

THESIS

A WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP: ADDRESSING GAPS IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Submitted by

Katie Linenberger

Department of Sociology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2021

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Jeni Cross

Tara Opsal

Katherine Gerst

Copyright by Katie Linenberger 2021

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

A WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS: ADDRESSING GAPS IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Support groups and self-help groups have been studied in the field of psychology to understand the individual effects of these groups but minimally studied in sociology on how support groups create a community and their potential to produce or reproduce norms, values, and ideas. Through analyzing a local women's support group, this research contributes to the sociological understandings of support groups and the community services they provide while also aiding in self-exploration. More importantly, this research adds to limited research on women's only support groups by analyzing the power of having a place dedicated for women to share with one another. The sociological understandings of groups and values was applied to understand how this support group might be shaping the values and norms of its group members. This research demonstrates how support groups build community through providing the space to socialize, be vulnerable with others, and participate in the storytelling process. Further, this support group produced supportive social ties in many of the group members' lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my thesis committee, Dr. Jeni Cross, Dr. Tara Opsal, and Katherine Gerst. My thesis became a quality piece of research because of the guidance, critiques, and knowledge of my thesis committee members. Each member provided their own expertise that challenged my own and helped me expand my knowledge and skills.

I extend my gratitude toward my advisor, Dr. Jeni Cross. My success would not have been possible without the support and nurturing of my advisor. I am grateful for the years of our collaboration and the opportunities you provided me with throughout my studies. My skills, knowledge, and professional development came from collaborating with you.

I am also grateful to my colleagues in the Sociology department who discussed and provided feedback on my research. I learned so much from them and appreciate all the discussions throughout the development of my thesis. Further, I would like to extend my thanks to my colleagues in Dr. Jeni Cross' research group who helped me learn more about research through our weekly conversations along with their support in revising my thesis research questions.

I also wish to thank professors in the Sociology department who strengthened my knowledge of sociological theories, methods, and concepts. Every course taken as a master's student in the department has contributed to my thesis and the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct this research.

I must also thank Arkitekt for allowing me to research this organization for the past couple years. They have been phenomenal collaborators and helped with multiple components of this research making the completion of my thesis possible.

Special thanks to my supervisors and colleagues at the Institute for Research in the Social Sciences and the Institute for the Built Environment for helping me develop my methodological and analytical skills through meaningful research projects. The skills developed from my work at these organizations were helpful for completing my thesis research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
Research Overview	1
Arkitekt's Goals	3
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
Groups, Norms, and Values	6
Community	8
Life Course	11
Support Groups and Self-Help Groups	12
Self.....	14
Power and Gender Ideology.....	15
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	18
Group Member Survey	18
Interviews	23
Participant Observation.....	25
FINDINGS	28
What Community Services is Arkitekt Providing for Its Group Members?	28
<i>A Safe Space</i>	28
<i>Support, Friendship, and Belonging</i>	29
<i>Storytelling</i>	34
<i>Gaps in Existing Community Services</i>	36
How is Arkitekt Affecting Group Members' Norms and Values?	40
<i>Gender Ideology</i>	40
<i>Self-Exploration</i>	45
IMPLICATIONS	51
Religion	51
Gender Ideology	52
Politics	54
Friendship and Community.....	55

Self.....	57
Storytelling	59
CONCLUSION.....	61
REFERENCES	62
APPENDIX A.....	65
APPENDIX B.....	89
APPENDIX C.....	97
APPENDIX D.....	99
APPENDIX E.....	100

INTRODUCTION

Research Overview

A local women's support group called Arkitekt reached out to my advisor in the sociology department at Colorado State University desiring for an evaluation on how effective they are in making positive change for their group members. Since Arkitekt recently became a non-profit organization, they wanted data they could use when applying for funding. As a researcher, I was tasked with observing the group's dynamics, learning the operations, and understanding its values.

This research analyzed the following questions: 1. What community services is Arkitekt providing for its group members? and 2. How is Arkitekt affecting group members' norms and values? Community was analyzed by spaces for socializing, friendship and support, storytelling, and gaps in existing community services. The values and beliefs analyzed were religious identity, gender ideology, family and romantic relationships, and constructions of self. These concepts are crucial for understanding what Arkitekt discusses and how the group affects the group members' values, sense of community, and ideas about their self.

These concepts are typically evaluated when studying support groups and matches the mission of Arkitekt: "We seek to [re]awaken SOURCE + SELF + KINDRED" (Bedrock Beliefs - Arkitekt™, 2019). Their mission focuses on guiding group members to a religious belief. Arkitekt aims to guide group members through their self-construction or reconstruction of the ideas held about themselves. Arkitekt aids in strengthening family, marital relationships, and group members' friendships. Thus, the values and beliefs analyzed are embedded in Arkitekt's mission and are the core of what they desire to accomplish as a group. The co-founder of

Arkitekt does not label this organization as a support group, but work conducted by this group is related to literature's definition of support groups.

Given the social climate and recent movements for women to be seen and heard, this research provides an important perspective on how support groups are creating communities and how they allow individuals to redefine themselves. Community and support groups have been researched for decades (Durkheim, 1995; Turner et al., 2011; Giuffre, 2013; Bruhn, 2005, 2011; Rainie and Wellman, 2012; Forsberg et al. 2005; Barak et al. 2008; Tutty et al. 1993; Kumar et al. 2019; Schonfeld 1991; Backstrom, 2006; Lumino et al., 2017; Heaney & Israel, 2008; Loseke, 2007; Prasetyo, 2017; Ewick and Silbey, 1995; Adamsen and Rasmussen, 2001; Kickbusch, 1983). Therefore, this research did not tap into a new subject area. However, this research expanded on current sociological literature about community, social networks, support groups, gender ideology, and essential social factors that foster growth and self-exploration. Through the insights from a specific support group, this research contributes knowledge about the demand for support groups and how these groups create new community connections and motivate self-growth.

This research used a mixed method approach to obtain an in-depth analysis of Arkitekt. A survey was distributed to group members to gain quantitative data on each group member's involvement with the group, their values and beliefs, and their thoughts on Arkitekt. Interviews provided detailed accounts of past and present group members' experiences with Arkitekt. Social network interviews informed the number of friendships and who the participants turn to for various types of support. Being a participant observer in Arkitekt gatherings provided a better understanding of the dynamics of the support group. Each method gathered data for a comprehensive understanding of this group.

Arkitekt claims to accept all races, religious beliefs, identities, experiences, and cultures into their group. Each group member has various reasons for joining and therefore bring different experiences into the group. Even with the diverse experiences and reasons for joining Arkitekt, there is consistency in the topics discussed in the gatherings such as healing from trauma, struggles with identity, expectations placed on them, and the emotional struggles which are often not discussed or only minimally with their current social circles.

Arkitekt's Goals

Created by the founder who was experiencing a downward spiral in her life, her goal was to provide the information and resources that guided her through previous struggles to other women. During her crisis, she gathered with a group of friends and poured her heart to them. In this vulnerable state, she felt seen, heard, and loved by the friends surrounding her. They embraced her and allowed her to speak truthfully without judgement. This feeling of support is what she desired to create for other women who may not have a space to talk freely about their struggles. Arkitekt provides a space for a group of women to openly listen to one another.

This support group is unique because there is a structured curriculum to guide women through what they are working through in their lives. Each month, group members are emailed a document to read and reflect on before meeting as a group, or what they call a "gathering". This curriculum gives the members an opportunity to work through their issues at their own pace each month and to not rely on the discussions as the only form of support.

There are no requirements for completing the curriculum and course work. The guides and activities are designed to help each group member process and grow. Arkitekt encourages each member to dive into the curriculum and work through the coursework because these materials are created to help members work on themselves. Arkitekt warns members to not push

themselves too far, especially if they feel overwhelmed with the concepts being discussed because it can cause members to shut down and become discouraged in the process. However, Arkitekt believes that the more work you put into yourself, the better the healing and the more you will get out of the group.

In the gatherings, members are not required to share but strongly encouraged to share. They argue the most beneficial part of a gathering is sharing what is on your mind, what you are dealing with, and your progress or setbacks in your journey. Again, Arkitekt believes the more you are honest and vulnerable to the group, the better the healing.

Because some members experience a vast amount of trauma and struggles, everyone is required to have a word of the year to consolidate these struggles into a goal to work towards and be held accountable by the other members. Members select a word that describes what they desire, who they want to become, or what they aim to achieve by the end of the year. Their selected word helps identify the common themes within their struggles. It makes processing and progressing easier when the issues are narrowed down to one word. Arkitekt believes that the chaos and discontentment someone experiences can cause them to view themselves differently which can alter the way they live and handle situations in their daily lives. They believe if members can achieve their desired self, there will be positive impacts on their life which can help in processing their struggles and create better outcomes for those within the individuals' networks and their local community.

Spirituality and self-growth are at the core of the group's attempt to process the struggles individuals deal with. Through the curriculum, Arkitekt guides group members in constructing their self. The three main phases in the curriculum: "burning", "framing", and "coming home".

The burning phase consists of the members deconstructing their shadow or fake self. The framing phase is where the members start to construct their true self. The coming home phase is integrating and displaying their true self. Arkitekt provides space for group members to respond to the similar conditions the group members may be experiencing in their lives such as trauma, lack of self-esteem, conflicts in relationships, etc. in a constructive but vulnerable process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concepts of group dynamics and the norms and values created in groups have been heavily developed throughout sociology with classical sociological theorist, Durkheim (1995), laying the foundation for future sociological research on groups. More contemporary sociological works, like Rainie and Wellman (2012), Bruhn (2011), and Giuffre (2013), provide instrumental thoughts on networks and communities to provide understandings of the communal function and benefits of Arkitekt. This research builds on classical sociological theorists, contemporary sociological theorists, and modern sociological and social psychology research about groups and community. In addition, this research fills the gap in sociology in which there is minimal research on the norms and values produced in support groups along with the community services they provide through a sociological perspective.

Groups, Norms, and Values

Outlining classical sociological research is important for analyzing how the group members' values and norms may be affected through this membership and to lay a foundation for the sociological ideas in current research on support groups. In his research on religious groups, Durkheim (1995) outlined the processes and development of norms and values which are unique to each group. These processes gives the group an identity and the provides members with the option to identify with the group (Durkheim, 1995; Fine, 2012). It is in groups where individuals become attached to the social world along with the cultural and symbolic components of that social world (Turner et al., 2011). Here, members start to adopt the practices and culture of the group they identify with into various aspects of their life (Turner et al., 2011). Beyond the

individual, groups utilize their symbols, meanings, and social understandings in other social situations (Fine, 2012).

Along the idea of adopting practices, Backstrom (2006) stated groups grow by adding new members and in doing this the group itself and its norms change as well. However, with voluntary groups, new member additions tend to be those who are like others creating a homogenous group (Fine, 2012). Additionally, the beliefs of the group, and their evolvement through new membership, affect the beliefs of the individuals (Durkheim, 1995). In his work, beliefs are a tool of power and if this power is used on a group, it can produce and reproduce certain knowledge and behaviors among the individual group members (Durkheim, 1995). This definition will be crucial for analyzing the beliefs held within Arkitekt and for understanding the beliefs group members come in with and which ones they leave with.

Further, Durkheim (1995) wrote about Totemism in aboriginal groups arguing it is a religion, a symbol, that morally bonds individuals to each other and creates a group. Like Durkheim's (1995) thoughts on norms, Ellison et al. (2014) argued religion provides individuals with rules for proper behavior. They also argued those who have a religion tend to have better social relationships and support which then increases the individual's wellbeing (Ellison et al., 2014). When analyzing religion and how bonding and support differs between gender, Krause et al. (2002) found women receive more support from churches than men. In recent scholarship, Beckford (2015) argued there has been a shift towards using the phrase "religious communities" or "faith communities" which, they argue, could be problematic since it assumes everyone in that religious identity is like one another, but as Fine (2012) argued, groups tend to add members that are like them which critiques the concern introduced by Beckford (2015).

Classical sociologist Weber (1905) had an opposing, more critical view of what religion does for society. For Weber (1905), religious affiliation not only penetrated social life, but also influenced the economy through individual's motivations to work hard for their deity. Weber (1905) argued this ambition benefitted the capitalist economy by creating a surplus of hard workers dedicating their life to work. Regardless of whose ideas about religion is more widely accepted by sociologists, both Weber (1905) and Durkheim (1995) demonstrated religion is a strong social belief for many and in this belief, they become connected to others who believe the same as them.

Connecting with others is evident when the group comes together in an event where collective effervescence is felt (Durkheim, 1995). Durkheim (1995) defines collective effervescence as the energy felt when being with the group and participating in the same event together. In participating in this event, we feel our group membership become validated and meaningful (Durkheim, 1995). In this emotional state, group members feel like they belong and start to create their own community.

Community

Building on the works of Durkheim, community sociological research has further demonstrated the power of identifying with a group (Bruhn, 2005, 2011; Giuffre, 2013; Rainie and Wellman, 2012; Lumino et al., 2017; Heaney & Israel, 2008). Additionally, this area of research has identified core factors of communities and the relationships between group members. *Gemeinschaft* is an older term for community emphasizing the binding of individuals through norms and the regulating of wills (Giuffre, 2013). Simmel argued individuals and society continually created one another (Giuffre, 2013). For Simmel, individuals were defined by their communities or the social groups they belonged to (Giuffre, 2013). Feelings of community

along with the beliefs in a community are created through individuals' networks (Giuffre, 2013). Simmel argued community is the relationships of individuals (Giuffre, 2013).

Like Simmel, Bruhn (2005) defined community as the networks of people. These networks can inform behaviors of those in the network and the flow of resources and ideas with one another (Bruhn, 2005). Not only do they provide resources and the rules of behaving, but communities also provide individuals with nourishment, feedback, guidance, expression, and hope (Bruhn, 2011). He also argued that as involvement in the group increases, the more influenced the individual will be by the group's values (Bruhn, 2011). With involvement, Backstrom et al. (2006) argued the probability of an individual joining a community is based on the number of people they already know in the community and the type of connections they have within the community. One interesting concept Rainie and Wellman (2012) provided is groups can be thought as stereotypes of the relationships in our networks (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Giuffre (2013) had similar ideas to Rainie and Wellman (2012) but focused more on communities and their benefit to us rather than the individual networks that create a community.

Giuffre (2013) argued communities provide social support and support is an essential component of communities. We turn to our community for social support, emotional support, instrumental support with services like childcare, and informational support like advice (Giuffre, 2013; Heaney & Israel, 2008). Additionally, Lumino et al. (2017) argued there is "evidence showing that social support furnished by personal networks represents a key asset for defining successful coping strategies, reducing hardships of everyday life" (pg. 780). Communities are counted on when tasks are too much for the individual and strength from others is needed.

However, we rely on different communities for different types of support (Giuffre, 2013). It is rare for someone to have one community support them in all the four aspects mentioned. This

can explain why many seek out support groups that will help them with a specific concern, typically emotional or advice giving, since their current communities cannot provide this for them. Sociological ideas of support are important to utilize when studying support groups because, through these relationships with their support group, members are gaining support that can improve their health and wellbeing, reduce mortality or effects of illnesses, and provide access to resources and information (Lumino et al., 2017; Bruhn, 2011; Heaney & Israel, 2008).

One community building activity is storytelling (Poletta et al., 2011; Prasetyo, 2017). Storytelling creates a bond between the members involved through the following of the norms and roles of the storytelling process which builds trust and emotional connections (Loseke, 2007; Prasetyo, 2017). The roles of the storyteller and the audience form within the group and must follow the appropriate behaviors for each role to create bonds between everyone involved (Ewick and Silbey, 1995). These norms determine not only what can be expressed but how the storyteller tells their story (Ewick and Silbey, 1995; Loseke, 2007). Through this process, the storyteller becomes a performer and actualizes the self they want the others to hear (Loseke, 2007; Ewick and Silbey, 1995; Poletta et al., 2011).

Storytelling goes beyond building community and aids in creating identity (Poletta et al., 2011). Through storytelling, especially in a self-help group, individuals identify the areas they are struggling with and reveal the process for achieving the self they want to become (Prasetyo, 2017; Loseke, 2007; Ewick and Silbey, 1995). Prasetyo (2017) furthered this by arguing storytelling puts the needed distance between what took place in the event, the narrated event, and the emotions of the storyteller to give them feelings of safety to discuss those deep emotions. Additionally, giving them the space and silence to tell their story, lessens the feelings of being interrogated or judged (Prasetyo, 2017). Instead, the storyteller feels heard by everyone

(Prasetyo, 2017). For the listeners, hearing others' stories helps them relate and build connections with others and motivates them to act in their own lives (Prasetyo, 2017). The dual purpose of storytelling is a key feature in support groups as it not only helps the individual with their identity but also brings the group members together as a community.

Life Course

Life course was defined by Glen Elder as the “the social forces that shape the life course and its developmental consequences” (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016, pg. 302). Changes in life course, such as marriage, having children, divorce, and aging, shift individual's social expectations and needs for support and resources in their social networks (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Dowd, 2012). A seminal contribution to the concept of life course was Erik Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development focused on the dynamic between individuals and society (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Batra, 2013). Each stage of development has a tension for individuals in which the outcome depends on their decisions and environments (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Batra, 2013). Each stage of development has unique psychosocial needs, and success in each phase is defined by resolving the tension between individual needs and societal needs or pressures and expectations.

Focusing on the age group of interest for this research, the conflict for individuals between 30-50 years of age is generativity vs stagnation (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Batra, 2013). Erikson's model works as a fluid progression in the life course and not predetermined by strict cut-offs based on age (Batra, 2013; Mackinnon, 2011). Therefore, some of the research participants may still be developing in the previous stage. Additionally, the outcomes of previous stages influence the outcomes of future stages (Batra, 2013; Mackinnon, 2011). Therefore, struggles with generativity could stem from the previous stage in which the conflict is between

intimacy and isolation where concern for others is needed to develop generativity (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Batra, 2013; Mackinnon, 2011). Generativity is achieved through healthy experiences with intimacy and positive social relationships (Batra, 2013; Mackinnon, 2011). For generativity, the individual gains a desire to help younger individuals which can take many forms such as volunteering, social action, and caring of children (Batra, 2013; Mackinnon et al., 2011). Being involved in society is crucial for the wellbeing for aging individuals (Dowd, 2012; Mackinnon, 2011). Throughout the developmental stages outlined by Erikson, individuals are forming healthy personalities and basic virtues (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Batra, 2013).

Creating an identity aids in intimacy and relationships which then contributes to feelings of generativity, or care for others (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016; Mackinnon, 2011). For those who are struggling and are near the stage of generativity vs stagnation, their issues may lie in the construction of their identity and unresolved conflicts with intimacy that need to be addressed to progress into generativity (Mackinnon, 2011). Thus, Batra (2013) argued that Erikson's model provides self-awareness which can aid in self-reflection for healing and may even encourage individuals to attend therapy.

Support Groups and Self-Help Groups

Support groups and self-help groups have been growing since the 1970s, but there is limited research on how these groups affect the group members' values and beliefs, especially for women-oriented self-help groups (Forsberg et al., 2005). Therefore, this research adds to current literature about support and self-help groups in general and contributes information on the impacts these groups have on their group members. By analyzing the impacts this women's support group has on its group members, this research provides more knowledge on the

collective ideas held within a support group, the impacts the group has on members' values and beliefs, and support group's importance to the members.

Adamsen and Rasmussen (2001) argued self-help groups provide contact with others, friendships, new behaviors, self-confidence, and knowledge. They also argued other studies have found participating in self-help groups made individuals more connected to family and health-care professionals (Adamsen and Rasmussen, 2001). Similarly, Forsberg et al. (2005) found the same benefits of self-help groups as Adamsen and Rasmussen (2001) along with increased societal awareness, support from individuals in a similar situation, decrease in feelings of isolation, and an increase in one's self-esteem and self-understanding. Acknowledging their study relies on limited secondary research, Forsberg et al. (2005) demanded more research on women self-help groups through a gender perspective to analyze if self-help groups are important for implementing and/or revising societal gender norms. This research contributes additional findings about women's only support groups and furthers the discussion on support groups affecting group members' self.

Research found individuals joined support groups to handle difficult situations occurring in their lives or to create "social or personal change" (Adamsen and Rasmussen, 2001). Schonfled (1991) argued certain types of support were important for different life transitions. Also, he found support or companionship beneficial to one's mental health. Hatch and Kickbusch (1983) argued the main outcome of self-help groups was to build social networks for the participants. Additionally, Adamsen and Rasmussen (2001) found participants felt like they belonged to a community. These findings align with the overall goal of support groups and self-help groups and their desire to create companionship among group members.

Like previously discussed about the research on self-help groups, Tutty et al. (1993) found women who were assaulted and joined a support group improved emotionally such as increased self-esteem, felt belonging, had less stress, improved locus of control, and made changes to their marriages. Similarly, in a study conducted on online support groups, Barak et al. (2008) found these groups fostered empowerment in the participants and brought positive development since individuals were required to confess their emotions with others who have similar issues. Barak et al.'s (2008) study states support groups provide the chance to converse with others who may have similar issues. These studies provide insights on the core ideas being mentioned in support groups and on what concepts need to be analyzed when evaluating Arkitekt. However, these studies did not explore how support groups might be shaping their members' values and beliefs.

Addressing the gap in the literature that support groups and self-help groups are impacting the group member's values and beliefs, Kumar et al. (2019) analyzed beliefs and participation in politics. They found compared to women who are not involved in self-help groups, women who were in self-help groups were more involved in politics, used governmental entitlement schemes, had greater social networks and social mobility (Kumar et al., 2019). Kumar et al.'s (2019) study is limited in generalizability outside of India and on their analysis of social networks but provided interesting information about women's only self-help groups. This research analyzed the impact a support group has on a member's social networks and community by evaluating an American women's support group to understand if Kumar et al.'s (2019) findings apply.

Self

At an individual level, support groups aim to help someone with the conflicts they are dealing with. For many women, these conflicts are grounded in their presentations of self. Goffman (1959) argued individuals select the selves they want to be depending on the audience.

Thus, one has many selves which are either hidden until called into play when socializing with others (Goffman, 1959). Further, the self that is presented to the audience becomes validated or dismissed by others (Goffman, 1959). Stets and Burke (2014) discussed this verification process within groups claiming this process produces feelings of value, worthiness, and being their true self. Similarly, Callero (2003) argued social interactions, including the storytelling process in support groups, aid in constructing the self. Assuming individuals join a support group for the correct reasons and not for attention seeking, the self they decide to display may be their most raw and truthful selves that they would not show their friends or even family (Goffman, 1959).

Social order is evident in the selves individuals feel they can display in interactions (Goffman, 1959). For some women, societal norms and traditional family values may cause them to present the self of a caretaker, mother, and wife limiting any other qualities they may have like hobbies, dreams, achievements, etc. Goffman's (1959) presentation of the self and how it controls individuals is useful for understanding the struggles women may have with the self they present to others and the constraints they feel due to societal order and power relations. Additionally, Callero (2003) argued the self is constructed through the roles, identities, culture, and politics. Further demonstrating how societal norms, values, and gender ideology contribute to the creation of self. Through support groups, women are actively reconstructing their selves by discussing and working to dismantle these judgments and constraints placed onto them.

Power and Gender Ideology

Because Arkitekt is a women's only group, group members may use the group to discuss these more sensitive and important topics like power, the patriarchy, and discrimination which might be viewed as taboo in their social circles. Both power and the patriarchy have been studied heavily in the field of sociology. For this research, I limited my focus to Giddens' (1984) idea of

structures produced and reproduced in interactions in society. Through this idea, Giddens (1984) provided three components on how interactions shape social systems. The first component consists of knowledge, signals, and rules for communication and actions (Giddens, 1984). Communication can reproduce the stereotypes and traditional roles of women to maintain the patriarchal system. The second component argues rules, resources, and ideas of domination are utilized to gain power over others (Giddens, 1984). Women may experience a lack of power in their relationships or within society because men have control over resources like finances, decision making, etc. The third component with the ideas around sanctions, norms within society are used to legitimate discrimination (Giddens, 1984). For women in support groups, they may use societal norms of traditional family values and the roles of women, possibly from a religious lens, to legitimate their position within society and prevent them from achieving equality and silence their voices.

Although Giddens's (1984) structures of social systems applies to patriarchal constraints women might discuss in support groups, it is important to also discuss sociological literature and research on gender ideology. For this research, housework is of specific interest. Studies have found the division of household tasks are influenced by resources (Bianchi et al., 2000). With these resources, men or women could negotiate their household tasks (Evertsson and Nermo, 2007). However, as Evertsson and Nermo (2007) argued, the individual must be aware of their own status and what they could lose in a conflict of negotiating household tasks.

Even if women have increased resources and higher power in a relationship, studies have found women still do more housework than men (Bianchi et al., 2000; Evertsson and Nermo, 2007). This indicates resources and power do not help as much in negotiating the household tasks as previously thought, rather it is the underlying norms of gender which have the largest

effects on the division of housework. Further, Davis and Greenstein (2009) found more traditional households had women doing most of the housework tasks and women with these traditional values less likely to view this as inequality. This finding demonstrates the socialization of the “traditional” norms of a woman’s role within the house. Additionally, studies have found more egalitarian views on gender, within individual households or regionally, translated to more egalitarian division of household tasks (Davis and Greenstein, 2009; Bianchi et al., 2000; Evertsson and Neramo, 2007).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Group Member Survey

To analyze how Arkitekt might shape their group members' beliefs and values, a survey was distributed to a list from the co-founder which included past, present, and waitlisted group members creating a sample size of 221 group members. This number excludes 51 group members who opted out of the survey and emails that bounced or failed to send. Participants from other methods for this research were included in the survey distribution list. This survey was administered to the contact list through the survey platform Qualtrics. Participants' consent was asked in Qualtrics when the participants opened the survey link. Those who did not click consent could not answer the survey. From November 10, 2020 until January 6, 2021, 89 responses were collected. The survey response rate was 40%. For a handful of questions, around 20 survey respondents did not provide answers. Analyses for those questions used the total number of responses as the sample size, excluding the non-responses. This survey asked the respondents to answer questions about their demographics, relationships, religious beliefs, gender ideology, self-esteem, and their overall ideas about the group.

The survey measured demographics to better understand the respondents. To measure age, the survey asked the respondent to select a range in which their age lies within. For educational attainment, the survey asked respondents to select the highest level of education they have completed. As for race, the survey asked respondents to select all the races they identify as and gave the respondent the option to not answer if they did not feel comfortable. These demographic questions were reliable measures because they were borrowed from a multitude of surveys conducted in social science research.

Fifty-two percent of the survey respondents were 35-44 years old and 25% were 25-34 years old. As for race, 89% reported they identified as White and 5% identified as Hispanic/Latino. Respondents had high educational attainment: 45% of respondents reported having a bachelor's degree and 36% have a master's degree. Half of survey respondents reported being employed full-time. Survey respondents had sufficient incomes: 24% of respondents reported having an income less than \$50,000 with 44% of respondents reporting an income in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range.

The questions about relationships focused on their partners and friends. The survey respondents identified if there were changes in their relationship with their partners and to select what caused those changes. To measure friendships, the survey asked respondents to identify if they have experienced changes in their friendships and select what caused these changes. Additionally, the respondents were asked to describe their relationship to their group members in Arkitekt. Asking individuals about their relationships and friendships was a valid measure for understanding the individual's relationships. Ideally, respondents were honest and accurately reflected on their relationships. Asking these questions was a reliable method for measuring individuals' relationships because the individual can reflect on the changes occurring in those relationships.

The survey measured religious beliefs by asking respondents to select what religion they identified with. Although the survey does not include every religion, there was an option for the respondent to write in their religious identity if they could not find their religion in the choices. This question also had a response option that stated they do not identify with a religion. If the respondent selected a religion they identified with, the respondent was asked how long they have identified with this religion and to rate the frequency of their participation in common religious

activities. These questions helped identify the religions present among group members and how often they participated in their religion. These questions provided an indication of the importance of religion to the individual.

To understand how Arkitekt has shaped the respondent's identity, the survey asked the respondent to identify if their religious belief altered within the past year. If they experienced a change in their religious identity, the survey asked the respondent to identify why it altered. These survey questions on religion were based on similar questions about religious identity in other social science surveys.

To measure if Arkitekt groups discuss gender ideology, the survey asked the respondent three questions about gender. First, to measure the division of household tasks, survey respondents were asked who typically takes care of responsibilities around the house and if they have arguments with their partners about these responsibilities. Second, the respondent was asked how often gender and gender roles were discussed in their gatherings. The term "gender roles" was used in the survey to eliminate any academic language that may be confusing to survey participants. The term "gender roles" was used by participants in interviews and was selected over the more academic concept "gender ideology". Third, the respondent selected the mood of the group when gender and gender roles were discussed in the gathering.

This mood question provided some context on the main discussions about gender and gender ideology. If the group felt frustrated or sad, they could be discussing the limits they experienced in society as women. If the mood of the group felt positive or empowerment, the group could be deconstructing gender ideology and empowering each other to break the gender ideology society placed on them. By learning the mood of the discussions about gender, this

provided an indication for the types of topics that could be discussed about gender and gender ideology. This measurement may not be as reliable because there was the possibility that the discussions varied in mood. An individual's response may change over time depending on when they were asked this question. Outside influences could affect the member's mood on the day of the survey causing them to respond differently to the topics of gender and in their response on the survey about their mood when the group discussed gender ideology.

Self-esteem was measured by asking the respondents to rate their agreement on ten different statements. These statements were initially discovered in a survey conducted by Patchin & Hinduja (2010). In their study, they used Rosenberg's (1965) Self-Esteem Scale. Rosenberg's (1965, 1989) scale has been a common and valid method for measuring self-esteem for decades. In the survey, Rosenberg's (1965, 1989) original statements were included in a matrix, but "Neither agree nor disagree" was added to the agreement scale to align with the scales in the rest of the survey. By respondents stating their agreement to the statements, overall self-esteem was assessed. Although it was difficult to capture self-esteem in ten statements, these questions provided a snapshot and understanding of the respondent's self-esteem.

Measuring the respondent's ideas about Arkitekt provided an understanding of how useful they found this support group and what about the group they did not like. In the survey, the respondents were asked to rate how often they think about and talk about Arkitekt with others. This provided an understanding of how important the group was to the respondent.

To understand the group's value to the respondent, the respondent was asked to identify how often they have considered leaving the group. If they considered leaving, they were asked to explain why they considered leaving the group and if they sought out other support groups or

help. This provided an understanding on the negative aspects of Arkitekt and if members found the support group useful. To further investigate the positive and negative aspects of Arkitekt, respondents were asked to identify what they liked the most about Arkitekt and what they liked the least. This also provided a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of this support group.

The last question of the survey asked if the respondent would refer a friend to Arkitekt. This provided information about how important and useful the group was to the respondent. If they found it useful, then they would most likely refer a friend to join. If the group did not provide enough or the right type of support, the respondent would not refer a friend to join. This was a valid measure for understanding how the respondent truly feels about Arkitekt. Variations of this referral question on other surveys were deemed as valid and reliable questions. Therefore, it can be assumed this question was reliable as well.

Data was saved from Qualtrics as a CSV file into a secure folder and served as the master file. The CSV file was copied and stored in a secure folder for data analysis. R was used to analyze the data in aggregate. All identifiable information was kept in a secure folder and not included in the analysis. Summary statistics, frequency tables, graphs, and cross tabs of the data were generated for analysis (see Appendix B). The open-ended survey questions were de-identified and copied into a separate Excel spreadsheet. Conditional formatting of the cells through key words highlighted the themes present in each of the open-ended survey questions. This survey provided quantitative and qualitative data on how Arkitekt might influence the group members' values and beliefs. In addition, it provided an understanding of the changes the members might make in their lives, possibly because of their participation in Arkitekt.

Interviews

Two different types of interviews were conducted to gain detailed information about the group members' experiences with Arkitekt and their social networks. The first type of interviews conducted were standard sociological interviews. These interviews uncovered what caused the participant to join Arkitekt, if Arkitekt made a positive impact in their life, what the group member enjoyed about Arkitekt, and what helped or hindered them working through their problems. The data collected from the interviews helped identify the common themes around the influence of Arkitekt on its members.

The second type of interviews was social network interviews. Respondents were asked to think about their social group before they joined Arkitekt. For some, this was just a few months to a year ago, for others this was nearly five years ago which made it more challenging to recall. Handouts of ego network circles were given to the participant (see Appendix D). They were asked to place their social contacts within the three circles with the inner most circle being the closest to them and the outer most circle being the least close to them but still valuable in their social network. Once the participant labeled their social ties on the ego network map, they described how they decided where to place people, who these people were to them, and what type of support they received from them. This task was repeated on another ego network map for their social network after joining Arkitekt. These social network interviews helped identify the ties within Arkitekt, understand the type of support gained from each social tie, and verify if Arkitekt is their own community.

Interview participants were selected through snowball sampling. Arkitekt's co-founder provided a list of women interested in being interviewed about Arkitekt and their experience with the group. The goal was to conduct 25 interviews to obtain a sufficient understanding of

group members' experiences in Arkitekt. In total, 13 interviews were conducted: eight standard interviews and five social network interviews. An individual participated in both the standard interviews and the social network interviews. Everyone else participated in only one of the two types of interviews. All interviews occurred in public spaces agreed upon by the researcher and the participant prior to COVID-19. All interviews were audio recorded with the participant's permission. The interviews were structured and followed an interview guide to direct the conversation and ensure the important topics being analyzed in the study were discussed by the interview participants.

The standard interview recordings were transcribed into a Word document. The transcription was coded line by line looking for key phrases or themes that aligned with the research questions. This was completed manually once by the researcher. Additional coding was conducted in NVivo for key words and themes. After coding schemes met the researcher's standards, the manual and software coding were combined to identify the main themes present in the group members' experiences with Arkitekt, their reason for joining, what they sought, and what they worked on through this group.

For the social network interviews, the ego network maps filled in by participants and the interview recordings were used to construct two matrices, one before joining Arkitekt and one after joining Arkitekt, that contained the relationships they had with their social ties based on the type of support the participants received. The types of support analyzed were emotional, instrumental, social, health and wellbeing, and emergency. These support types were determined after the interviews and aligns with the community sociologists' categories of support. Thus, participants were not asked to place their social ties into these categories. During the social network interview, they freely talked about the type of support they received from their social

ties describing these relationships in their own words. While listening to the recordings of the interviews, I coded each participant's social ties into the five types of support.

These matrices were analyzed in UCINET to create visuals of these social networks to analyze which members knew each other and to identify who was central in these networks. The five participants' social network maps were visualized together instead of individually to view the common ties between them and analyze if Arkitekt makes its own community among its group members. Although, this data is only from five participants, it identified possible trends that might apply to most of Arkitekt group members and helped understand how joining Arkitekt might shape group members social ties. The visuals were also edited in UCINET to color code the strength of tie based on which circle the participants placed their social ties into during the interview. Green lines indicated the strongest tie to the participant. Blue indicated a strong tie to the participant. Red indicated a close tie to the participant. The participants' combined social networks of before joining Arkitekt and after joining Arkitekt visuals were compared for analysis (see Appendix E).

Participant Observation

To gain access to an Arkitekt gathering, the co-founder worked with facilitators to find a gathering willing to have me join as a participant-observer. I joined a new gathering with seven other women. The gathering met once a month for three hours until some of the members left causing the group to only need an hour and a half or two hours per monthly gathering. Members of this small gathering met in a conference room in a counseling center to discuss what was going on in their lives, how the curriculum relates to their situation, and actively listen to each other share their thoughts. I observed this gathering through all twelve meetings. The observation took a year and a half to complete.

In this gathering of eight women, all but three women were mothers. Besides two women, the rest of the group was between 30 to 50 years old. All but one woman identified as white. Four or five members were married or engaged. Three members worked in schools, two were college students, two worked in the health field, and one was unemployed. The group members joined this gathering to work on themselves and process past traumas.

I took on the role as a participant-observer because just observing a support group and taking notes about them did not seem the most appropriate method. The group would hesitate to share certain stories and struggles if they saw a researcher in the corner of the room taking notes. To make the group comfortable and to increase the authenticity of the stories, I decided to participate and observe. I read the curriculum and shared my stories like everyone else in the gathering. If I did not share, I would have been the only one who refused to share which could have disrupted the vulnerability of the group and could have caused the group to not trust me. I was embedded in the group, by reading and behaving like they were in the gatherings.

Support groups consist of individuals sharing their deep feelings and struggles with others in the group. This gathering expected each member to express vulnerability and share deep stories or thoughts. The members were transparent in the issues they were working through. As a participant, I needed to do nearly the same. I needed to show I was being vulnerable with the group and share true deep stories. I had to let them learn about me through my struggles and stories or else I would have been an outsider disrupting the flow of the gathering.

This field site provided the opportunity to directly observe the way group members engaged in the gatherings, the purpose of Arkitekt, and how it shaped the group members' values and beliefs through interacting in the group. My group was unique when it came to developing a community between the members. Many group members left after the first semester and by the

end of the entire curriculum, only four remained, including myself. Therefore, I cannot make larger claims about the group dynamics in an Arkitekt gathering due to the special circumstances of my group. However, all other aspects of the gathering I participated in apply to Arkitekt and how their small gatherings operate.

All notes from the gatherings and my reflections after the gatherings were typed from my journal into a Word document. The Word document was manually coded looking for key concepts and themes in the discussion notes. NVivo was used to conduct a second round of coding for keywords and themes. Both coding schemes were combined to create a cohesive understanding of the themes present in this gathering.

FINDINGS

This section is divided by the two research questions and how the data from the mixed methods contributed to the questions explored in this research. In the Implications section, sociological concepts will be applied to these findings from both research questions.

What Community Services is Arkitekt Providing for Its Group Members?

A Safe Space

When asked to describe Arkitekt in the group member survey, many common words or phrases used in the respondents' answers indicated how Arkitekt builds community. The top phrases used to describe Arkitekt were "A safe space/place" or "a place without judgment". This aligns with Arkitekt's mission of providing a gathering space for deep conversations among women and supports providing a communal space is important to the group members. Other less widely used phrases for describing Arkitekt were "community", "community of women", and "friendship group/group of friends/gathering of friends". One respondent stated Arkitekt is "A safe place for women to be fully seen while being fully supported".

Providing this safe space was an important component of Arkitekt for interview participants as well. Most of the participants used the phrased "a safe space" when asked how they would describe Arkitekt. This safe space serves a communal function. Providing a safe space allows for vulnerable conversations with other women in similar situations, many of which focused on life course and their development. Within this safe space, women feel they can be open and honest without feeling judged or worry about their thoughts being shared through their existing networks. The interview participants craved to be heard and to not hide the struggles they dealt with. They sought a group that would allow them to speak freely without judgement.

They needed a space to process these thoughts, events, and traumas that society labels as socially unacceptable to discuss in a typical social conversation.

In my observations, I noted how the space felt safe and inviting during the 3.0 curriculum gathering:

“The room was warm and inviting. Everyone seemed more comfortable and at ease at being here with each other. Probably because we were all getting to know each other more, have seen everyone’s vulnerability, and have felt supported by the group.”

In this journal entry, I experienced feeling secure in the space. The feelings of inviting and warmth made me feel safe and comfortable with sharing my thoughts with others. I felt supported by those occupying the space, my group members. Only when we feel safe, will we be vulnerable and connect deeply with others. In the creation of this safe space, the Arkitekt community develops, and friendships are built between the group members.

Support, Friendship, and Belonging

From the standard interviews, a theme that emerged was the need for support or companionship with others going through similar, rough, emotional experiences in their lives. Most of the women noted they were seeking a group that would listen to these deep emotions. Many discussed how these deep conversations were not acceptable or they did not have room for these conversations in every day social circles. Through being vulnerable with their group members at their gatherings, the interview participants claimed they created friends through Arkitekt. Many even called Arkitekt a “sisterhood” indicating that the friendships built between group members are deep, supportive, and long lasting. The interview participants who discussed their lack of support in their social circles before joining Arkitekt explained that Arkitekt was a community that connected them to people they could count on for support especially through difficult situations and major life events.

Most interview participants experienced a new transition in their lives, dealt with a life changing event, or dealing with the challenges associated with aging and development. These prominent events were a key reason for joining Arkitekt for most of the interview participants. These major events and transitions sparked a need to be supported by others, specifically those not involved with these events. Some expressed that having the support from others not involved with their life events made it easier to speak truthfully about how they felt about the event. They felt the support from their group was more objective and genuine. Thus, a support group provided exactly what they needed to vent, process, and grow from the life event. They had a space to be vulnerable about their struggles and no worries of their families', close friends', or partners' reactions to what they are feeling or thinking about regarding the life event. In this way, they let go of the mask they may wear in front of their loved ones and speak out on how they truly feel about what is happening in their lives with support from their Arkitekt group members.

Because group members support each other through these difficult situations, it was important to understand if group members were supportive during the first gathering or if it takes time to become comfortable with the other group members. To understand the levels of comfort with the group when starting Arkitekt and once they finished Arkitekt, survey respondents were asked to rate the group's interaction with each other, the group's mood, and the respondent's mood in their first and last gatherings. It was hypothesized the level of awkwardness and quietness would be higher in the first gatherings since the women may not feel comfortable with each other yet.

Table 1. Comparing Moods of the Group and Respondents During First and Last Gatherings

	Supportive	Positive	Motivating	Awkward	Relaxing	Quiet

Group's Interactions in First Gathering	25%	27%	15%	11%	12%	6%
Group's Interactions in Last Gathering	29%	24%	20%	4%	16%	3%
Group's Mood in the First Gathering	29%	26%	16%	7%	15%	4%
Group's Mood in Last Gathering	29%	24%	19%	3%	16%	5%
Respondent's Mood in First Gathering	24%	22%	17%	10%	13%	8%
Respondent's Mood in Last Gathering	26%	24%	17%	5%	16%	7%

From comparing the feelings at the first and last gathering, the feelings of awkwardness decrease over time and in both the first and last gatherings “Supportive”, “Positive”, and “Motivating” were the top three emotions felt by the group’s interactions with each other, the group’s mood, and respondent’s mood. Therefore, the group members showed up ready to support each other even when they have not met prior to the first gathering and this support has continued throughout their time with their group.

Through this support from their group members, many women I interviewed stated they kept in contact with their group members after completing Arkitekt and reached out to their group members between gatherings for support. In my experience, I was not close enough to my group members to ask them for advice or help outside of the gatherings. As far as I am aware, the women in my group have not talked to each other since our last gathering. The reason for this lack of togetherness may have been due to the ongoing changes our group experienced over the year and a half such as life course and COVID-19.

The group I participated in was no longer stable past the first semester. Over half the group left for a variety of reasons and the facilitators stated this was not typical. We added a member in the middle of the second semester who dropped out after meeting with the group

twice. Then, we added another member near the end of the second semester who stayed until the end. The group had only four members at the end of the curriculum. I believe this instability and loss of group members affected my gathering's chance of connecting with each other, creating friendships, and participating in the larger Arkitekt community. Within that first semester, I saw real connections being formed at the gatherings. It was not on the level of communicating outside the gathering, but if those members had stayed, I believe the group would have felt more connected.

Even though I did not experience friendships being made from my own participation in the gatherings, creating friendship was a central theme in the other methods for this research. In the group member survey, Arkitekt helped more with the respondents' friendships than their romantic relationships. Thirty-four percent of survey respondents reported they have worked on making their friendships better and 30% reported they have made new friends because of Arkitekt whereas 25% reported they are communicating more in their relationships with their partners. In addition, 37% reported they reached out to the women in their gathering outside of their gathering, 38% reported they have hung out with women in their gathering outside of their gathering, and 44% reported they consider the women in their gatherings as friends. From the data, Arkitekt had effects on the respondents' friendships which helps build a community. This was further shown in the social network analysis findings.

From the social network interviews, all five participants' networks grew after joining Arkitekt. Before joining Arkitekt, the five participants had a range of 3 to 20 social ties in their networks. After joining Arkitekt, the five participants had a range of 8 to 38 social ties in their networks, with much of this increase in ties stemmed from meeting Arkitekt group members and developing close relationships with them. In the after joining Arkitekt networks of the five social

network interview participants, 40 Arkitekt ties were listed. The type of support they went to their Arkitekt ties for were overwhelmingly emotional support (98% of Arkitekt ties), health and well-being support (95% of Arkitekt ties), and social support (78% of Arkitekt ties).

However, not all social network interview participants stated Arkitekt gave them friendships. Some stated Arkitekt gave them the knowledge and courage needed to remove individuals from their networks. For some social network interview participants, Arkitekt, the trauma, and life experiences they went through helped them redefine friendships and truly understand who could be there for them on a deep level and support them through rough times. This realization caused the removal of some social ties from some participants' social networks or placing some ties further away from them in the after joining Arkitekt social networks. These social network interviews demonstrate that Arkitekt gave them the opportunity to connect with people on a deeper level and develop close relationships with people within the group while also helping them redefine who is valuable to have relationships with and who no longer fits within their life. This was also true for one of the group members in the gatherings I participated in. In my notes, I wrote the following while one member shared:

“She feels there are two types of friends. First, there are the supportive ones like Arkitekt, and they embrace grief and those who are grieving. Second, there are the positivists who ignore grief and try to tell the person to move on. She informed us that she was in the process of getting rid of the friends who were positivists and unsupportive of her heartache.”

This observation demonstrates that Arkitekt showed group members what constitutes as true support and vulnerable friendships. They realized the lack of understanding and support from others in their current social networks have not helped them grow and process through these life events. Arkitekt provided them the deep connections they desired and missed. Arkitekt

aided in creating supportive friendships between group members and have made many group members feel they have a place where they belong.

Belonging is essential for creating community and for individuals to feel supported. Arkitekt's goal is to make every group member feel like they belong to develop a community. During the 2.0 gathering I attended, the facilitators stated they want everyone to feel like they belong and not that they just fit in. Belonging was a theme that appeared in the interviews as well when participants discussed their previous group experiences and why they joined Arkitekt. When asked what caused the interview participant to seek guidance through Arkitekt, she said:

“I really wanted some belonging and connection and that spiritual growth portion too, because it's really easy to get bogged down in your day-to-day and not be present and not work on yourself, but to do that through some sort of community, I was really craving something like that.”

Storytelling

The top three responses of what survey respondents liked most about Arkitekt were: “Hearing other people's stories” (20%), “The people involved” (17%), and “Going to the gatherings” (17%). Hearing others' stories was a common benefit described by research participants in all data collection methods. Hearing stories was valuable both for the individual sharing and for those listening. Storytelling fosters connections between each other, helps us feel less alone, and allows us to compare other's situations to our own to ease our minds about our experiences in our daily lives. I experienced the benefit of storytelling from my own group members:

“As I listened to the other group members share, I realized that some of their dilemmas were similar to mine. It felt comforting to hear that we all have some of the same struggles and that I am not alone in what I am experiencing.”

And is evident in this note from my observations as well:

“After everyone shared, one group member said she feels the hope in everyone’s story in this room and that it was impactful to hear all the stories.”

In both the observation notes, storytelling not only made the other member and I feel connected to everyone on a deep level, but it also made me feel at ease with what I was working through and provided hope for another group member. The mutually beneficial interaction between storyteller and listener aids in connecting the group members to each other which is a large component of how Arkitekt builds community. In an open-ended survey question asking respondents to describe Arkitekt, an individual described what I observed within my own gathering speaking to the power of storytelling:

“Arkitekt is a vessel for all that needs to be said. It is a space of listening and holding, of vulnerability and reflection. In gathering with other women, we enter a collective ancient knowing, and whether we are conscious of this or not, our experiences and our stories are transmuted. We have the opportunity to speak our voice, to hear our own words, to recognize threads in the stories of others, and to grow in empowerment; recovering the lost knowing that we are not alone.”

In another gathering I observed the power of storytelling. In the 3.0 curriculum, there was an optional assignment to write a letter from our grandchild to ourselves. I did not do the assignment, but one group member was courageous enough to complete the assignment. Here is what I observed when she shared the letter she wrote:

“It was beautifully written and powerful. We were in awe and teared up as she cried while reading through the letter. I felt the power in her words and could not help tearing up myself. I felt her emotions strongly as she read about her grandchild telling her what she loved about her. Some of those items like being free was something she was working on this year.”

This observation emphasizes the emotional and social impacts of storytelling. Through storytelling, we connect with others and build a community. As we sit and listen to the women’s struggles in the gatherings, we relate to them and connect with them emotionally. We empathize with them and truly hear their thoughts and emotions through storytelling. The facilitators ask for silence after each group member shares to deeply connect and hear what the group member just

shared. This ritual, with its rules and norms, creates bonds between the group members and creates a community built on the process of sharing and listening to provide clarity for the storyteller and security for the listeners.

Gaps in Existing Community Services

Through the research, the lack of depth and vulnerability in existing community services became apparent. In all data collection methods, research participants had some narrative about not finding what they needed in church groups and other support groups due to their structure, processes, and underlying principles. The existing community services have not supported women throughout the stages in their life course. As we age, we lose supportive and mentoring relationships leaving those in mid-life adulthood searching for developmental support and self-exploration in community services. Participants were unsatisfied with the current options, mostly churches. One interview participant described how she felt Arkitekt was different from her experiences with other church and women's groups:

“I had been in and out of different groups and small groups and women's groups. I didn't find anything that really allowed or fostered that same kind of depth of relationship in any group I had been in, any women's group I'd been in, before. I've been in some great small groups...but I felt like the way Arkitekt really helps women stand by each other...I hadn't experienced anything like that before.”

To better understand the gap in current community services and what sets Arkitekt apart from the rest, I asked the interview participant a follow-up question. I asked if what she described above was the main difference between Arkitekt and her involvement in other groups. She responded:

“I think that the main difference, well, some of the differences was a lot of the groups I was part of before were co-ed, so having it just be for women, I think, lends it another element of intimacy... just the difference between being in a sisterhood vs. something that's open to everybody does make a difference. I do think that the curriculum encourages being vulnerable in a way that we might not naturally go there in another

group of women. I would say the depth that Arkitekt brings... encourages really deep connection, and that to me is pretty unique. I don't think I've been part of a group before where you get to know people so quickly."

In her response, she noted her experience with co-ed support groups and the uniqueness of Arkitekt being a women's only support group. There is a gap in existing community services for women to discuss these broader themes of values, societal constraints, life events, challenges with development, and trauma. Many support groups focus on a specific subject such as domestic violence, health-specific ailments, etc. Book clubs and church groups have not provided deep emotional and vulnerable connections in which the interview participant, and many other research participants searched for. The interview participant further described the need for a group that fosters deep connection when she described her experience with Arkitekt:

"It also was impactful, because a lot of the women went to my church, and I was used to seeing them every Sunday. You know someone on this surface level, and so even in this four hours uncovering layers and layers and realizing, oh, I've seen you every Sunday for years, and I've never seen you really."

The participant's narrative about shallow relationships from churches was rephrased in similar words by nearly all interview participants. For many, the services churches provided did not align with what they longed for in community and their desire for vulnerability with other women. In my notes from a different interview, a participant stated the only women's groups she experienced was through her church. She experienced betrayal and judgement through groups in her church. Also, in her church's women's groups, not everyone was vulnerable which caused her to not tell them what truly happened in her life.

Another interview participant stated she remembered when she learned from her group members in Arkitekt that she was not alone in thinking church was not working for what she was looking for in terms of community. The interview participant stated other women in Arkitekt felt traumatized by churches too. Another interview participant stated the following as her

experience with not feeling like she belonged with her church and the pressure to fit into these underlying principles:

“In a certain church group, I had to think like them and be like them, and if I didn’t, then that meant that I didn’t know who Jesus was, so even though I have been a pastor before and did things, it was like you’re either going to do this, and if you don’t, then you don’t fit the group. I had a lot of oppression and prejudice against the fact that I was a minority.”

Because many research participants were dissatisfied with their church and church groups, understanding the religious identity of Arkitekt group members was necessary. Many survey respondents identified as Christian (51%) and 31% reported they do not identify with a religion. Survey respondents that identified with a religion stated they identified with their religion either their entire life or most of their life (84%) with most saying they practice their religion every week or every day for each of the religious activities in the survey matrix. Those who did change their religious view had these top three reasons: “New understandings and knowledge about religion” (26%), “Self-reflection” (24%), and “Felt confined by your religion” (19%). These reasons for changing religion are like the concerns expressed above by interview participants with their churches. In an open-ended question asking respondents to describe Arkitekt, some respondents stated it is “a place to explore spirituality”, “spiritual break throughs”, and “a place to go to instead of the church”.

Arkitekt is working to fill the gap identified by individuals about their churches not providing the community and the support these women want. These research participants desired community and spirituality but did not enjoy the way churches practiced or provided these services. They sought something new without the judgment that is embedded within the churches they attended. They sought deeper connections with others experiencing similar conflicts between self-growth and societal expectations. This lack of community from churches that was

identified by some research participants also came from the concern or discontent with the beliefs of their church. Many described their lack of support from their church appeared in their observations and reflections on the values of their religion and church. For many interview participants, they expressed the dilemma of their religious identity and what they have experienced with their churches. When asked about their religious views, the interview participant stated:

“I identify as a Christian, but I always feel like I have to give an operational definition of what that means to me, because I think that society in general has a negative—a lot of people have a negative perception of that, and I want people to know that I am the type of Christian that is open and respectful and loving and accepting of everyone, and it’s none of my business what other people believe. It’s something that’s kind of nurturing and supportive to me, but I also don’t feel like I strictly am religious.”

In notes from another interview, a participant mirrored this concern by stating she does not call herself a Christian because she disagreed with what it stands for: “coopted as a system of judgement”.

Arkitekt is working to create the community these women need and want while trying to help group members explore or continue to identify with their religion with new freedom. They provide the space for group members to reflect and redefine their spirituality based on their own values and beliefs. It is important that Arkitekt is working to address this gap in local services so individuals can have the community and support they need to thrive. This was expressed by an interview participant when asked if there was anything else they would like to share about Arkitekt:

“I think every person deserves a space where they can be together with others, whether that’s with one person. It might be a therapist or even just a mentor. It’s just so important that we’re not alone. We’re all walking each other home, and I just want to give this to everybody and hopefully they find it in some way, and hopefully there are churches and spiritual places where they can find that, but I didn’t find it, so this is where I found it.”

How is Arkitekt Affecting Group Members' Norms and Values?

Gender Ideology

Because Arkitekt is a women's only group, gender ideology, the responsibilities of women within their homes, and the constraints they feel from society have been discussed. When my group met to discuss the 2.0 curriculum, many of the discussions focused on constraints as women or the responsibilities that were assigned to them such as household chores. There were also discussions about relationships with their partners, wanting freedom, longing to pursue their goals, and wishing they had the independence men, specifically their husbands, have in society.

The 2.0 curriculum focused on "The Rubble State" in which you allow yourself to feel the "discomfort and disorientation of loss" (Arkitekt 2.0 Guide, 2018). In the coursework, group members were asked to identify what they wanted, when they felt most like themselves, what makes them envious, and what breaks their heart. Not surprisingly, when tasked to feel loss, many group members shared their issues with traditional roles, gender ideology, and their desires for freedom. They felt constrained by these roles and through exploring what they wanted versus what they felt they lost, they expressed losing their passions and goals. They envied their male partners for being able to live their dreams or for having less responsibilities than themselves. This tension is particular to women in this stage in the life course, where the need to contribute to society is often not compatible with traditional expectations and opportunities for women.

The 2.0 curriculum gathering I attended held the most direct discussion about gender ideology from nearly all group members. Throughout the other gatherings I attended, these thoughts about losing their passions and goals continued in group members' stories but were not a central theme to the whole gathering. However, these feelings expressed periodically by group members over the course of the 12 curriculums demonstrates how these group members

attempted to dismantle gender ideology and process the loss they felt from not being able to pursue their dreams because of gendered expectations and opportunities. In my gathering on the 8.0 curriculum, we welcomed a new group member. She shared why she joined Arkitekt. This is what I noted about her response:

“She joined Arkitekt to work through her experiences with her health concerns and she is having issues with her husband. She feels like they have focused on just his dreams and not hers.”

This description of why she joined Arkitekt focuses on the loss she has experienced and the troubles with societal gender ideology. Through all these discussions over the year and a half period with my group members, I do not recall any group member stating or indicating they have successfully dismantled gender ideology in their relationships. However, the act of discussing these feelings of frustration with traditional roles is progress to help these group members further work through gender ideology and their relationships with their partners.

To better understand how frequently gender ideology was discussed in other group members’ gatherings and as a point of comparison to what I observed in my gatherings, survey respondents were asked “How often are issues around gender and gender roles being discussed in your gatherings?”. Only 45% reported it was discussed “Occasionally” and 29% reported “Never” or “Rarely”. To break this down further, 47% of survey respondents that identified as Christian stated “Occasionally”, along with 67% of those who were unsure of their religion, whereas 35% of those who did not practice or identify with a religion stated “Occasionally” and 39% stated “Often” or “Always”. Fifty six percent of survey respondents who listed their religion as “Other” reported “Often” to the same question.

Table 2. Frequency of Gender Roles Discussed in Gatherings by Religious Identity

Religion	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always	NA_	Total
Christian	13%	24%	47%	8%	0%	8%	100%
I do not practice or identify with a religion	13%	9%	35%	26%	13%	4%	100%
Other:	11%	0%	22%	56%	0%	11%	100%
Prefer not to answer	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Unsure	0%	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	100%
NA	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%

This table shows that religion does seem to influence how often participants noticed gender was discussed. Interestingly, those selected their religion as “Other:” reported the highest frequency of discussing gender roles in their gatherings with 56% stating “Often”. This could be because they are actively dismantling the traditional gender ideology associated with some religions which would align with the narratives of the church not providing the needed community and support. With nearly half of survey respondents identifying as Christian reported they “Occasionally” discuss gender roles, it raises the question if they are trying to dismantle the traditional gender ideology they have learned through their religion or if they are taught to not view this inequality. This was further explored in the interviews.

From the standard interviews, a common theme was how their religious beliefs were viewed as restricting or misaligned with their morals and values. Most of the respondents discussed how they came to the realization that their religion and their church preached love but

practiced discrimination. To them, this realization caused many to leave their church, explore spirituality, and/or reflect on the role of religion in their lives. A few interview participants expressed the backlash they received from their church because of their decisions. Some were involved with church support groups but did not feel truly supported by the group members. One interview after the next, the idea of religion restricting their actions and morals became a common narrative. Arkitekt claims they accept all religions and discusses spirituality in more general terms. This idea most likely appealed to these participants who wanted to explore their spirituality and be free of the discrimination they faced or experienced by their churches.

When asked to elaborate on her thoughts about her Christian religion, one interview participant explained how the church felt fake, harsh, and oppressive. She stated:

“I would see all these people out on a Saturday night, you know, wasted and then there they are on Sunday morning pretending to be these perfect creatures.”

This excerpt from an interview starts to reveal how the values of the church felt oppressive or discriminatory. Discrimination and oppression from the church was described in most of the interviews. In my notes from another interview, I captured what she had to say about her religion:

“Felt like because the church wouldn’t approve of her internal life then her friends wouldn’t either and God wouldn’t approve. She said I will be this person here and then be another person in another social circle, to not rock the boat.”

Here the interview participant struggled to navigate who they were and what is acceptable in each social circle. The norms and rules to the church, especially on the acceptable behavior of women, caused this conflict for the interview participant. In my notes for the same interview, she discussed her relationship with her soon-to-be ex-husband and how the church’s views of women impacted her:

“She was raised with the church expectations of what a woman should be; somebody who stands by her man, support, and the man is the head of the family and the woman is the neck.”

These roles and values of what a woman should do and who they should be in relation to their family was discussed in many of the interviews. As observed and found in the various methods used in this research, the women joined Arkitekt to feel religiously free to explore their beliefs, gain freedom from societal constraints, and redefine their relationships with their partners to become more liberated. However, some group members struggled to reach the freedom they desired.

In the group member survey, most of the respondents reported they were responsible for the household tasks labeled as “women’s work” such as “Grocery shopping” (63%), “Cleaning” (69%), “Cooking” (60%), and “Laundry” (67%).

Table 3. Division of Household Tasks

Household Tasks	Respondent	Partner(s)	Equally Split between Respondent and Partner(s)	Other Family Member	Other	Hired Caregiver
Grocery shopping	63%	0%	36%	1%	0%	0%
Cleaning	69%	3%	21%	0%	1%	7%
Cooking	60%	8%	32%	0%	0%	0%
Laundry	67%	4%	27%	0%	1%	0%
Bills	51%	33%	15%	0%	1%	0%
House Maintenance	27%	34%	30%	4%	1%	3%
Trash	33%	32%	23%	12%	0%	0%
Childcare	47%	4%	49%	0%	0%	0%

Although conversations in the groups have included gender roles and frustration around the division of household chores, the survey found most women in Arkitekt still completed tasks associated with gender. Further, more “manly” tasks such as “Trash” or “House Maintenance”

were more equally distributed as the respondent's task, their partner's task, or equally split between them. This was also the case for "Childcare". With this mismatch of what women discussed about gendered household tasks and the tasks they completed, only 30% of survey respondents reported they "Occasionally" argued with their partners over these household tasks. These statistics display societal gender ideology is embedded in these survey respondents' lives even if they have actively tried to work through these roles in Arkitekt.

With current women empowerment movements and a safe space for women to discuss oppression and inequality, it is surprising politics were hardly discussed in the gatherings, especially with the conversations occurring around gender ideology which could easily connect to policies. According to the survey results, 64% said politics were "Never" or "Rarely" discussed in their gathering. Although politics are not directly engaged with in the curriculum, I would predict some women in Arkitekt struggled with political issues, but the data does not support this prediction. If politics were discussed, 33% of these survey respondents reported feelings of frustration in the group, 24% reported sadness, and 19% reported empowerment. When asked about their participation in political activities, most reported they participated every year or every couple of years except for discussions which was mostly every week and every month. The survey respondents are politically active individuals, so again it is interesting the politics that oppress women was barely discussed when the group members have expressed the need to have freedom and to stop sacrificing their goals for their families.

Self-Exploration

Because most group members are working on traumas, deep emotional wounds, and their identity, it would be challenging to successfully progress and work through everything on their own without a group or the curriculum. Arkitekt provides a structured curriculum and gatherings

to help keep members on track and to carry them through the self-healing/discovery process. This helps motivate group members to work on themselves. Without the structured curriculum or accountability from the gatherings, I do not think I would have progressed nearly as much as I did on my own. It is easy to tell yourself you need to reflect and work on your issues, but other pressing matters demand attention and life keeps moving forward minimizing the time you give to yourself to work through and process some issues and trauma. At different gatherings, group members claimed they almost did not show up to the gathering that day. It takes strength to get yourself to attend this type of group and to be authentic about your thoughts on the curriculum and what you experienced. It takes effort, time, and accountability. From my notes on the gathering on the 5.0 curriculum:

“Another group member shared and stated that she needed the accountability to do this work. She said she would not do this work on her own, so it is nice to know there are others doing it too. She was glad there was a group to discuss this work with because she wants and needs accountability.”

Accountability was a common theme for what made participants self-exploration successful in Arkitekt. Accountability keeps group members on a timeline for processing events and exploring themselves. Because there are specific days when group members meet, Arkitekt provides a structure and deadlines to keep group members progressing forward and promote self-growth. When asked what tools helped her grow, an interview participant said:

“I think it was 1) the accountability of women, so if you choose a word as part of it, and then use that word to help you define the work you’re going to do for the semester, and I think having a word to frame things through sort of gives your semester a story, which I think helps you to sort of focus on what you’re doing.”

The gatherings and the curriculum helped guide me through my processing of events that happened over the past few years in which I needed to move on from and remove the blame I placed onto myself. In my time participating, I explored what I wanted and what I needed to

work through to reach my goal. My experience was like other participants' experiences. Interview participants gained new ideas about themselves through being involved in Arkitekt. The participants also noted Arkitekt helped them recognize who they were currently and identify how that aligns with who they would like to be. In exploring their identity through Arkitekt, all the participants stated the last gathering was their most memorable session.

The last gathering session consists of everyone reading the statements they created before the gathering about what they see in each person in their group. The members take turns describing what they see in each group member. This continues until every member had the opportunity to hear how their group members describe them. For the interview participants, this validated who they were and was emotionally impactful to hear how others viewed them since we are our own worst critics. In an interview, a participant stated the last gathering was powerful because each member tells you what they see in you: "The other things that other people saw in me were the things I wanted to be noticed for". Some of the participants kept the statements their group members read to them from their last gathering in a journal and shared some of the comments with me during the interview. Others remembered a statement or two by memory indicating how hearing those statements helped their identity and growth over time.

Arkitekt's design makes self-exploration and growth a key component of what they provide for their group members. In the group member survey, some participants described Arkitekt as a group "for growth" and "identity". Because of this, I predicted group members would have lower self-esteem as they deal with deep issues around identity, life decisions, and family. However, the data showed most respondents have good self-esteem with over 66% positive responses on each self-esteem statement (agreeing for positive self-esteem items and disagreeing for negative self-esteem items). The two weakest items of self-esteem were feeling

useless (54% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 28% agreed) and they needed more respect (47% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 29% agreed or strongly agreed), but these negative self-esteem items hardly have any agreement which further demonstrated good self-esteem for survey respondents.

Since this survey was distributed to group members involved with Arkitekt at different lengths of time, it is difficult to conclude whether Arkitekt has helped group members improve their self-esteem. This item could be given to new Arkitekt members and used as a pre-survey when they first join Arkitekt and as a post-survey when they complete Arkitekt to better understand if Arkitekt improves group members' self-esteem. The positive self-esteem found in the survey respondents could be a result of their experience with Arkitekt.

When asked about how they have used this experience with Arkitekt, many survey respondents stated they used or referenced the curriculum and resources within the guides. A few reported they attended therapy after their experience with Arkitekt. This demonstrates that Arkitekt revealed and helped them identify what they needed to work through, so they sought additional services outside of Arkitekt to further work through trauma and on themselves. It also demonstrates the desire to continue to grow and self-explore. A couple of survey respondents reported they have continually reflected on the content of Arkitekt in their daily lives indicating Arkitekt creates this self-reflection and self-exploration pattern that is carried forward with group members even after they complete Arkitekt. Further, a few survey respondents stated they pay more attention to themselves or practice more self-care after their experience with Arkitekt. One survey respondent stated:

“This experience shaped who i am and continues to. The cornerstones of honesty, vulnerability, practicing openness, breathing, meditating, looking for the ways my 'word' manifests, the way i ask questions and build friendships. The curriculum and the

coursework continues to serve me. I'm also in ongoing therapy because I believe in it. Arkitekt is a space that encourages my pursuit of my fully alive self.”

Another survey respondent stated something similar:

“I feel like I have deepened a love for myself and increased my empathy towards others. We are all evolving at different levels and it is an amazing gift to be witness to these changes.”

This newly found self-love promotes group members to take care of themselves and to be mindful of the self they want to be. It requires paying attention to and nurturing the self to understand who they are and what they need to embrace that self. Further demonstrating the impacts Arkitekt had on self-exploration, an interview participant said:

“I think Arkitekt sets up a place where you can come home to yourself, where you can find out who you really are and the way that each individual is uniquely created to be, and then all these events in our lives, all these things happen, pains and hurts, and so we're able to come back and take off all those things and to work through them and to find a group of people who support you and who are there for you, and so it's like you're coming home and back to yourself without all the add-ons or everything that we put on, but our original design, the way that we were created to be.”

Part of this self-exploration comes from the process of storytelling. Storytelling not only served the communal function discussed previously, but also provided the opportunity for the storyteller to share what bothered them and to express their thoughts and feelings. In doing so, they felt lighter and gained clarity on the problem providing them guidance on how to work through the problem found within the story. However, the most important component of storytelling for self-exploration was group members feeling heard.

In the interviews, “feeling heard” was a common phrase used when describing their experience with Arkitekt. An interview participant described her experience of being heard by her group members:

“They're just always there to listen, hear what I had to say. That was important to me. I wanted to be seen and heard and held, and I was, and when I broke down, finally just

cracked through, they were like, “This is a breakthrough,” because there were so many meetings that I was so nervous being the youngest one and feeling like I was comparing a lot to them, comparing myself to these amazing women who all accomplish so much and are just on fire, so that was important. That was an important moment for me.”

This quote from an interview demonstrates the process of storytelling for self-exploration and growth. Truly being listened to allowed her to be open and vulnerable not only with her group members but to herself. She broke down the judgments of herself in relation to who she was telling herself she was and through the comparisons to those around her. In this breakthrough, she learned about herself and minimized the comparativeness she experienced during these gatherings. The storytelling process helped her navigate through the false claims and thoughts she had about herself. This was like many of the interview participants’ experiences indicating that feeling heard, a ritual in all Arkitekt gatherings, is a key component of their self-exploration and growth in Arkitekt.

IMPLICATIONS

Religion

From a sociological perspective, religion has the power to bring people together and create group bonding (Durkheim, 1995). Because many of the participants in this research identified as Christian, many were recruited to Arkitekt through a local church. Religious identity plays a large role in creating bonds between those involved within the group. Thus, it is expected the group will become even more homogeneous over time with the recruitment through churches and word of mouth (Giuffre, 2013). However, this could potentially lead to some group members feeling less like they belong if they identify with a different religion or feel the spirituality component of Arkitekt does not work for them. For many, Arkitekt and their ideas have shaped their identity with their community and world which is a fundamental component of groups and religion in general (Durkheim, 1995). Through the norms created within Arkitekt and the newly defined Christian ideas and practices identified in the group, a sense of community is created for these individuals who found Arkitekt to be everything they needed (Giuffre, 2013).

Some survey participants stated Arkitekt became a place they turned to when their churches failed them, but they did not want to give up on their religion. From interviews, many participants had similar versions of a story about their Christian beliefs and negative experiences with their churches. They sought community support elsewhere and found it in Arkitekt. Arkitekt draws in Christians who want to dismiss churches' regulations such as being unsupportive of the LGBTQ community or those who were assaulted and try to find a revised version of their Christian faith within Arkitekt. They do not want to lose community and their spirituality completely because they would lose a core component of human connection.

Ellison et al. (2014) and Krause et al. (2002) found women were more likely to receive support from their church which creates more social relationships for wellbeing. However, the findings suggest the women in Arkitekt do not feel like they received the type of support they needed from their churches or their relationships with individuals at their churches. Through this research, the women in Arkitekt are disrupting and redefining “traditional” religious support groups by identifying why these church groups did not work for them. Further, they sought and found a group with less restrictions which allowed them to explore some topics and their spirituality without feeling the judgment or limits of their churches. It would be interesting to research if this phenomenon is occurring with other women who have turned away from their churches and sought other groups for support and community to understand if this is more of a critique of religion or has more to do with gender ideology.

Gender Ideology

Group members have vaguely described their tensions with gender ideology. However, only a few identified that gender ideology and traditional roles were partly embedded in the struggles they had with their partners. Additionally, the conversations in the group I participated in included discussions of gender ideology but were not bluntly labeled as such, besides during the 2.0 gathering. One participant discussed how her husband would not help with some of the household tasks unless specifically asked for help. For her, the energy put into asking or reminding her partner was too much and she may as well use the energy to complete the task herself. A couple of other participants in the gathering agreed and echoed the same issue in their relationships. At other times, conflicts with participants’ relationships were discussed with gender ideology embedded in the issue but not called out such as the traditional role of women in the relationship, if she should work, and sacrificing her dreams for their family and their partner.

However, these conversations stayed specific and did not amount to larger discussions about gender ideology in society.

The survey results support the traditional division of household tasks by men and women. However, with “Trash”, “Childcare”, and “House Maintenance”, there was a near split on the respondent completing these tasks, their partner, and equally split between themselves and their partner. Revealing at least a minor change in the division of household tasks by gender ideology. These results align with the studies of Davis and Greenstein (2009), Bianchi et al., (2000), and Evertsson and Neramo (2007) which explored who typically completed household tasks. In those studies, and my own, women overwhelmingly completed household tasks and many of the women in the survey reported working a job outside of the labor they conducted in their households (employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed). This raises some questions on why there is still a big disparity between genders and household tasks especially in a group actively trying to explore themselves, redefine their values, and dismantle gender ideology in the process. One explanation of this could be group members’ traditional Christian upbringings, in which studies have found individuals with more traditional views are less likely to view the division of housework as unequal (Davis and Greenstein, 2009). Because it is challenging to dismantle a lifetime of traditional religious ideas, especially in the year and half commitment in Arkitekt, group members might demand a more egalitarian approach to household tasks over time.

Because gender ideology, including the division of household tasks, are deeply embedded in our lives, it is necessary to unpack how these roles and ideas are maintained and reproduced in society. Applying Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory, communication and signals can reproduce the stereotypes and traditional roles of women to maintain the patriarchal system. The partners of Arkitekt group members might be influenced by signals within society that convey

the gender ideology of women and men related to household tasks, especially because the United States is not an egalitarian nation (Giddens, 1984; Davis and Greenstein, 2009; Bianchi et al., 2000; Evertsson and Neramo, 2007). Secondly, Giddens (1984) stated rules, resources, and ideas of domination are used to gain power over others. Survey respondents may feel a lack of power since many of them reported that they do not argue with their partners over household tasks and are the ones responsible for most of the tasks. Lastly, Giddens (1984) argued societal norms are used to legitimize discrimination and oppression. For the survey respondents, they or their partners may use the societal norms of traditional family values and the roles of women, possibly through the perspective of their religious identity, to legitimate their position within their household while minimizing arguments about the determination of household tasks and why they are determined through these perspectives. Here, the “status quo” of the division of household tasks is used to continue oppressing women. By following the “status quo”, an equal division of household tasks is avoided since this is not a societal norm in the United States.

Politics

Surprisingly, the findings did not indicate frequent discussions about politics. However, this does not mean the group members are apolitical. Most of the survey reported they participate in the religious activities in the matrix every year or every other year. If discussions about politics occur, the top three emotions were “Frustration”, “Sadness”, and “Empowerment”. This data supports Kumar et al.’s (2019) claim about women in support groups being politically involved and active. Because conversations are hardly about politics, the political activism appearing in this group is most likely not because of others in their gathering, but rather they are highly educated, identified as white, and reported high incomes. As voting and political activism

data has shown, there is more participation from those who identify as white, with higher incomes, and with higher education (Pew Research Center, 2006; 2018).

The lack of political discussion makes sense given Arkitekt's curriculum does not discuss political matters and focuses more on the individual, their issues, and their identity. In groups without a structured curriculum, like the one Kumar et al. (2019) studied, it may be more likely to have political discussions during the support group. However, I am surprised conversations do not end up becoming political in today's climate. Discussing gender ideology can easily lead to discussions about policy and regulations. Though this is not the case from survey respondents. One participant I interviewed briefly discuss politics and governmental policies affecting people emotionally in her reply on why she thinks Arkitekt is needed right now. Arkitekt's design and curriculum avoids discussions around politics and aims to keep the focus on the self and not how they are impacted by being oppressed in larger systems. As a Sociologist, I have connected the gathering discussions from my group to some larger societal issues but not everyone is aware of or actively tries to connect their situation to larger systems, especially when the curriculum does not guide members in that direction.

Friendship and Community

One factor evident in all the data collected, except for the group I participated in, is how Arkitekt connects individuals together and either creates new friendships or helps repair current friendships. Overwhelmingly in all data collected, participants stated they have become friends with some or all their group members. Throughout life events, our expectations of our social network change (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016). Research participants have shown and described how joining Arkitekt and the life events occurring created changes in their social network and what type of support they expected from their networks resulting in new supportive friendships

and the removal of ties that did not provide the support they needed at this point in their life course. From the social network maps, there is an indication of Arkitekt becoming a community with all the participants sharing a couple of contacts. Although only five individuals participated, these maps serve as preliminary social network data and provided enough information to predict Arkitekt brings group members together, with many of the Arkitekt ties being some of the closest ties, and two to three key contacts within the community. Further, those who have some ties with Arkitekt group members are more likely to join Arkitekt (Backstrom et al., 2006). Thus, creating more mutual ties and creating a larger Arkitekt community.

Sociologically, communities are created through networks (Giuffre, 2013; Bruhn, 2005). For those who did not connect with their group members well or did not make friendships, they may feel Arkitekt is not a community since their network is not connected to other group members' networks or they may not have felt like they belonged in the group. Those who do not feel involved or that they belong in the group are less likely to participate and show up (Backstrom et al., 2006). Feelings of belonging allow vulnerability to occur which strengthens the support and emotional connections between the group members, is a key component of communities, and necessary in support groups like Arkitekt (Backstrom et al., 2006; Adamsen and Rasmussen, 2001). Vulnerability among group members is needed to support discussions about identity, life course, and personal development.

A community does not feel like one until there is a space for individuals to gather and socialize with one another creating trust and emotional connections. Because many of the interview participants felt what they had to say was socially unacceptable to discuss with their current network, Arkitekt creates a community and network of individuals through providing a space for individuals to gather when they need to have these deep conversations. With many

group members having conversations around the psychosocial development tensions experienced with aging, they needed a new social network that would support these conversations, connect with them, and not judge them for what they may be feeling, specifically stagnation or issues with losing themselves in their family and responsibilities (Gilleard and Higgs, 2016). Without this space for conversing, sharing, and being with others, Arkitekt would feel like a group an individual takes membership in but not a group that has brought them community and social ties.

Communities provide support, nourishment, feedback, guidance, expression, and hope (Bruhn, 2011; Giuffre, 2013). From interviews and social network interviews, participants noted how supportive their group was and continued to be in their daily lives. Most participants stated they know they can call or text their Arkitekt friends for support on almost anything: emotional support, instrumental support, social support, and health and wellbeing support. Further, the social network interviews indicated the ties built in Arkitekt largely provide emotional, health and wellbeing, and social support. This aligns with some sociological studies on how support groups affect the health and wellbeing of those involved (Lumino et al., 2017; Bruhn, 2011; Heaney & Israel, 2008). The support group members give each other outside of the gatherings makes Arkitekt a community.

Self

Although Arkitekt is a community, the work itself is not community oriented. The gatherings and curriculum are individually focused. A huge theme throughout the curriculum is ‘the shadow self’ vs ‘the true self’. Within the dichotomy, is the idea of how we present our self to others and the authenticity of who we think we are (Goffman, 1959). Goffman’s idea on the presentation of the self was heavily found within the curriculum and the discussions I experienced, and in some of the stories from the participants interviewed. It is also a core

component of Arkitekt, where Arkitekt argues that in the gatherings women can be their true self without judgment. Some interview participants stated that in the gatherings they felt they did not have to be fake and could show up as their whole self which was missing from their current social life. Many noted Arkitekt was a space to speak freely without the worry and consequences of their families, close friends, or partners hearing their true thoughts and feelings. Thus, many of these participants expressed constraint or the inauthenticity of socializing with others in their current social circles. The presentation of the self occurs for various reasons: acceptance, fear of not being what the person wants, scared of being authentic, etc. but Arkitekt provides the space for a more authentic presentation of the self (Goffman, 1959).

However, I wonder how authentic these group members' presentations of self are in the gatherings. In a group like this, with the curriculum so inward focused, many might continue putting on a performance in their gatherings. They may act more upset or dramatic to convince the members of how rough everything is for them and to gain sympathy. They may keep some composure in the group to not appear like a complete mess. When we are with groups of people, are we not always performing? As humans, we want to be liked and have positive social relationships, so we constantly present different selves to different people or groups to fulfill our connection and social needs with others and attempt to avoid any humiliation or negative comments from others (Goffman, 1959).

Arkitekt's curriculum argues a similar point that we alter who we are for different people, or what they call 'the shadow self'. Through the curriculum, Arkitekt tries to liberate the group members by encouraging them to find who they are or want to be, accept the self, and then live life as their 'true self'. In the gathering I participated in, I heard many stories of how the roles, responsibilities, and titles these members had conflicted or constrained their 'true self'. These

discussions occurred multiple times by group members. Thus, demonstrating how they present different selves based on the responsibilities tied to these roles and never really feel completely whole or like themselves (Goffman, 1959; Callero, 2003).

After completing the curriculum, I do not feel it is possible to present just one ‘true self’ all the time. Individuals have many different social networks, titles, and responsibilities that make it nearly impossible to present a true self to all when we have organized and categorized our lives to have separate components and to avoid integrating all aspects of our lives (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). Different aspects of our lives have different norms, values, and rules to maintain social order (Durkheim, 1995). Therefore, presenting just one true self could disrupt the order for those involved in that social life and cause the individual to be removed from social circles when they break the norms and rules agreed upon by groups (Durkheim, 1995)

Storytelling

In all the research findings, storytelling was described as one of the best components of group members’ experiences with Arkitekt. Through interviews and open-ended questions on the group member survey, group members described the power of storytelling. For some, the storytelling process allowed the listener to reflect and hear the struggles of others which, in most cases, made the individual’s struggles seem less harsh. For others, the process was more impactful as the one telling the story because they were able to describe not only what happened but their feelings on the situation. Based on other research conducted, it is not surprising storytelling serves this dual purpose in Arkitekt.

Thinking of storytelling as a group process, or the focus on the listeners, informs how this interaction creates community. Arkitekt’s ritual of giving the floor to one person, expectations of quietness from the group, and the minute silence after the storyteller finishes speaking has

created a process that bonds group members together. The norms and roles of Arkitekt's storytelling process not only creates a systematic flow of the gathering, but also builds trust and emotional connections among everyone partaking in the practice (Loseke, 2007; Prasetyo, 2017). Because Arkitekt has created the norms and rules for this gathering, it creates an identity for the group and for the group members involved (Durkheim, 1995).

Thus, it is also important to unpack how storytelling contributes to individuals' identity and self. Through the narratives of those who argued being the storyteller was impactful, the phrase "feeling heard" was frequently used. Through the space Arkitekt provides, an individual can speak in the non-judgment of other women and storytelling has contributed to group members' realization of what may be occurring (Prasetyo, 2017). Through what I have experienced and heard from interview participants, Arkitekt gives group members the opportunity to actively process the deeper emotions and thoughts associated with the event or conflict. Additionally, storytelling forced the individual to discuss these thoughts instead of keeping them trapped inside with no chance for verbal reflection or healing. This allows the individual to reflect on who they were in the situation processed and identify who they want to be in the future (Prasetyo, 2017; Loseke, 2007; Ewick and Silbey, 1995). This self-reflection is important for healthy psychosocial development, according to Batra (2013). For a support group like Arkitekt, storytelling is one of the very few strategies which creates a supportive community among group members while helping individuals self-explore simultaneously.

CONCLUSION

Through studying a local women's support group, some of the findings and implications aligned with previous studies on support groups. Creating a community, friendship, and a supportive network is a core component of support groups in general and was apparent in Arkitekt as well (Forsberg et al., 2005; Adamsen and Rasmussen, 2001; Schonfled, 1991; Kickbusch, 1983; Tutty et al., 1993; Barak et al., 2008; Kumar et al., 2019). Interestingly, this research uncovered sensitive issues around religion and gender ideology for these group members. Specifically, the group members were conflicted between the religion they grew up associating with, their values and beliefs, and with the roles they have as women. As these group members have turned away from their Christian churches because their values no longer match what the church does for their local community, they find Arkitekt as a space to explore and redefine their spirituality. Some of the churches' values group members actively turned away from involved traditional roles within their relationships and households. Although the findings still indicate there is inequality in the group members' households with the division of household tasks, the process of leaving their church and discussing these societal constraints placed onto women in their Arkitekt gatherings is a step forward to dismantling these larger issues. Future research could examine if there is a trend in women leaving their churches and joining other groups in hopes of redefining their religious beliefs and values as well as dismantling societal norms and the constraints women face in their daily lives.

REFERENCES

- Adamsen, L. & Rasmussen, J.M. (2001). Sociological perspectives on self-help groups: Reflections on conceptualization and social processes. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 35(6), 909-917.
- Arkitekt 2.0 Guide. (2018). "The Rubble State".
- Backstrom, L., Huttenlocher, D., Kleinberg, J., & Lan, Xiangyang. (2006). Group formation in large social networks: Membership, growth, and evolution. Proceedings of the ACM SIGKDD International Conference on Knowledge Discovery and Data Mining. 2006. 44-54. 10.1145/1150402.1150412.
- Barak, A., Boniel-Nissim, M., & Suler, J. (2008). Fostering empowerment in online support groups. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 24(5), 1867–1883. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2008.02.004
- Batra, S. (2013). The Psychosocial Development of Children: Implications for Education and Society — Erik Erikson in Context. *Contemporary Education Dialogue*, 10(2), 249–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973184913485014>
- Beckford, J. A. (2015). 'Community' in the sociology of religion: The case of Britain. *Social Compass*, 62(2), 225–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0037768615571692>
- "Bedrock Beliefs - Arkitekt™." Arkitekt, www.arkitektwomen.com/our-vision.
- Bianchi, S., Milkie, M., Sayer, L., & Robinson, J. (2000). Is Anyone Doing the Housework? Trends in the Gender Division of Household Labor. *Social Forces*, 79(1), 191-228. doi:10.2307/2675569
- Bruhn, J.G. (2005). *The Sociology of Community Connections*, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2005.
- Bruhn, J.G. (2011). *The Sociology of Community Connections Second Edition*, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1633-9_10, © Springer Science+Business Media B.V. 2011.
- Callero, P.L. (2003). The Sociology of the Self. *Annual Review Sociology*, 2003, 29:115–33. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100057
- Davis, S.D., & Greenstein, T.N. (2009). Gender Ideology: Components, Predictors, and Consequences. *Review of Sociology*, 35, 87-105.
- Dowd, J. (2012). Aging and the course of desire. *Journal of Aging Studies*. 26. 285–295. 10.1016/j.jaging.2012.01.004.
- Durkheim, E. (1995). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (K. Fields, Trans.). Free Press.

- Ellison, C., Bradshaw, M., Flannelly, K. & Galek, K. (2014). Prayer, Attachment to God, and Symptoms of Anxiety-Related Disorders among U.S. Adults. *Sociology of Religion*. 75. 208-233. 10.1093/socrel/srt079.
- Evertsson, M., & Neremo, M. (2007). Changing Resources and the Division of Housework: A Longitudinal Study of Swedish Couples, *European Sociological Review*, Volume 23, Issue 4, September 2007, Pages 455–470, <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcm018>
- Ewick, P. & Silbey, S. (1995). Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward a Sociology of Narrative. *Law & Society Review*, 1995, Vol. 29, No. 2 (1995), pp. 197-226. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/3054010>
- Fine, G.A. (2012). Group Culture and the Interaction Order: Local Sociology on the Meso-Level. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 38, No. 1, 159-179. 10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145518
- Forsberg, B., Nygren, L., & Fahlgren, S. (2005). Self-Help Groups For Women With Pain-- A Research Review With A Gender Perspective. *International Journal of Self Help and Self Care*, 3(1-2), 133–148. doi: 10.2190/ek7c-0h24-cpmr-r8b1
- Giddens, A. (1984). Elements in the Theory of Structuration. In *The Constitution of Society* (pp. 1–40). University of California Press.
- Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2016). Connecting Life Span Development with the Sociology of the Life Course: A New Direction. *Sociology*, 50(2), 301–315. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038515577906>
- Giuffre, Katherine 2013: Communities and Networks. Using Social Network Analysis to Rethink Urban and Community Studies. Cambridge: Polity Press. *Int J Urban Reg Res*, 38: 2339-2340. doi:10.1111/1468-2427.12200_8
- Goffman, E. (1959). Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. In *The Presentation of Self*.
- Hatch S. & Kickbusch I., eds (1983) *Self-Help and Health in Europe: New Approaches in Health Care*. World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen.
- Heaney, C. & Israel, B. (2008). *Social Networks and Social Support*. Health Behavior and Health Education (4th edition), 189-210.
- Krause, N., Ellison, C.G., & Marcum, J.P. (2002). The Effects of Church-Based Emotional Support on Health: Do They Vary by Gender?. *Sociology of Religion*, 63:1 21-47. 10.2307/3712538
- Kumar, N., Raghunathan, K., Arrieta, A., Jilani, A., Chakrabarti, S., Menon, P., & Quisumbing, A. (2019). Social networks, mobility, and political participation: The potential for women’s self-help groups to improve access and use of public entitlement schemes in India. *World Development*, 114, 28–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.09.023>
- Loseke, D. (2007) The Study of Identity As Cultural, Institutional, Organizational, and Personal Narratives: Theoretical and Empirical Integrations, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 48:4, 661-688, DOI: 10.1111/j.1533-8525.2007.00096.x

- Lumino, R., Ragozini, G., van Duijn, M. *et al.* A mixed-methods approach for analysing social support and social anchorage of single mothers' personal networks. *Qual Quant* **51**, 779–797 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-016-0439-6>
- Mackinnon, S., Nosko, A., Pratt, M., & Norris, J. (2011). Intimacy in Young Adults' Narratives of Romance and Friendship Predicts Eriksonian Generativity: A Mixed Method Analysis. *Journal of personality*. 79. 587-617. 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2011.00692.x.
- Patchin, J. W., & Hinduja, S. (2010). Cyberbullying and Self-Esteem. *Journal of School Health*, 80(12). Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2010.00548.x>
- Pew Research Center. (2006, October 18). Who Votes, Who Doesn't, and Why. Retrieved January 21, 2021, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2006/10/18/who-votes-who-doesnt-and-why/>
- Pew Research Center. (2018, February 15). Political data in voter files. Retrieved January 21, 2021, from <https://www.pewresearch.org/methods/2018/02/15/political-data-in-voter-files/>
- Poletta, F., Chen, P., Gardner, B., & Motes, A. (2011). The Sociology of Storytelling. *Annual Review Sociology* 2011. 37:109–30. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150106>
- Prasetyo, Y. (2017). From Storytelling to Social Change: The Power of Story in the Community Building. *Community Development Academy III*.
- Rainie, H., & Wellman, B. (2012). *Networked: The new social operating system*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Rosenberg, M. (1989). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. Revised edition. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.
- Schonfeld, I. S. (1991). Dimensions of functional social support and psychological symptoms. *Psychological Medicine*, 21(04), 1051-1060. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S003329170003004X>
- Stets, J.E. & Burke, P.J. (2014). Self-Esteem and Identities. *Sociological Perspectives*, Vol. 57(4) 409–433. DOI: 10.1177/0731121414536141
- Turner, J. H., Beeghly, L., & Powers, C. H. (2011). *The Emergence of Sociological Theory* (Seventh edition). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Tutty, L. M., Bidgood, B. A., & Rothery, M. A. (1993). Support groups for battered women: Research on their efficacy. *Journal of Family Violence*, 8(4), 325–343. doi: 10.1007/bf00978097
- Weber, M. (1905/2011). *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism*. (S. Kalberg, Trans.) New York: Oxford University Press.

APPENDIX A

Arkitekt Group Member Survey Questions

Start of Block: Information

Q1 My name is Katie Linenberger and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the Sociology department. We are conducting a research study on the effects of support groups by analyzing Arkitekt. The title of our project is The Impacts of Support Groups: Evaluating Arkitekt. The Principal Investigator is Jeni Cross in the Sociology department and I am the Co-Principal Investigator.

We would like you to take an anonymous online survey. Participation will take approximately 10 minutes. Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

We will not collect your name or personal identifiers. When we report and share the data to others, the data will be aggregate. While there are no direct benefits to you, we hope to gain more knowledge on support groups and how they may be impacting the values and beliefs of their group members.

There are no known risks to participating in this survey. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential (but unknown) risks. To indicate your consent to participate in this research and to continue on to the survey, please click the next arrow.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Katie Linenberger at klinen@colostate.edu or Jeni Cross at jeni.cross@colostate.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

Jeni Cross, PhD.

Katie Linenberger

Sociology Professor

Sociology Master's Student

End of Block: Information

Start of Block: Arkitekt Experience

Q10 How long have you been involved with Arkitekt?

- 1 to 3 months (1)
- 4 to 6 months (2)
- 7 to 9 months (3)
- 10 to 12 months (4)
- 1 to 2 years (5)
- 2 to 3 years (6)
- 4 to 5 years (7)
- More than 5 years (8)

Q11 What roles have you had in Arkitekt?

- Group Member (1)
- Facilitator/ Co-Facilitator (2)
- Core Team (3)
- Other: (4) _____

Q12 Have you been to a gathering (group meetings in which members share their thoughts about the curriculum)?

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Display This Question:

*If Have you been to a gathering (group meetings in which members share their thoughts about the curr...
= Yes*

Q13 How many members are in your gathering?

- 1 to 3 members (1)
- 4 to 6 members (2)
- 7 to 9 members (3)
- 10 or more members (4)

Q47 How would you describe Arkitekt?

Display This Question:

*If Have you been to a gathering (group meetings in which members share their thoughts about the curr...
= Yes*

Q39 Please select the most common feeling in the following scenarios.

Display This Question:

*If Have you been to a gathering (group meetings in which members share their thoughts about the curr...
= Yes*

Q14 During the first gathering, how would you describe your... (Check all that apply)

	Supportive (1)	Positive (2)	Motivating (3)	Relaxing (4)	Quiet (5)	Awkward (6)	Inconsistent (7)	Isolating (8)	Negative (9)	Annoying (10)
Group's interaction with one another (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group's typical mood (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mood when you are with your group (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Display This Question:

If Have you been to a gathering (group meetings in which members share their thoughts about the curr... = Yes

Q40 During the last gathering, how would you describe your... (Check all that apply)

	Supportive (1)	Positive (2)	Motivating (3)	Relaxing (4)	Quiet (5)	Awkward (6)	Inconsistent (7)	Isolating (8)	Negative (9)	Annoying (10)
Group's interaction with one another (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group's typical mood (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mood when you are with your group (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q15 What religion do you identify with?

- Christian (1)
- Hindu (2)
- Jewish (3)
- Muslim (4)
- Other: (5) _____
- I do not practice or identify with a religion (6)
- Unsure (7)
- Prefer not to answer (8)

Display This Question:

If What religion do you identify with? != I do not practice or identify with a religion

Q16 How long have you practiced and identified with that religion?

- My entire life (1)
- Most of my life (2)
- A few years (3)
- A year or two (4)
- Less than a year (5)

Display This Question:

If What religion do you identify with? != I do not practice or identify with a religion

Q17 How often are you involved in the following religious activities?

	Every month (1)	Every other week (2)	Every week (3)	Every other day (4)	Every day (5)	N/A (6)
Church, mosque, etc. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious groups (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious readings (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious services or ceremonies at your place of worship (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Praying or practicing religion on your own (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If What religion do you identify with? != I do not practice or identify with a religion

Q18 Within the past year, have you changed your religious identity?

Yes (1)

No (2)

Display This Question:

If What religion do you identify with? != I do not practice or identify with a religion

Q19 Why did you change your religious identity? Check all that apply.

Self-reflection (1)

New understandings and knowledge about religion (2)

- Found something that matched your beliefs more (3)
- Discussions with others who have different beliefs (4)
- Felt confined by your religion (6)
- Other: (5) _____

Q20 Within your household, who primarily does the following tasks?

	You (1)	Your Partner(s) (2)	Equally split between my partner and I (7)	Other Family Member (3)	Hired Caregiver (4)	Other (5)	N/A (6)
Taking out the trash (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grocery shopping (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laundry (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cleaning (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cooking (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paying bills (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
House maintenance (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking care of the kids (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q21 How often do you and your partner(s) argue over these tasks?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)
- I do not have a partner (6)

Display This Question:

If How often do you and your partner(s) argue over these tasks? != I do not have a partner

Q22 If Arkitekt has affected your relationship with your partner(s), in what ways did it? Check all that apply.

- I am communicating more in my relationship (1)
- I am appreciating my partner(s) more (8)
- I have more arguments in my relationship (2)
- I have ended my relationship or I am taking a break from my relationship (3)
- I am feeling closer to my partner(s) (4)
- I am isolating myself from my partner(s) (5)
- Other: (6) _____

Arkitekt has not influenced my relationship. (7)

Q23 How has your friendships change since joining Arkitekt? Check all that apply.

I removed friends who no longer understood me (1)

I have isolated myself from my friends (2)

I have made new friends (3)

I have worked on making my friendships better (4)

Other: (5) _____

My friendships have not changed. (6)

Q24 How would you describe your relationship to the women in your Arkitekt gathering? Check all that apply.

I am not close with the other women in my gathering. (1)

I have minimal conversations with other women in my gathering. (2)

I only talk to the other women at gatherings. (3)

I have reached out to the other women outside of gatherings. (4)

I have hung out with the other women of the gatherings. (5)

I talk a lot with the other women outside of the gatherings. (6)

I consider some or all of the women in my gathering as my friends. (7)

Other: (8) _____

Unsure (9)

Q25 How often have political topics been discussed in your gatherings?

Never (1)

Rarely (2)

Occasionally (3)

Often (4)

Always (5)

Display This Question:

If How often have political topics been discussed in your gatherings? != Never

Q26 If political topics have been discussed in your gatherings, what are the feelings of the group during those discussions? Check all that apply

Frustration (1)

Sadness (2)

Isolation (3)

Calmness (4)

Hopefulness (8)

Empowerment (5)

Confidence (6)

Other: (7) _____

Q27 How often are you involved in the following political activities?:

	Every couple of years (1)	Every year (2)	Every month (3)	Every week (4)	Every few days (5)	Every day (6)	N/A (7)
Voting (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protests (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rallies (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Campaigning (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending debates and speeches (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participating in a discussion (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signing a Petition (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Creating a Petition (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Writing letters to elected officials/representatives (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Donating to a campaign (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other: (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q28 How often are issues around gender and gender roles being discussed in your gatherings?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

Display This Question:

If How often are issues around gender and gender roles being discussed in your gatherings? != Never

Q29 If gender has been discussed in your gatherings, what are the feelings that are present during those discussions? Check all that apply

- Frustration (1)
- Sadness (2)
- Isolation (3)
- Calmness (4)
- Hopefulness (8)
- Empowerment (5)
- Confidence (6)
- Other: (7) _____

Q30 How much do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times, I think I am no good at all. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to do things as well as most other people. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I certainly feel useless at times. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could have more respect for myself. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take a positive attitude toward myself. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q31 How often do you think about Arkitekt?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

Q32 How often do you talk about Arkitekt with others who are not involved?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

Q33 How often have you considered leaving Arkitekt?

- Never (1)
- Rarely (2)
- Occasionally (3)
- Often (4)
- Always (5)

Display This Question:

If How often have you considered leaving Arkitekt? != Never

Q34 If you have considered leaving Arkitekt, what was the main reasoning for this consideration? Check all that apply.

- I do not have enough time to participate. (1)
- I do not enjoy the curriculum. (2)
- I do not like the coursework. (3)
- I do not feel heard in the gatherings. (4)
- The group dynamics are not for me. (5)
- I feel isolated in the group. (6)
- I do not have enough time to share what is on my mind in the gathering. (7)
- I do not feel comfortable sharing with the group. (8)
- I am too anxious to be sharing in a group. (9)
- I do not feel like I belong. (10)
- Other: (11) _____

Display This Question:

If How often have you considered leaving Arkitekt? = Always

Or How often have you considered leaving Arkitekt? = Often

Q48 If you left Arkitekt, did you join another group(s)?

Yes (1)

No (3)

I did not leave Arkitekt. (4)

Display This Question:

If If you left Arkitekt, did you join another group(s)? = Yes

Q49 What other group(s) did you join?

Display This Question:

If If you left Arkitekt, did you join another group(s)? = Yes

Q50 In which group have you experienced the following?:

	Arkitekt (1)	Arkitekt (2)	Both Groups (3)	Neither Group (4)
Feeling included (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling supported (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being able to identify self-improvements (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that it is worth the time commitment (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q35 What do you like the most about Arkitekt?

- The curriculum (1)
- The coursework (2)
- Going to the gatherings (3)
- The people involved (4)
- Sharing your story with others (5)
- Hearing other people's stories (6)
- The events created by Arkitekt (7)
- Other: (8) _____

Q36 What do you like the least about Arkitekt?

- The curriculum (1)

- The coursework (2)
- Going to the gatherings (3)
- The people involved (4)
- Sharing your story with others (5)
- Hearing other people's stories (6)
- The events created by Arkitekt (7)
- Other: (8) _____

Q37 How likely are you to refer someone to join Arkitekt?

- Extremely unlikely (1)
- Unlikely (2)
- Neither likely nor unlikely (3)
- Likely (4)
- Extremely likely (5)

Q46 Have you completed the Arkitekt curriculum and gatherings?

- Yes (1)
- No (3)

Display This Question:

If Have you completed the Arkitekt curriculum and gatherings? = Yes

Q45 After completing Arkitekt, how have you used this experience? Have you reworked through the curriculum, found another group to join, sought professional services, discussed the material with others, etc.?

Q44 Please describe your overall experience with Arkitekt.

End of Block: Arkitekt Experience

Start of Block: Demographics

Q2 What is your age?

- 18-24 (1)
- 25-34 (2)
- 35-44 (3)

- 45-54 (4)
- 55-64 (5)
- 65 or older (6)

Q5 Which category best describes your race or ethnicity? Check all that apply.

- American Indian or Alaska Native (4)
- Asian (2)
- Asian Indian (8)
- Black or African American (3)
- Hispanic/Latino (9)
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5)
- White (1)
- Other (please specify): (6) _____
- Prefer not to answer (7)

Q6 What is your highest level of education you have completed?

- Less than a high school diploma (1)
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g. GED) (2)
- Some college, no degree (3)

- Associate degree (4)
- Bachelor's degree (5)
- Master's degree (6)
- Professional degree (7)
- Doctorate (8)

Q7 What is your marital status?

- Single (including widowed, divorced, or separated) (1)
- In a romantic relationship, not living together (2)
- In a romantic relationship, living together (6)

Q8 In the past month, what was your employment status?

- Employed Full-time (1)
- Employed Part-time (2)
- Unemployed and currently looking for work (3)
- Unemployed and not currently looking for work (4)
- Student (5)
- Retired (6)
- Stay at home parent (7)
- Self-employed (8)

Unable to work (9)

Q9 What is your annual household income?

Less than \$25,000 (1)

\$25,000 to \$34,999 (2)

\$35,000 to \$49,999 (3)

\$50,000 to \$74,999 (4)

\$75,000 to \$99,999 (5)

\$100,000-\$149,999 (6)

\$150,000-\$199,999 (8)

\$200,000 or more (7)

End of Block: Demographics

APPENDIX B

Arkitekt Group Member Survey Tables

Time Involved in Arkitekt	Frequency	%(NA-)
1 to 2 years	21	25.0
2 to 3 years	21	25.0
4 to 5 years	13	15.5
1 to 3 months	8	9.5
4 to 6 months	7	8.3
More than 5 years	6	7.1
NA	5	0.0
10 to 12 months	4	4.8
7 to 9 months	4	4.8
Total	89	100.0

Arkitekt Group Member	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Group Member	80	89.9	100
NA	9	10.1	0
Total	89	100.0	100

Arkitekt Facilitator	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
NA	60	67.4	0
Facilitator/ Co-Facilitator	29	32.6	100
Total	89	100.0	100

Arkitekt Core Team	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
NA	83	93.3	0
Core Team	6	6.7	100
Total	89	100.0	100

Other Involvement	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
NA	86	96.6	0
Other:	3	3.4	100
Total	89	100.0	100

Attended a Gathering	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Yes	75	84.3	89.3
No	9	10.1	10.7
NA	5	5.6	0.0
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Number of Group Members in Their Gatherings	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
7 to 9 members	47	52.8	68.1
NA	20	22.5	0.0
4 to 6 members	15	16.9	21.7
10 or more members	7	7.9	10.1
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Moods and Interactions of The Group and Respondent During First and Last Gatherings	Supportive	Positive	Motivating	Awkward	Relaxing	Quiet
Group's Interactions in First Gathering	25%	27%	15%	11%	12%	6%
Group's Interactions in Last Gathering	29%	24%	20%	4%	16%	3%
Group's Mood in the First Gathering	29%	26%	16%	7%	15%	4%
Group's Mood in Last Gathering	29%	24%	19%	3%	16%	5%
Respondent's Mood in First Gathering	24%	22%	17%	10%	13%	8%
Respondent's Mood in Last Gathering	26%	24%	17%	5%	16%	7%

Religious Identity	Frequency	%(NA-)
Christian	38	51.4

I do not practice or identify with a religion	23	31.1
NA	15	0.0
Other:	9	12.2
Unsure	3	4.1
Prefer not to answer	1	1.4
Total	89	100.0

How Long They Have Identified with Their Religion	Frequency	%(NA-)
NA	39	0
My entire life	22	44
Most of my life	20	40
A few years	5	10
A year or two	2	4
Less than a year	1	2
Total	89	100

Did They Change Their Religion in The Past Year?	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
No	43	48.3	86
NA	39	43.8	0
Yes	7	7.9	14
Total	89	100.0	100

Why They Changed Their Religion in The Past Year	Frequency	Percent
New understandings and knowledge about religion	11	26.2
Self-reflection	10	23.8
Felt confined by your religion	8	19.0
Found something that matched your beliefs more	5	11.9
Discussions with others who have different beliefs	5	11.9
Other:	3	7.1
Total	42	100.0

Household Tasks	Respondent	Partner(s)	Equally Split between	Other Family Member	Other	Hired Caregiver
------------------------	-------------------	-------------------	------------------------------	----------------------------	--------------	------------------------

			Responde nt and Partner(s)			
Grocery shopping	63%	0%	36%	1%	0%	7%
Cleaning	69%	3%	21%	0%	1%	0%
Cooking	60%	8%	32%	0%	0%	0%
Laundry	67%	4%	27%	0%	1%	0%
Bills	51%	33%	15%	0%	1%	0%
House Maintenance	27%	34%	30%	4%	1%	3%
Trash	33%	32%	23%	12%	0%	0%
Childcare	47%	4%	49%	0%	0%	0%

How Frequently They Argue with Their Partners Over Household Tasks	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
I do not have a partner	22	24.7	30.1
Occasionally	22	24.7	30.1
Rarely	18	20.2	24.7
NA	16	18.0	0.0
Never	6	6.7	8.2
Often	4	4.5	5.5
Always	1	1.1	1.4
Total	89	100.0	100.0

How Arkitekt Has Impacted Their Friendships	Frequency	Percent
I have worked on making my friendships better	42	34.4
I have made new friends	37	30.3
I removed friends who no longer understood me	18	14.8
My friendships have not changed.	17	13.9
Other:	7	5.7
I have isolated myself from my friends	1	0.8
Total	122	100.0

Frequency of Political Discussions in Gatherings	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Rarely	26	29.2	35.6
Never	21	23.6	28.8

Occasionally	20	22.5	27.4
NA	16	18.0	0.0
Often	6	6.7	8.2
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Feelings of the Group When There Are Political Discussions in The Gathering	Frequency	Percent
Frustration	23	32.9
Sadness	17	24.3
Empowerment	13	18.6
Isolation	6	8.6
Confidence	6	8.6
Other:	3	4.3
Calmness	2	2.9
Total	70	100.0

Frequency of Gender Roles Discussed in The Gatherings	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Occasionally	31	34.8	44.9
NA	20	22.5	0.0
Often	15	16.9	21.7
Rarely	11	12.4	15.9
Never	9	10.1	13.0
Always	3	3.4	4.3
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Religion/Frequency of Gender Roles Discussed in Gatherings	Always	Never	Occasionally	Often	Rarely	NA_	Total
Christian	0 (0.0%)	5 (13.2%)	18 (47.4%)	3 (7.9%)	9 (23.7%)	3 (7.9%)	38 (100.0%)
I do not practice or identify with a religion	3 (13.0%)	3 (13.0%)	8 (34.8%)	6 (26.1%)	2 (8.7%)	1 (4.3%)	23 (100.0%)
Other:	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (22.2%)	5 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	9 (100.0%)
Prefer not to answer	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)

Religion/Frequency of Gender Roles Discussed in Gatherings	Always	Never	Occasionally	Often	Rarely	NA_	Total
Unsure	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	1 (33.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (100.0%)
	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	15 (100.0%)	15 (100.0%)

Feelings When Gender Roles Are Discussed in The Gathering	Frequency	Percent
Frustration	31	26.5
Empowerment	28	23.9
Confidence	17	14.5
Isolation	15	12.8
Sadness	13	11.1
Calmness	8	6.8
Other:	5	4.3
Total	117	100.0

Frequency of Considering Leaving Arkitekt	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
NA	27	30.3	0.0
Never	19	21.3	30.6
Rarely	16	18.0	25.8
Occasionally	12	13.5	19.4
Often	9	10.1	14.5
Always	6	6.7	9.7
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Like Most About Arkitekt	Frequency	Percent
Hearing other people's stories	49	20.4
The people involved	41	17.1
Going to the gatherings	41	17.1
Sharing your story with others	39	16.2
The curriculum	30	12.5
The coursework	28	11.7
The events created by Arkitekt	10	4.2

Other:	2	0.8
Total	240	100.0

Least Like About Arkitekt	Frequency	Percent
Other:	19	31.7
The curriculum	9	15.0
The coursework	9	15.0
The events created by Arkitekt	7	11.7
Going to the gatherings	6	10.0
The people involved	5	8.3
Sharing your story with others	4	6.7
Hearing other people's stories	1	1.7
Total	60	100.0

Age of Respondents	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
35-44	33	37.1	51.6
NA	25	28.1	0.0
25-34	16	18.0	25.0
45-54	10	11.2	15.6
65 or older	3	3.4	4.7
55-64	2	2.2	3.1
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Race of Respondents	Frequency	Percent
White	56	88.9
Prefer not to answer	3	4.8
Hispanic/Latino	3	4.8
Other (please specify):	1	1.6
Total	63	100.0

Education of Respondents	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Bachelor's degree	29	32.6	45.3
NA	25	28.1	0.0
Master's degree	23	25.8	35.9
Associate degree	4	4.5	6.2
Doctorate	3	3.4	4.7

Some college, no degree	3	3.4	4.7
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	1	1.1	1.6
Professional degree	1	1.1	1.6
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Relationship Status of Respondents	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
In a romantic relationship, living together	40	44.9	64.5
NA	27	30.3	0.0
Single (including widowed, divorced, or separated)	16	18.0	25.8
In a romantic relationship, not living together	6	6.7	9.7
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Employment of Respondents	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
Employed Full-time	33	37.1	52.4
NA	26	29.2	0.0
Employed Part-time	12	13.5	19.0
Stay at home parent	8	9.0	12.7
Self-employed	6	6.7	9.5
Unemployed and currently looking for work	2	2.2	3.2
Retired	1	1.1	1.6
Student	1	1.1	1.6
Total	89	100.0	100.0

Annual Income of Respondents	Frequency	%(NA+)	%(NA-)
NA	27	30.3	0.0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14	15.7	22.6
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13	14.6	21.0
\$150,000-\$199,999	9	10.1	14.5
\$100,000-\$149,999	7	7.9	11.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	7	7.9	11.3
Less than \$25,000	5	5.6	8.1
\$200,000 or more	4	4.5	6.5
\$25,000 to \$34,999	3	3.4	4.8
Total	89	100.0	100.0

APPENDIX C

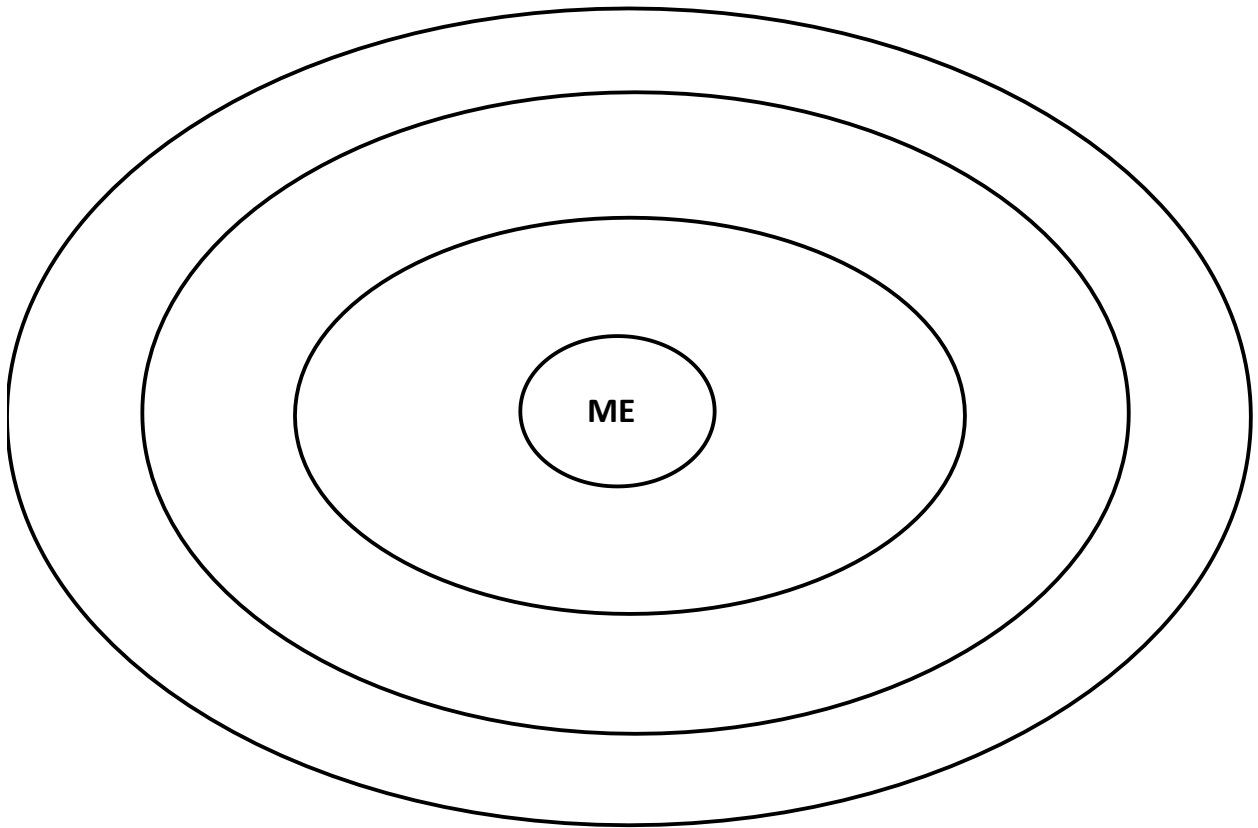
Traditional Interview Questions

1. When did you join Arkitekt and how long have you been involved in Arkitekt?''.
2. What events drove you to seek out guidance through Arkitekt?
 - a. How did friends and family support or encourage you to go on a path of self-discovery?
 - b. Conversely, did you face any resistance or discouragement from friends or family?
 - c. How do you cope with losing loved ones and the institutions you used to go to? Or if positivity with friends and family: How has your loved ones impacted your process?
 - d. How did you get the courage to seek guidance and join Arkitekt?
 - e. Did you have any previous spiritual experiences, and/ or previous safe spaces. How is it similar or different to Arkitekt?
3. What did you expect to get out of Arkitekt when you first walked in?
 - a. How does it match what Arkitekt has done for you?
4. Tell me about the most memorable session you have experienced at Arkitekt.
 - a. When was this session, what was discussed, why did it affect you as much as it did?
5. Do you use the concepts learned in Arkitekt in your daily life?
 - a. How are you using these concepts?
 - i. Why do you not use the concepts from Arkitekt?
 - b. Do you use these concepts to help others?
 - i. Do these concepts seem not useful for others?
6. What areas of Arkitekt would you liked improved?
 - a. Are there improvements that need to be made to the curriculum or structure of Arkitekt?

7. What were the best tools that helped you grow?
 - a. Was there anything in Arkitekt that seemed to hinder your growth or set you back?
8. How have you noticed a shift in your thoughts and emotions when it comes to events in your life since going through programs at Arkitekt?
 - a. Do you have a new understanding of yourself?
9. What has changed and what has stayed the same throughout this journey?
10. How would you describe Arkitekt? Why do you think it is called Arkitekt?
11. Why does this work seem so timely right now with our current culture? (Women's right, me too movement, women empowerment, etc.) **OPTIONAL**
12. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX D

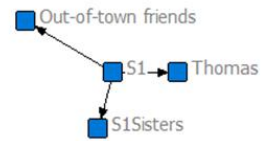
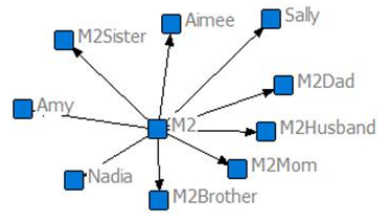
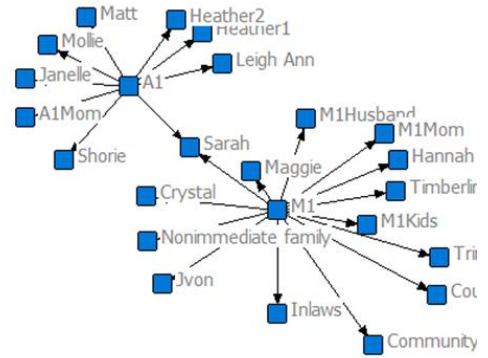
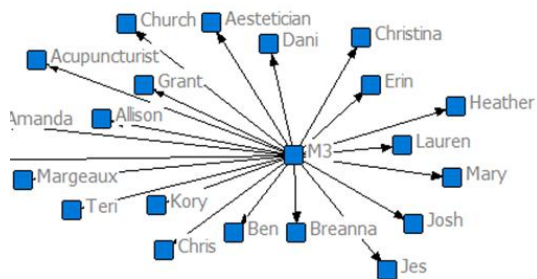
Social Network Interviews Ego Network Map



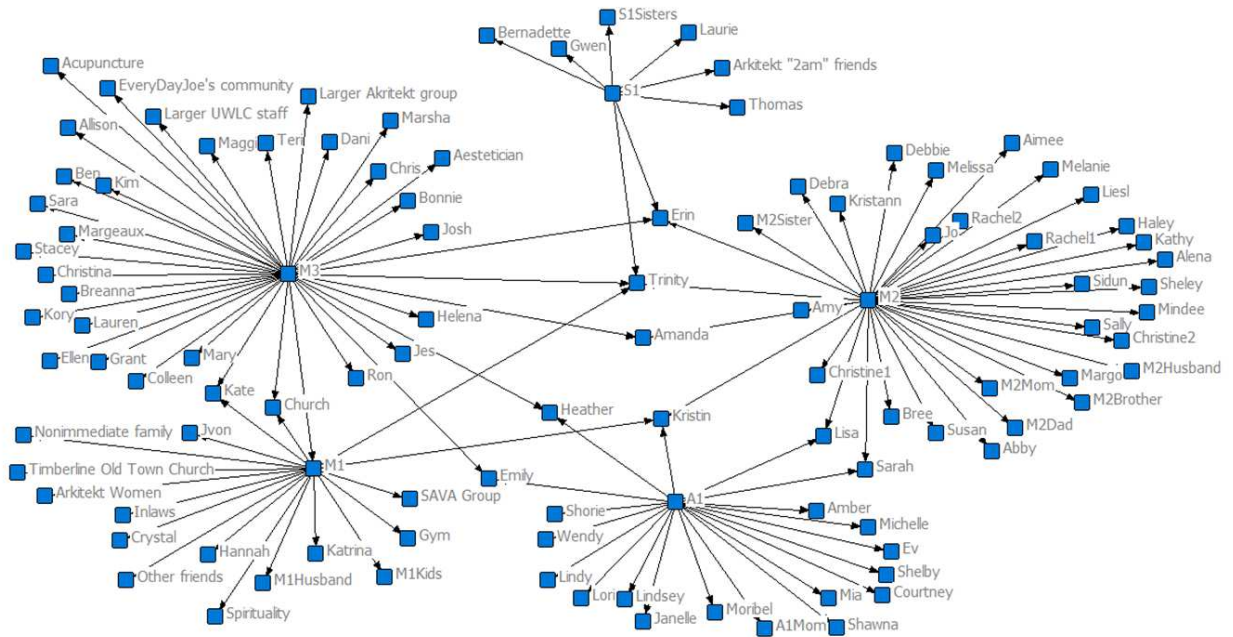
APPENDIX E

Social Network Analysis Visualizations

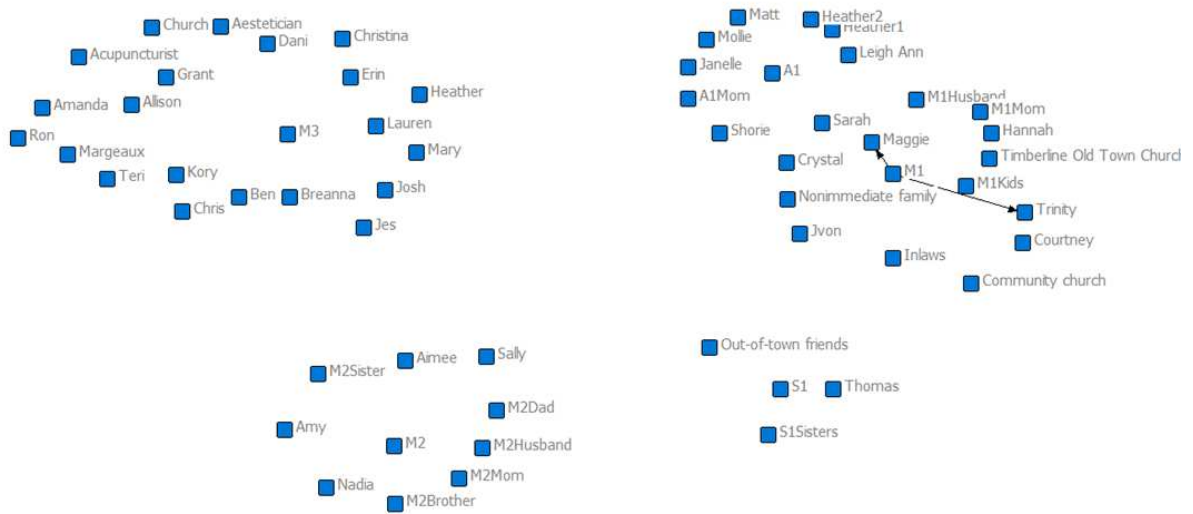
Before Joining Arkitekt



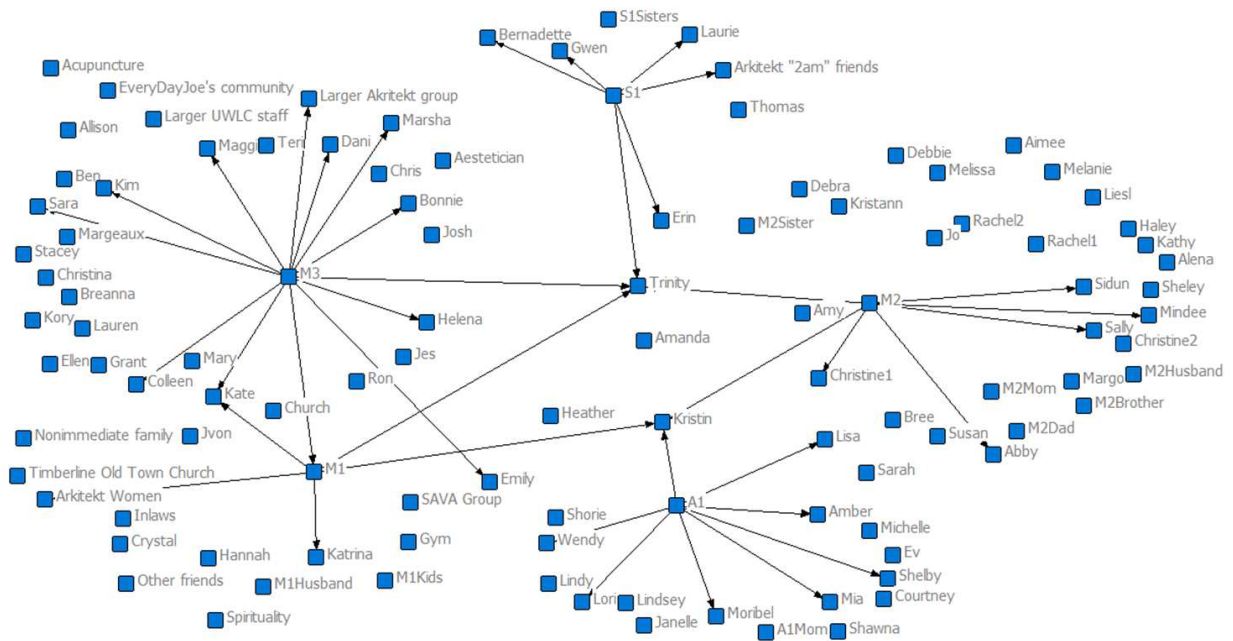
After Joining Arkitekt



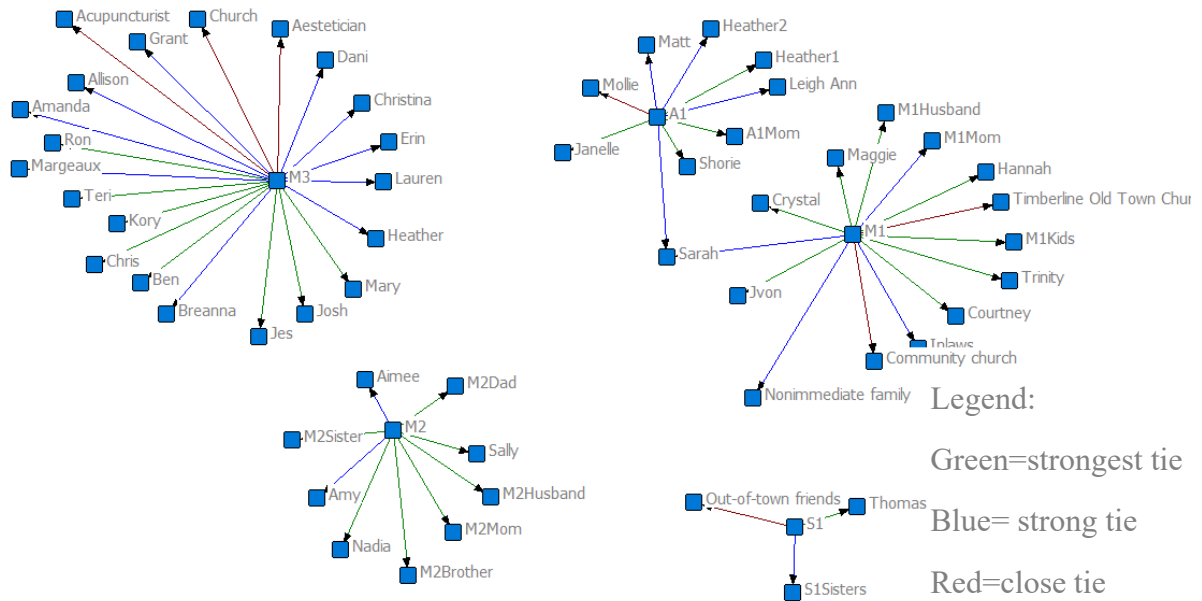
Before Joining Arkitekt only Arkitekt Ties



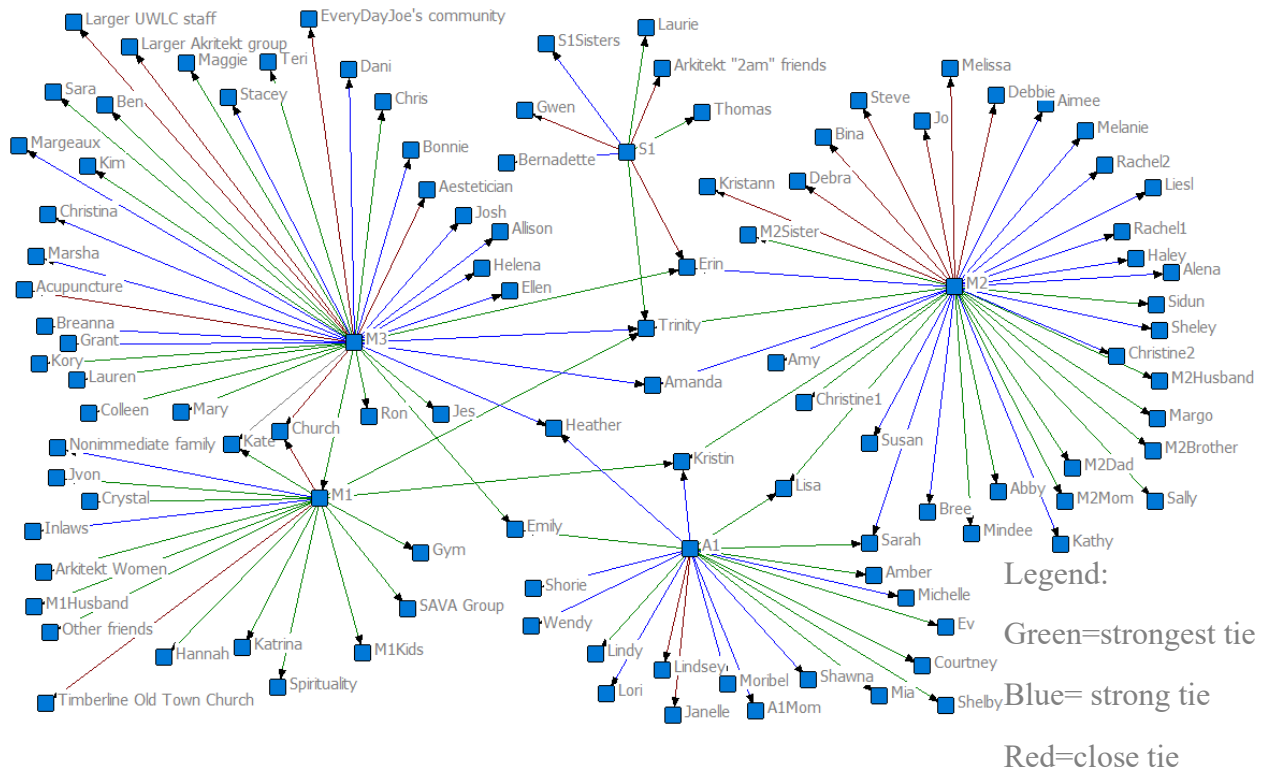
After Joining Arkitekt only Arkitekt Ties



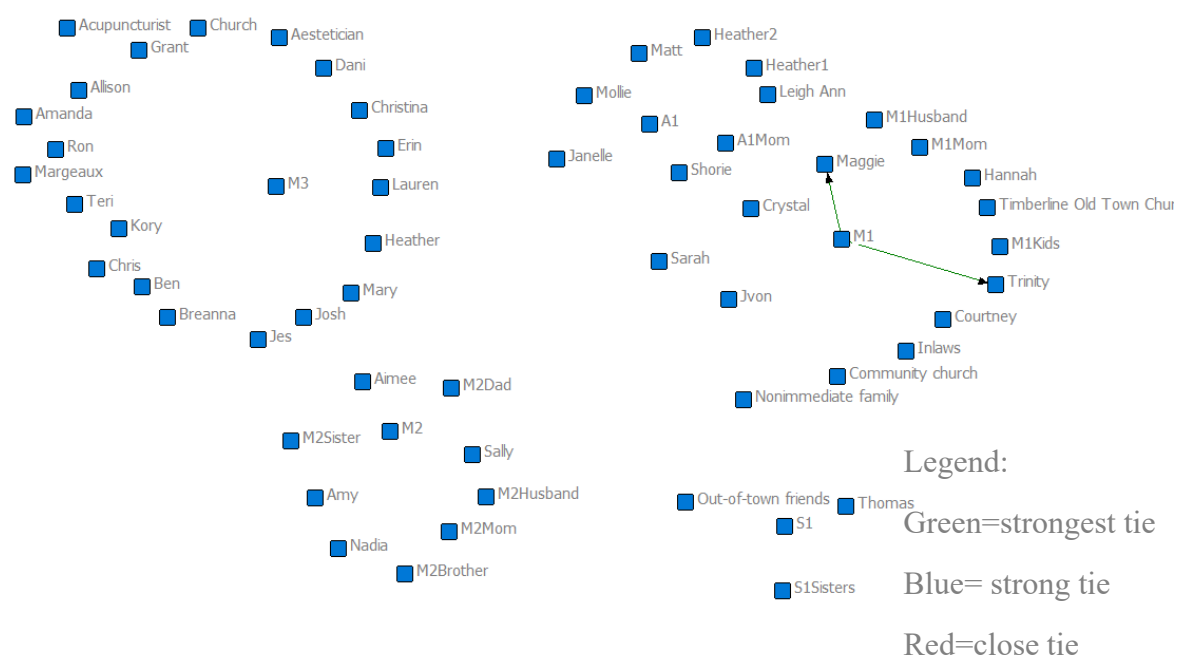
Strength of Ties Before Arkitekt



Strength of Ties After Arkitekt



Strength of Ties Before Arkitekt only Arkitekt Ties



Strength of Ties After Arkitekt only Arkitekt Ties

