the subsequent fears of settling may also be related to generational factors. Mackay (1997) suggested that children born in the current generation of social, cultural and economic developments are predisposed to keep their options open and to postpone long term-goals in favor of short term ones. According to Mackay (1997) this generation "takes pride in their openness to possibility" (p. 138). Perhaps the women in the current study have been shaped by generational messages to be fearful of closing doors for the future. It is possible that the fear of settling is based more on a generalized fear of closing off possibilities than an actual fear of making the wrong choice.

A Break from Traditional Gender Role Beliefs

Data from the current study suggested that women did not primarily identify traditional or complementarian gender role beliefs about women's role in the home. Instead female students were challenged and bolstered by gender role messages to do it all with a

bias toward women's empowerment. This theme is the second of two key unanticipated findings from the current study. Past research has found that women at Evangelical institutions largely identify with complementarian beliefs where men and women have different roles and responsibilities within relationships and in society (Colaner & Warner, 2005; Colaner & Giles, 2008). The complementarian gender role belief has been shown to limit women's career aspirations (Colaner & Warner, 2005). Further, those with such views have been found to have higher mothering aspirations than those with egalitarian beliefs (Colaner & Giles, 2008). In contrast, the women's most salient hoped for self in the current study was to attain a specific career and the majority of participants expected to get a graduate degree.

The findings suggested a strong negative stigma against becoming a stay at home mom for the study participants. There was a sense from the women that aspiring to be a stay at home mom would negate the use of their gifts and talents and reverse the trend of freedom that they valued whereby women can finally choose their own paths. Some of the female students even suggested they were against staying at home on principle. The data in this study appeared to demonstrate a pendulum swing where women may not feel free to choose a path but instead feel pressure to pursue a career because they can. Some women's responses suggested that they might enjoy staying at home, despite placing the aspiration card to "stay at home with kids" in the bottom three aspirations of their card sort.

While it is not possible to precisely pinpoint why the findings from the current study diverged from research trends, a few clues are offered in the data. The institution itself seemed to be sending the participants mixed gender role messages about women's role in society, leaving the women space to evaluate and determine their own gender role beliefs. In

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spite of the mixed messages, faculty at the institution were unanimously communicating messages of empowerment to the women and many were modeling egalitarian lifestyles. These influences may have encouraged women to adopt egalitarian beliefs and to pursue career goals. The women in the current study felt pressure and expectations from faculty and family to use their gifts and talents in the workplace and students may have felt guilty expressing desires to mother in light of these pressures from the community. It is possible that women at other Evangelical colleges are not hearing these same messages.

Another possible explanation for the break from traditional gender role norms is mounting research and publicity from secular and Christian institutions about women's equity in the workforce. A recent Global Leadership Summit hosted by Willowcreek Church reaching 260,000 people in the United States and worldwide placed a special emphasis in 2015 on communicating women's critical roles in church leadership as well as in the workplace. The message from this highly influential Evangelical church is that society can no longer afford to relegate women to the sidelines. These messages of women's empowerment are becoming commonplace within Christian institutions like churches and colleges and future studies may reveal similar egalitarian tendencies of Evangelical Christian women.

Study Abroad Experiences Influential

The initial literature review exploring influences on college women's possible selves did not identify study abroad as an influencing theme. The current research found that study abroad experiences were a significant influence on the ways that women considered their futures. This theme is the third of three key unanticipated findings from the current study. At Dayton College, about 70 percent of students spend a semester off campus or overseas. According to Witherell and Clayton (2014) with the Institute of International Education, less

than ten percent of U.S. college students study abroad. The significant study abroad emphasis within the Dayton community brings to the forefront the influence of global experiences. In the current research, study abroad programs transformed the ways that the women thought about the world and therefore, their place in the world. These programs also raised important existential questions that frequently re-oriented women's future paths.

A post study review of the literature suggested links between study abroad and career development. Specifically, Hannigan (2001) found that study abroad experiences increased vocational self-concept and clarity toward career goals among college students generally. Norris and Gillespie (2009) found that study abroad experiences frequently sparked interest in career paths that students pursued and that participants also acquired skills that influenced their career paths. The findings in the current study, although salient, did not suggest a direct link between study abroad and specific career paths for most women. The influence on women's possible selves was more indirect whereby women's abroad experiences transformed the ways that they thought about the world and raised important existential questions about the meaning of life and cultures. For some women, their study abroad experiences left them feeling disoriented and less certain about future career paths as a result of the broadening of their horizons. Many of the women in the current study had recently returned from study abroad experiences and it is unclear whether the disorientation they were experiencing was temporary or if it would ultimately led to greater clarity with their hoped for selves.

The current study suggested that study abroad also influenced some women's possible selves by increasing their self-efficacy for reaching their future goals. Milstein's (2005) research of study abroad participants revealed that 95.5% of the sample

retrospectively reported a perceived increase in self-efficacy. The women in the current study were frequently pushed outside of their comfort zones and left to navigate complex challenges independently. As a result of these experiences some women reported an increased sense of agency in problem solving within their communities. This finding points to an opportunity to help students make a connection between their strengthened sense of agency and the unknown elements of their future. This increase in self-agency could be very valuable at a time where women are experiencing a sense of fear and a lack of agency related to their futures.

Finally, women's study abroad experiences appeared to catalyze a hoped for self to continue to travel and seek adventure. Surprisingly, the desire to travel abroad was listed slightly higher than the aspiration for marriage and family. The global emphasis inherent within the Dayton community may be partially responsible for this hoped for self that women communicated. It is also possible that women felt more agency with regards to travel abroad than they did with getting married or having a family, particularly for those who were not currently in dating relationships. It also could be due to the timeframe for consideration. Women were asked to consider the next five years of their lives. It is possible that hoped for selves would be re-ordered if the time frame for consideration were greater such as ten or twenty years in the future. The findings from the current study indicating an influence of study abroad on women's possible selves are likely to be transferable to other populations of college students that have meaningful and common study abroad experiences. These results expand the somewhat limited research on the influence of study abroad on life role aspirations.

Applications of the Research to Practice

       The current research exploring the possible selves and influences on the possible selves of college women can inform the ways that college administrators who shape student learning environments can guide and support female students in thinking about their futures. This research suggests applications for practice that flow out of the six key themes and findings highlighted in the discussion.

Lack of Leadership Aspirations

       In the current study, the participants articulated a lack of leadership aspirations. Providing career role models for women has played a role in successfully increasing women's career aspirations. As a next step, Christian colleges should make it a priority to introduce effective female leaders to women students. The current study reflects female students' aversion to leadership alongside a desire to serve. Therefore, female role models could be asked to discuss how their leadership enables them to more effectively serve others. Presenting and examining female leaders in Scripture could also serve to benefit female students on Christian campuses and to address any lingering concerns women have about conservative Biblical interpretations of Scripture that serve to limit women's leadership aspirations.

     The data in the current study suggested that some women's connotations regarding leadership were characterized by stereotypical masculine models that necessarily excluded their interests and talents. Evangelical colleges should consider developing first year seminar courses, women's leadership mentoring groups, and/or student leadership training sessions exclusively for women that give women permission to create their own models of leadership that are not limited by the boundaries of leadership that they see or experience. The current

study indicated that simply asking women to consider what it would look like for them to serve as a leader in their field of interest broadened their thinking about leadership and caused some women to reconsider their own prioritization of leadership aspirations. Within the context of a seminar, a mentoring group or a training session, women could be made aware of second-generation gender biases identified by Ibarra, et al. (2013) and develop strategies to overcome these biases. These women's leadership development initiatives could also provide space to consider college and career paths that incorporate service focused communal leadership models. Ideally, campuses will work to identify first year and sophomore women for leadership potential and to invite these women to participate in these training sessions.

Finally, campus leaders need to break associations for constituents between leadership and agency models that reflect individualism and power yielding. The extent to which Evangelical campuses can provide multiple models of leadership that defy stereotypical male models will enable women to begin to see themselves as future leaders. A natural place to begin is to consider the representation of women in upper level leadership positions at the college. If women do not see themselves represented within top levels of leadership at the institution, they may struggle to envision how women can strive to high levels of leadership in any institution.

Faith Foundation Guides and Supports

In the current study, the participant's faith beliefs significantly influenced their possible selves by serving as an anchor at uncertain time in their lives and by orienting the women to a service mindset. Most Evangelical campuses require students to take a variety of religious studies courses. Faculty teaching these courses could assist students to intentionally

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explore the value system informed by their faith and to examine how these values influence future career goals. Students who can make connections between their faith beliefs, their classroom learning, and their interests in the world may have the best chance for success in future endeavors.

Faculty and administrators at Evangelical colleges must regularly communicate that God works in and through students faithfully working hard and prayerfully seeking out opportunities for their futures. Christian college personal need to emphasize that God's will for student's lives is not achieved by simply waiting to hear God's calling, although that might be part of the equation, but rather, individuals are invited to join God in his work by pursing interests and passions and using their talents wherever they find themselves. While the majority of the women in the current study seemed to be actively pursing future selves, the fear of settling or failure at times appeared to be linked to faith based expectations that were sometimes paralyzing to women.

Highly Influential Family and Faculty

The most frequently mentioned influences on women's possible selves in the current study were family members and faculty. In most cases the participants suggested that the influence of faculty and family members was indirect, guided by encouragement and role modeling. These significant others in women's lives have a distinct opportunity to discuss hoped for selves with college women. These conversations can help college women to keep hopes and expectations in view and to rework possible selves as circumstances change and as women gather more information about their own talents and about situational limitations. Faculty and family members are in key roles to help women lower the saliency of their feared selves. Their intimate knowledge of these women will lend credence to their encouragement

and help to affirm that women can and will use their talents effectively in the future because they have already. Faculty and family members can offer specific examples to women of ways that they have successfully achieved goals and to remind them of their agency in deliberately working toward hoped for selves. Faculty and family members may be in the best position to help women identity possible career pathways in cases where women are plagued by fears of unknown futures. In some cases, the career goal itself is less important than simply having an idea in mind so that the uncertainly does not seem so daunting.

In the current study, women suggested that although faculty were very encouraging to women's career possible selves, they did not frequently address the anticipated challenge of balancing work and family life. Female faculty with families at Evangelical colleges are in an ideal role to not only model this balance but to discuss what this looks like including the many challenges and rewards of pursuing a career and family. Evangelical women students will be better prepared to approach career and family possible selves if armed with multiple lenses through which to view the realities of these blended goals.

Finally, women's families have a unique role in encouraging women to use their talents and pursue their personal goals. Parents in particular should be cautioned during events like parent orientation and parent's weekend to understand the strong influence that their life role expectations might have on their students, particularly in cases where they have hoped for selves for their children that are contrary to their student's desires. Parents should be alerted to the possibility that these expectations may have a particularly profound effect on college women who may hold or develop differing expectations.

High Achievement Expectations

In light of the participants' high achievement expectations, faculty and administrators may consider beginning early in student's experiences to communicate expectations to take a long career view. Women should continue to be encouraged to dream big dreams but also to take specific steps during college to work towards achieving elements of these dreams. Women should be encouraged that they can do anything with their lives, but that the path is a stairway to the top, not an elevator. Administrators and faculty can build future goal setting into academic advising appointments, especially as women receive counsel from faculty in their majors. Institutions would be wise to require students to identify 3-5 realistic and attainable goals to accomplish within three years of graduating from college. Setting goals is critical to success and setting goals in partnership with respected faculty mentors could help women to better achieve hoped for selves and to experience a greater degree of efficacy with regards to these selves. Faculty could offer feedback to women on goals that are too lofty or insufficiently challenging. Examples of realistic goals related to women's hoped for or expected selves could include paying off student loans (self-sufficiency), getting involved in a local church (growing in faith), taking the Graduate Records Exam (graduate school), or obtaining an entry level job in a company in their field (specific career). Institutions might consider goal-tracking systems that would assist with accountability and provide women with links to faculty after graduation. Electronic portfolios including student research and goals could help with the tracking and feedback process. Alternately, senior seminar courses could be the setting in which realistic goals are developed for students' first destinations after college.

Institutions need to consider how to effectively address and combat unrealistic pressures that women experience to be superwomen in their life role possible selves. Gender role messages are deeply embedded within institutions and society and therefore trying to dismiss these types of belief may be ineffective. Instead, administrators and faculty could acknowledge these messages and distinguish between pursing a career and family in comparison to seeking perfection or immediate success in these arenas. College officials can affirm the belief that women can be effective and successful in a career and in the home, but to clarify that success and perfection are not tantamount. Furthermore, in light of gender role messages to be superwoman, women hoping for marriage, family and a career might be encouraged to seek romantic relationships with individuals that value women in the workplace and that envision a household with shared responsibilities (Sandberg, 2013). Women should be encouraged to place boundaries around their time that reflect their values and limit them being pulled in all directions. While it might not be realistic to focus on achieving all hoped for selves at once, women could be encouraged to consider seasonal goals, prioritizing areas where they currently feel the greatest sense of agency.

Women need to be reminded often and clearly that settling and failure are natural and expected elements of future pathways. Administrators and faculty need to normalize failure in order to lessen the saliency of these feared selves. If women can begin to see failure as an integral part of their future paths and experiences that are necessary for future success then they can be freed to take more risks as they move forward. Career offices at Christian colleges may consider launching social norming campaigns highlighting the average length of time graduates spend exploring careers, how many jobs the typical adult has in a lifetime,

and how seemingly dead-end starts can yield long term success and effective use of student's talents.

Finally, in light of women's hoped for selves to serve others, Evangelical colleges might want to introduce conversations about bivocationalism. The idea of bivocationalism originated within ministry contexts for pastors or service people who worked another job for primary financial support while pursing the goal of ministry (Dorr, 1988). One of the participants within the current study suggested this idea as she considered her hoped for selves and it seemed to bring together her service and career possible selves. The idea for modern Evangelical women is that service aims might be fulfilled through part time or volunteer roles while concurrently working in a job that pays the bills.

A Break from Traditional Gender Role Beliefs

Findings from the current study suggested that women did not primarily identify traditional gender role beliefs about women's role in the home, but rather they were challenged and bolstered by messages to do it all with a bias toward women's empowerment. This break from traditional gender role beliefs appeared to free the participants from an obligation to focus only on life roles within the home and family. However, women appeared to be conversely limited from considering stay at home mom possibilities. Evangelical faculty members and administrators rarely discuss the concept of being a stay at home mom. This could be due to social stigmas associated with the concept or due to an assumption that women students will likely pursue a career and not stay at home full time. These colleges would do well to discuss and broaden the stay at home mom concept to consider stay at home parents or to envision time at home as a choice for a particular season of life. Given college women's' interest in pursuing careers and families Evangelical colleges should

programmatically address the reality that family needs must be constantly re-evaluated and that families will make decisions based on financial realities, career possibilities, faith based values, and other practical considerations over time. Making a decision to stay at home is not necessarily a once and for all choice, but rather a decision laced with values as well as practical life situations and realities.

Evangelical administrators should track graduates including numbers of students who go on to graduate studies, those who get married and start families, those who stay at home for a season, as well as other life roles. Providing this kind of data to woman about what graduates are actually doing with their lives five years out of college will assist students to have a better sense of what is likely and realistic within this time frame. Further, collecting data by gender helps ensure that any problems women face are not hidden.

Study Abroad Experiences Influential

Study abroad was a key influencing factor on college women's possible selves in the current study. The data suggested that study abroad experiences expanded women's world views and at times left them with answered questions. In light of these results, off campus program administrators might consider expanding the program for study abroad students to incorporate pre and post trip career reflections as well as support for integrating new ideas into existing career aspirations. Program advisors could meet with participants one on one before and after trips to help sort through important existential and life shaping questions. In cases where resources are limited and staff advising is not possible, administrators could train study abroad alumni to conduct these one on one meetings and to refer any students with significantly challenging questions and issues to program staff.

Some participants suggested that off campus program experiences served to develop their self-efficacy around problem solving. Campuses highlighting study abroad experiences might benefit from helping students identify the skills and competencies they developed while participating in off campus programs. A post trip assignment could involve creating a resume entry based on their study abroad experience. Mock interviews with fellow program participants may serve to encourage students to more effectively articulate transferable skills and how these skills can help them to be successful in desired career or life roles. These exercises could help women to make connections between their strengthened sense of agency and the unknown elements of their future. This increase in self-agency could be very valuable at a time where women are experiencing a sense of fear and a lack of agency related to their futures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Research on college women's possible selves and the influences on these selves at any institution is a challenging task due to the potential impact of uncontrolled variables such as current mood, personality factors, and unexamined climate elements, among others. Women's possible selves are constantly evolving and changing and therefore the current findings may only be relevant to a particular point in time in the participants' college experiences. The findings of this study are limited to the sample of women studied at Dayton College and are therefore not necessarily representative of other populations or groups of college women. Recommendations for future research are plentiful due to the scarcity of current research on women's future life role possible selves. Some key possibilities for future research are suggested in the concluding paragraphs.

Additional research is needed to explore college women's possible selves at other Christian colleges. Future research should seek to understand the following questions: "What are women's possible selves and influences on these possible selves at other Evangelical colleges?" "How do findings at other institutions compare to the data collected at Dayton College?" "Are there findings from other institutions that further explain or elucidate the current findings?" "How do contextual factors at other Evangelical colleges influence women's possible selves?"

It is unclear from the current study how women's possible selves and influences on these selves compare to men's possible selves at an Evangelical college. "Do men and women share similar hoped for, expected and feared selves?" "How do the possible selves of men and women differ?" "Do faculty and family influence men in the same fashion and to the same degree that they influence women?" It is likely that there are similarities between men's and women's thinking about the future at Evangelical institutions but the extent of the overlap is unknown. In light of the current findings about women's lack of leadership aspirations future research could examine college men's leadership aspirations at an Evangelical college. While the literature suggested that college men aspire to leadership to a higher degree than college women it would be valuable to explore the differences between men's and women's leadership aspirations at Evangelical colleges and what factors appear to be most closely associated with leadership aspirations.

Additionally, alternate research methods could be employed to examine women's possible selves including the use of surveys or aspiration papers for courses that might offer a larger participant pool or a different angle on women's possible selves. Osyerman's (2004) possible selves questionnaire could be used to query college women regarding their future

hopes, expectations and fears. One benefit of Osyerman's open-ended measure is that it allows subjects to self-identify possible selves in a structured table alongside behaviors and strategies that may enable them to achieve these hoped for or expected selves and to avoid feared selves. In the current study, it was not always clear if the women's possible selves identified were motivating their behaviors and choices.

The current study focused on women's possible selves and the influences on these possible selves at an Evangelical college. It did not examine the perspectives of significant others in these women's lives. Given the strong influence faculty and family members have on college women's future thinking, more research is needed that explores how faculty and family members view their role in influencing college women. "How do faculty and family members describe women's hoped for, expected and feared selves?" "What gender role messages are faculty and family members intending to communicate to women and are the intended messages consistent with the messages that women receive?"

Future research is also needed to extend the findings of the current study related to academic major and possible selves. In the current study it appeared that women in STEM fields might have had more salient hoped for career selves as well as more salient feared selves related to failure. Future research could examine if there a relationship between academic major and possible selves. Further studies may also examine if influences on women's possible selves differ by academic major. If women's thinking about the future does differ by academic major that information could assist faculty in best supporting women based on trends within the major.

Finally, longitudinal research would greatly benefit explorations of women's possible selves. In the current study, women were asked to consider their possible selves in

the next five years. A follow up study could examine the same women five years in the future. "Did these women's hoped for, expected and feared selves play out?" "Did the women reach their goals?" "What unexpected life roles emerged during the five year time period?" How are these women's current possible selves similar and different than their college possible selves?" "Do the women have a similar resistance to leadership and becoming a stay at home mom?" These types of longitudinal studies could help researchers to better ascertain the value of using the possible selves concept in studies of future aspirations.

Research on college women's achievement is not new nor is research on women in the workforce. However, few studies have explored the link between women's achievement and their roles in society by examining the ways college women consider their life role possible selves. This study of college women's possible selves at an Evangelical college affirmed the need for future long-term research on college women's thinking about their future and the influences on that thinking. The current study confirmed previous research that women are closing off possibilities for themselves in future leadership and that they are feeling substantial fears related to doing it all and doing it all well in their futures. As higher education administrators seek to prepare women to successfully use their gifts and talents in the world beyond college, women's hoped for and feared selves, as well as the primary influences on these selves cannot be ignored.

APPENDIX A

SANTA BARBARA

3/25/2015

VERIFICATION OF ACTION BY THE UCSB HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

RE: HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTOCOL SUBMISSION ID 15-0229

TYPE: Renewal with Mods

TITLE(S):
UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S WELL-BEING AT A CHRISTIAN, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE; DETERMINING THE PRIMARY FACTORS PROMOTING ANXIETY AND LIMITING SELF CONFIDENCE IN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE WOMEN UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S POSSIBLE SELVES AT AN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND THE INFLUENCES ON THESE POSSIBLE SELVES

PROJECT #: 59

INVESTIGATOR(S):
Jenny Cook-gumperz
Angela D'Amour

The UCSB Human Subjects Committee (HSC) conducts review of human subjects research under FederalWide Assurance #FWA00006361 and in compliance with applicable regulations as described therein.

The above identified research project has undergone review and approval by the USCB HSC and may commence on3/25/2015. It was approved by Expedited review.

Date of expiration of HSC approval: 3/24/2016

RENEWAL OF PROTOCOLS

If you wish to continue your research beyond the above expiration date, your protocol must be renewed before it expires. To ensure that your research can continue uninterrupted, the following schedule should be followed:

Full Board Review: Submit 5 weeks before expiration date.
Expedited Review: Submit 3 weeks before expiration date.
Exemption Review: Does not expire. Resubmit only if changes are made.

All research must cease under this protocol on its expiration date unless you have received notice of renewal from the HSC.

AMENDMENTS/MODIFICATIONS/CHANGES:

Any change in the design, conduct, or key personnel of this research must be approved by the HSC prior to implementation.

UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS/ADVERSE EVENTS:

If any study subject experiences an unanticipated problem involving risk to subjects or others, and/or a serious adverse event, the HSC must be informed promptly. An e-mail or phone call must be received within 7 days of reporting to the Investigator(s). Further reporting requirements will be determined by the HSC at that time.

If you have any questions about the information provided above, please contact the, Human Subjects Committee Coordinator at:

805-893-3807
(805) 893-2611 (fax)
hsc@research.ucsb.edu

For more details on this protocol, go to the ORahs
website: https://orahs.research.ucsb.edu/

For more information about human subjects research, go
to http://www.research.ucsb.edu/compliance/human-subjects/.

APPENDIX B

PURPOSE:
You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate women's self perceptions of their well-being including their levels of anxiety, physical and emotional health and self confidence in order to understand what factors have the greatest influence on women's well being at a Christian, liberal arts college. The goal is to discuss with subjects the factors that dictate the quality of their experiences on the campus and to examine how these contribute to their well-being.

PROCEDURES:
If you decide to participate, we will invite you and 4-7 other current students to join either one 75 minute focus group or one 30-45 minute individual interview on campus where we will ask you to discuss six questions related to your physical and emotional health well-being during college. The focus groups will be videotaped and audio-taped. The interviews will be audio-taped. We may invite you to participate in an individual interview on another date following the focus group.

The total time commitment is 75 minutes for a focus group and no more than 45 for an individual interview. The full study including approximately 30 participants will conclude by December 2014.

RISKS:
Affective risks (e.g., embarrassment, stress) of this study are minimal. Some questions attend to personal evaluations of your well-being which could cause temporary discomfort. However, you may choose not to answer any question and you may leave the study at any time without consequences. There are no physical risks to participation.

BENEFITS:
Benefits to you include an opportunity to reflect on your experiences of being a woman on Dayton's campus. In the future, data generated from this study will inform college administrators about the unique pressures young women experience at a small, Christian liberal arts college and how their well-being might be improved.

CONFIDENTIALITY:
Although absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, since research documents are not protected from subpoena, we will take appropriate steps to secure and protect the information you provide, to keep it confidential, and to prevent others from connecting this data to you. Any information that could identify you will be removed or changed before it is shared with researchers, Dayton, or other organizations and before any research results are made public in an aggregated form.

Video and audio data will be transcribed following interviews and focus groups and at the conclusion of the project these audio and video recordings will be destroyed to ensure subject confidentiality. Any transcription elements that could be identifiable to a particular subject will not be used without the subject's written permission.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for subjects participating in the focus groups. To address this, at the start of each focus group the moderator will remind subjects to respect the confidentiality of other participants by not discussing the contents of the discussion with others outside of the group. The moderator will remind participants to be aware that other students are able to hear their comments and may not respect her confidentiality. Subjects will also be told that they are free to decline to answer any question and/or leave the focus group at any time without consequences. If any subject in the focus group decides to withdraw his or her comments will be removed from the data transcriptions.

Data from the interviews and focus groups will not be shared publicly with members outside of this project. Audio data will not be used in presentations without participant's permission.

COSTS/PAYMENT:
There is no cost or payment involved in this study. However focus group participants will be offered a free pizza dinner prior to the start of the focus group. Individual interview participants will receive a $5 coffee gift card.

RIGHT TO REFUSE OR WITHDRAW:
You may refuse to participate and still receive any benefits you would receive if you were not in the study. You may change your mind about being in the study and quit after the study has started.

QUESTIONS:
If you have any questions about this research project or if you think you may have been injured as a result of your participation, please contact:

Dr. Jenny Cook-Gumperz, UCSB Professor, Dept. of Education at jenny@education.ucsb.edu or 805-893-3786

If you have any questions regarding your rights and participation as a research subject, please contact the Human Subjects Committee at (805) 893-3807 or hsc@research.ucsb.edu. Or write to the University of California, Human Subjects Committee, Office of Research, Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2050

PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. YOUR SIGNATURE BELOW WILL INDICATE THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT IN THE STUDY DESCRIBED ABOVE. YOU WILL BE GIVEN A SIGNED AND DATED COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

Signature of Participant or Legal
Representative:_____Date:_____Time:_____

APPENDIX C

Participant Questionnaire

1) Name   _____

2) Major/s   _____

3) Class Year _____

4) Age   _____

5) How do you identify racially? _____

6) To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

My Evangelical Christian faith is important to me:

    (1)   (2)   (3)   (4)   (5)
Not At All   Somewhat   Moderately Agree   Agree   Strongly Agree

Focus Group Questions
Angela D'Amour
2/27/15

The moderator began by providing a brief overview of the study objectives and asking all participants to sign the informed consent document.

Establishing Rapport
Let's begin by a quick round robin where everyone shares your name, your major, your hometown and one thing you like about Dayton.

After establishing rapport, the focus group moderator read the following paragraph developed by Markus (1987): Everyone thinks about the future to some extent. When doing so, we usually think about the kinds of experiences that are in store for us and the kinds of people we might possibly become. Sometimes we think about what we will probably be like, other times about the ways we are afraid we might turn out to be, and at other times what we hope or wish we would be like. One way of thinking about this is to talk about possible selves. We can probably imagine a number of possible selves in terms of the kind of people we might become, the lifestyle choices we might make, or the occupations we might select. Some of these possible selves are similar to the way we are now or almost surely will be, and some may be only vague thoughts or dreams about the future.

This study is focused on possible selves related to life roles including career, family and future education.

Opening Question:
In one word or phrase, how does thinking about the future make you feel?

Possible Selves:
What do you most wish to do or become in your life over the next five years? (hoped for self)

What is most likely to happen in the future?

What are three possible selves you most expect to become over the next five years? (expected self)

What are things you don't want to do or to have happen to you in the next five years? (feared self)

[Card sort of life role possible selves into order: most important to least important]
  * Cards include: Use my gifts and talents in career, Enjoy a future career, Be involved in serving my community, Adventure, Get Married, Have a family, Leader in my field, Leader in my community, Financially successful, Graduate Degree, Stay at home with kids

Gender Roles

Views on gender have changed a lot over the past twenty years.

What do you think that others expect women to do with their lives?

How are these expectations the same or different within the context of a Christian college?

What does it mean to be a woman at Dayton? (social role clarification)

Influences:

What significant experiences or events have influenced your consideration of your future goals?

Since you arrived at Dayton, how have your considerations about your future life roles changed?

What has most encouraged your hoped for selves?

What has most constrained your hoped for selves?

Closing

Is there anything related to the topics that we discussed today that you did not get a chance to share?

Interview Protocol
Dissertation Research April 2015
Angela D'Amour

Opening Question
    1) Briefly, how does thinking about the future make you feel?

Influences
    2) How has your faith influenced your thinking about your future goals and plans?
    3) What expectations do those who are closest to you have for your future? (Grad school; family; career?)
        a. How do these expectations influence your thinking?
    4) Since you arrived at Dayton have your future goals changed? If so how and to what do you attribute these changes?
    5) Have you participated in an off campus program? If so, how has this experience influenced your thinking about your future goals and plans?
    6) Describe any influence Dayton faculty members have had on your thinking about your future goals or plans

Card Sort
    7) Do you hope or expect to be a stay at home mom if you have kids? Please explain.
    8) Do you envision being a leader in your field or in your community in the future? Please explain
        a. How would you define being a leader?

Gender Roles
    9) What do you think that society expect women to do with their lives?
        a. How do these messages influence your own thinking about your future?
    10) What do you think that others at Dayton expect women to do with their lives?
    11) Some say that women are now expected to be superwomen and do it all and do it well.
        b. Do you perceive this expectation and if so, how does it influence your thinking about your future goals?

Possible Selves
    12) What would be the perfect future life if you could create that for yourself?
        c. What do you most hope to do or become over the next 5 years?
    13) What is most likely (or what do you expect) to happen over the next 5 years?
    14) What are the things you don't want to do or have happen to you in the next 5 years?
        d. What are your greatest fears for the future?
    15) Do you anticipate any conflicts or competing interests between your future goals?
        a. How do you anticipate reconciling those?
        b. What do you envision the relationship between family and work will look like and how does that influence your future goals?

If there is time:

16) What experiences or events have most influenced your thinking about your future?

17) How important is a sense of control over your future fate?
   a. In what areas do you feel empowered and in what areas do you feel disempowered?

18) Have you had any contact with alumni? If so, how have they influenced your thinking about your future goals and plans?

19) Is there anything I haven't asked you about related to your future that you'd like to share?

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