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‘As Sisters in Zion’: How do Mormon Women in Britain Negotiate Gender?

By

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PhD

February 2019

‘As Sisters in Zion’: How do Mormon Women in Britain Negotiate Gender?

Alison Gwyneth Elaine Halford

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University’s requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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In trusting me enough with your thoughts, aspirations and experiences; I hope that I have kept your faith and created space for your voices to be heard.

Abstract

Increasingly, sociological scholarship is investigating how social constructions of gender are embedded in the historical, cultural and theological narratives of religious congregations. With a presence in over 164 countries, the New Religious Movement, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or, as it is more commonly known the Mormon Church, claims gender, like biological difference, is a fixed, divinely designed identity. But Mormon doctrine is just one aspect of religiosity, and when translated into lived practices, individuals may vary in their understanding of official Church teachings when negotiating gender.

Drawing upon 30 interviews of British Mormon women living in the Midlands, this study will discuss the role regional practices play in constructing gender by exploring lived religion. By expanding the frames of analysis to focus on the everyday social interactions, this study captures how some devout Mormon women negotiate gender through embodied practices. As such, this thesis becomes part of a larger body of feminist scholarship on Mormonism and gender that recognises the complex and diverse lived experiences of some British Mormon women in an international Church.

‘As Sisters in Zion’: How do Mormon Women in Britain Negotiate Gender?

Chapter One: Introduction

'As Sisters in Zion': How do Mormon Women in Britain Negotiate Gender?

National identity is publicly constructed and expressed through institutional structures that shape how citizens see themselves. Historically, British societal values have been informed by *unus rex, unus grex, una lex* that in public citizens submit to 'one monarch', 'one people', 'one law', and accept an Anglican identity.[1] However, in contemporary Britain, the religious and belief landscape is changing as more people are disaffiliating from institutional religion, and the non-religious are rapidly becoming the majority.[2] A British identity no longer automatically means a religious affiliation, and along with increased visibility of non-western faiths in the public sphere, neither does it mean being a Christian (Lee, 2016).

Sociological enquiry on religion in Britain requires not only insight into how religious identities are constructed, but also the ways that faith communities navigate the secularisation of state and civil society. As women are more likely to be part of a Christian congregation than men in Britain (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012), exploring the narratives of British Christian women enables investigation of gendered differences or tensions in how people negotiate an increasing secularised nation. Moreover, researching Mormon women in Britain – a group outside mainstream Christian orthopraxis – provides insight into the negotiations of gender that occur when constructing a religious identity that conflicts with not only mainstream culture but also with the religious majority.

[1] King James speech on the Union 1607: 'But it is most true, I ever wished such a Union as there might be *unus Rex*, *unus grex, na lex*. ''House of Commons Journal Volume 1: 02 May 1607'. in *Journal of the House of Commons Volume 1, 1547-1629* (London, 1802), pp. 366-368. *British History Online* available from <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/pp366-368> [accessed 17 September 2018]

[2] According to Clive Field (2015) Britain is ranked 59th of 65 countries in terms of self-rated religious persons (30%), under half the global mean (63%) and 13% below the Western European average; his data also claims two-thirds of Britons describe themselves as not religious or convinced atheists. However, the 2011 Census still shows a majority of British people consider themselves as Christian.

Research Aims and Questions

Unlike American Mormon studies, British sociological research on gender and Mormonism is limited. In the case of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints[3] or to use the vernacular, the Mormon Church, the body of scholarship on how gender performances embed Church's historical, cultural and theological narratives are resolutely located in a North American context. This lack of global perspective on gender and Mormonism means that academic work often recognises the power disparities between American Mormon men and women but struggles to evidence the complexity between gender and Mormonism outside of American culture (Colvin, 2015; Inouye, 2016). Furthermore, a lacuna of research on regional practices in what the institutional Church claim is a global religion can reinforce the belief that Mormonism is intrinsically an American religion that is found in other countries (Rutherford, 2016).

This thesis is an insight into how Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender, adding to the corpus of work on regional practices within a global religion (Aikau, 2013; Brooks and Colvin, 2018; Decoo, 2013; Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen, 2016; García, 2015; Hendrix-Komoto, 2016; Inouye, 2016; Knowlton, 1996; Kwok, 2012; Rutherford, 2016). The study aims to understand the ways some religious women comply with, conform to and resist secular and religious gender norms in their religion-as-lived practices. By asking the question 'How do British Mormon women

[3]In this thesis I use *Mormon*, the *Church* and *Latter-day Saint* to mean The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When I started this thesis Mormon and Mormonism were considered by the Church appropriate forms of reference for members, the institution, and the doctrine. However, on the 16th of August 2018, the current Prophet Russell M Nelson instructed that the correct usage by members and the wider community is 'in the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"'. The use of Mormon, Mormonism, and LDS, which have been applied to the Church as a nickname, is now discouraged and replaced by 'the Church' and 'Latter-day Saints' if shortened terms are required. It has yet to be seen how Mormon scholarship will respond to this disavowing of 'Mormon' by official channels as a legitimate religious identity. Brigham Young University, the Church owned educational establishment, is the first academic body to commit to no longer using this term but in the thesis, I have not altered the references to conform to the new moniker. I wrote this thesis when members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints self-identified as Mormon and to edit that chosen label removes ownership from them.

Full statement: 'The official name of the Church is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The full name was given by revelation from God to Joseph Smith in 1838. In the first reference, the full name of the Church is preferred: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." When a shortened reference is needed, the terms "the Church" or the "Church of Jesus Christ" are encouraged. The "restored Church of Jesus Christ" is also accurate and encouraged. While the term "Mormon Church" has long been publicly applied to the Church as a nickname, it is not an authorized title, and the Church discourages its use. Thus, please avoid using the abbreviation "LDS" or the nickname "Mormon" as substitutes for the name of the Church, as in "Mormon Church," "LDS Church," or "Church of the Latter-day Saints. When referring to Church members, the terms "members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" or "Latter-day Saints" are preferred. We ask that the term "Mormons" not be used. The term "Mormonism" is inaccurate and should not be used. When describing the combination of doctrine, culture and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the term "the restored gospel of Jesus Christ" is accurate and preferred.

LDS Church News (2018) [online] available from <https://www.lds.org/church/news/mormon-is-out-church-releases-statement-on-how-to-refer-to-the-organization?lang=eng> [accessed 16 August 2018]

negotiate gender?' this study is also about power, about who decides how and what it means to be a woman in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To address this research question, I will explore structures, religious or otherwise, that shape the construction of gender by focusing on four secondary research questions:

1) What are the lived religious practices and expressions of British Mormon Women?
2) How do British Mormon women negotiate between their faith, British mainstream culture and gender norms?
3) How do they negotiate the five key themes of i) personhood; ii) feminism; iii) Church roles; iv) home and work; v) religion in public spaces?
4) In their approaches to gender, how do British Mormon women navigate between national and global contexts and differences?

The overarching principle of these questions is to gain insight into the ways that some British Mormon women construct gender in their everyday practices, including their bodily, emotional, and religious experiences and expressions. In exploring the complex, diverse, and, at times, contradictory lived religion of British Mormon women, this thesis offers an alternative discourse on the negotiations of gender, Mormonism, and regional practices.

Thesis Structure, Themes and Chapter Overviews

The thesis begins with an introduction, followed by a literature review, which is an overview of the critical texts on gender and religion, including Mormon approaches to gender and the approach I take to gender in this thesis. I also comment on the lack of sociological studies on British Mormonism and the resultant gap that assists in producing and reproducing 'American exceptionalism' in Mormon studies. The relationship between American exceptionalism and Mormonism is further complicated due to the role the Church had in colonising Mid-west America and Mormon doctrine claiming America as a 'new Jerusalem' (Article of Faiths: 10). Alex de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America* (2002 [1840]), contends the 'exceptionalism' of America is the way American notions of democracy and equality differ from European aristocratic orders. Over time, 'American exceptionalism' has come to mean an American entitlement to moral leadership because of what is seen as exceptional societal values and practices (Ceaser, 2012).

Therefore, any discussion about Mormon doctrine, history and practices will necessitate an insight into how American exceptionalism informs the discourse.

Chapter Two starts with an overview of Mormon history to show how British converts to Mormonism in the 1800s became instrumental in the development and expansion of the United States, in particular creating the State of Utah, in their search for Zion (Shipps, 1987). Since the establishment of the Church in 1830, early Church leaders sought to organise a Latter-day Saint 'Zion': a geographical place where societal norms and values would be guided by a social order based on Mormon principles. This objective was achieved when Brigham Young, the second Prophet of the Church, declared on the 24th of July 1847, that Salt Lake Valley, Utah was the place to build Zion (Arrington and Bitton, 1979). The early Church demands for Zion, built on the systematic dismantling of British Mormon congregations, impacted on Victorian Mormon women in Britain. Understanding the historical connections between Utah Mormonism and British Latter-day Saints helps explain, I will argue, some of the tension between Mormon women and British society. I conclude with a short overview of the unique Mormon teachings on gender, including the Mormon concept of a female deity, Heavenly Mother, which places Mormon doctrine at odds with Judeo-Christian ideas of an all-male pantheon.

In the first section of Chapter Three, I outline the methodology and methods used for this study. In adopting a feminist standpoint, I acknowledge the influence of second-wave feminists, such as Dorothy Smith (1987), Ann Oakley (2005), and Sandra Harding (1987). This standpoint, I argue, can accommodate my positionality as a white, middle-aged, British Mormon woman, and as a researcher, as it encourages reflexivity on the biases (direct and indirect) that I am subject to when researching. The second part of Chapter Three focuses on why qualitative research using thematic analysis is a useful feminist research practice when embarking on under-researched subjects, such as Mormon women in Britain. In sharing my belief that the method of semi-structured interviews can address the asymmetry between researcher and researched, I maintain that the fluidity in lines of questioning allows the interview to become a shared exchange that captures the voice of British Mormon women. In constructing the interview as a more collegial and approachable space, I hope that the women I interview can claim some, if not all, ownership of their narratives as fair representations of their negotiations of gender.

Chapters Four through to Chapter Seven, are based on my findings on three critical structures that Mormon women in Britain negotiate when constructing gender: the home, the workplace, and Church. I recognise negotiations occur between British Mormon women and class, sexuality, disability, reproduction, and race but to do benefit to these topics I feel each would merit a PhD thesis in their own right. When approaching a new research topic, which this thesis is doing, there are multiple undocumented entry points and permutations. In focusing on gender to analyse some forms of interlocking subjugation and by selecting what I believe are the most pressing issues, I see that this 'is only the first stage of a larger project' (Sigle-Rushton and Lindstrom, 2013: 131).

As this thesis is exploring how some British Mormon women negotiate gender, Chapter Four starts by explaining the overarching theoretical approach to gender and defines what I understand as negotiations of gender. I then discuss three Mormon discourses on gender: *divinely designed, Heavenly Mother,* and *complementarianism* and explain how these teachings translate into lived religion. I conclude by reflecting on the extent conservative secular and religious models of gender coalesce with Mormon teachings to produce and reproduce inequality in religious structures. Following on from the discussion on Mormon constructions of gender, Chapter Five starts with a review of Heavenly Mother as a Mormon model of female embodiment. I then go on to show how some British Mormon women respond to the 'Molly Mormon', a discrete traditional Mormon gender role by producing a nascent form of gender performance, the '*Guardian of the Family'*. The chapter ends by arguing that the domestic sphere is where religious creed connects with material reality, where everyday tasks, mundane social interactions and religion-as-lived informs negotiations of gender.

Chapter Six moves the discussion from the intimate, private sphere of the home onto how participants negotiate gender in institutions, such as the workplace and educational establishments. Starting the chapter with a review of secularism and religion, I go onto explore how some British Mormon women feel their colleagues and employers view Mormonism. Looking at religion-as-lived, I contend that participants, at times, feel disenfranchised in public spaces. I also offer insights into how women from a minority religion respond when they find themselves at the margins of religious and secular institutions.

Chapter Seven reflects on the way that some British Mormon women negotiate gender in a patriarchal structure, looking at the priesthood and visible, hidden, and invisible power (Gaventa 2006; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2006). I suggest some participants are re-imagining doctrine to develop lived practices that encourage self-determination, while still claiming to submit to official demands for priesthood authority. Looking at lived religion, I contend, we can see how some women are subject to benevolent sexism and how women negotiate an all-male priesthood, gender equality and equal opportunities. Underpinning both chapters is Kelsy Burke's (2012: 123) typology of agency; *resistance, empowerment, instrumental*, and *compliant,* which I consider captures how participants are agential in a range of actions.

In the final chapters of this thesis, I concentrate on what some scholars see as on-going issues in Mormon communities: Mormon feminist activism and Utah as the paradigm of Mormonism (Colvin, 2015; Toscano, 2016b). In Chapter Eight, I explore attitudes of some British Mormon women towards Mormon feminist movements, such as Ordain Women, and compare and contrast their attitudes towards secular and Mormon feminism. By speaking with some British Mormon women about their perceptions of Mormon feminist activism, I speculate that the lack of engagement with Mormon feminism is because they consider it is a Utahan construction. Chapter Nine looks at the ways British Mormon women negotiate between cultural context, religious teachings and gender. I argue that some gender practices encouraged by Church leaders mean some participants are continually negotiating to overcome American exceptionalism. Based on the findings, I propose that in a partial secularised Britain, with a state religion, Church policies and administration could do more to address mainstream cultural and religious norms that are decidedly non-American (Mason, 2016; Knowlton, 1996; Rutherford, 2016; Phillips, 2006; Ventura, 1988).

The thesis concludes with a review of the contributions to knowledge this study makes to scholarship on religion and gender, including the limitations of this body of work. I argue that more work needs to be done on negotiations of gender, Mormons and mainstream culture as religion-as-lived. Moreover, this study merits interest as it moves beyond hegemonic depictions of gender to give an account of the vibrant, intimate detailed voices of Mormon women in the British context.

Literature Review

In the sociology of religion, when discussing gender, religious affiliation and lived practices, studies show that Christian women appear to be more religious than Christian men (Aune, Sharma, and Vincett, 2008; Miller and Stark, 2002; Neitz, 2014; Roth and Kroll, 2007; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012).[4] The apparent piety of Christian women, despite the androcentric structures of most Christian organised religion, sees feminist scholars adopting a 'gender lens on religion' to interrogate the power dynamics between religion and women (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo 2015: 7). In seeing gender and religion as relational, intersecting with race, ethnicity, age, class, ableism, and sexuality, we can see the embedded historical, cultural and theological narratives that facilitate inequality.

This review starts with an overview of the literature on gender, religion and secularisation, including a discussion on feminist approaches to gender and religion. Following on from that, I define lived religion and how focusing on the everyday lives of religious women can offer a richer understanding of the negotiations of Mormon women. Next, I examine critical discourses about gender in sociology and Mormon teachings, which allows me to consider the sites of difference between sociological framing of gender and how the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches about gender. I then question why in a global religion such as Mormonism, there is a lack of sociological enquiry on Mormons outside of the United States.[5] In doing so, the review will support my contention that there is a pressing need for more expansive research on the diverse lived experiences of Mormon women beyond the United States of America.

[4] According to Pew Research (2015), Christianity, when taking into account affiliation, number of prayers and a belief in a higher being, there are more women than men that are devout worldwide. However, the difference in religiosity between men and women in Islam is nominal.

[5] In December 2019 global Latter-day Saint membership figures are 16,313,735 million members in 161 countries, with over half residing outside of USA. It is worth noting that the Church is meticulous in record keeping, which suggests that these figures are reliable, but with the caveat that this is the number of Church members worldwide and not indicative of activity rates. [https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics accessed 12 January 2019].

Gender and Religion: Feminist Scholarship

Grace Davie (1995, 2013) argues that historically when discussing religion, sociological literature has tended to demarcate between the religious and non-religious in simplistic binary terms of the sacred and the secular. As a result, studies may fail to capture the multi-faceted approaches to religion found in the lives of the religious and focus instead on a narrative that too often fixates on 'the coincidence of social progress and secular western modernisation' (Day and Lövheim, 2015: xiv). When studying religious communities, analysing gender enables the recognition of the mechanisms, religious and otherwise, that can oppress or emancipate religious women's lives (Aune, Sharma, and Vincett, 2008; King, 1995; Sullins, 2006; Woodhead, 2008). Therefore, while the body of sociological literature on religion has given considerable insight into the relationship between religion and secularisation, more could be done to understand how gender shapes the trajectory of religious structures, doctrine and lived practices.

The meta-narratives of Emilie Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx on religion may differ on the purpose of religion in people's lives, but the overarching focus of their work is the relationship between religion and modernisation (Lyotard, 1992). For example, Durkheim (2012 [1912]) contends the polarisation between the sacred and the profane, coupled with increasing urbanisation, will eventually disperse a collective religious consciousness. Max Weber (1991 [1922]: 139) considers the pursuit of rational knowledge would result in the 'disenchantment of the world'. In a similar way to the nihilism of Fredrick Nietzsche, Weber argues that modernity will result in God being absent in societal structures (Nietzsche, 1996 [1887]). In contrast, Karl Marx (2015 [1867]) saw the demise of religion not as an existentialist crisis but as a sign of an equal society. Marx claims religious structures are complicit in maintaining the social hierarchy that perpetuates economic inequality and exploitation, so the removal of institutional religion would assist in the fight against capitalism and the bourgeoisie. The legacy of these discourses is that sociological literature has appeared to focus more on the way secularisation and religious affiliation and organisations interact to the detriment of work on how people construct a religious identity through embodied practices (Lyotard, 1992).

Secularisation is the 'process whereby religious thinking, practices and institutions lose social significance' (Wilson, 1966: xiv). In tracking the progress of secularisation, as in the degree

that industrial societies seek societal emancipation from religious institutions and relocate religion to the private sphere, some (mostly male) scholars frame the absence of faith in the public space as a positive measure of modernisation (Berger, 1999; Bruce, 2011, 2013; Dobbelaere, 2002). In the case of Steve Bruce (2011), he maintains that secularisation is not only a universal manifestation of societal progress for both men and women but also the removal of religion from public spaces facilitates a fairer society. However, uncritical acceptance that greater gender equality is brought about by increasing secularisation limits analysis as it presupposes secular ideals are gender-neutral and/or favourable for women (Schnabel, 2015; Schnabel, Facciani, Sincoff-Yedid, and Fazzino, 2016).

Nevertheless, religion in Britain is still present if somewhat reduced in authority in governmental policy, civic society and public institutions, (Casanova, 2004). While some may claim religion has entrapped women in a 'web of expectations' (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012: 179), they are still more likely to engage in some form of religious worship and remain committed than men in Britain (Woodhead, 2012). Therefore, secularisation is not a universal phenomenon for men and women, is uneven in its progression, and its presence in the public sphere does not always necessarily reflect the differing ways men and women engage with secular and religious thought (Aune et al., 2008; Scott, 2018; Woodhead, 2008a).

To move away from a male secularist framing of religion to understand how women engage with religion and secularity, Abby Day and Mia Lövheim (2015: xiv) suggest that studies of gender and religion would benefit from a 'step change'. This step change includes looking through a gender lens to recognise the mechanisms, religious and otherwise, that inform religious women's constructions of gender (Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo, 2015). In Britain, this 'step change' is being driven by a new generation of feminist academics that advocate for a gendered reading of religion to understand the intersection between gender, religion, and secularisation (Aune, 2015a; Lee, 2016; Llewellyn and Trzebiatowska, 2013; Nyhagen, 2019; Woodhead, 2016). In addressing the gaps in the literature, these feminist scholars are developing a body of work on women navigating religion and secularist systems of belief, and their corresponding lived practices to make meaning of their lives. But this has not always been the case. According to Randi Warne in '(En) gendering Religious Studies' (2001), as the patriarchal structure of religious

institutions presents contested territory, there was reluctance by feminists to study religion, which resulted in an androcentric approach to religion in academic focus and production. Indeed, the dominant narrative for second-wave feminist thought and activism was that secularisation was the only means to emancipation (Daly, 1992 [1979]); Dworkin, 1983; Juschka, 2001; Maynard, 2001; Warenski, 1978).

Although there is some residual hesitancy by feminists to become involved in discussions on religion as something positive or not necessarily negative for women, Kristin Aune (2015a, 2015b) contends that feminist approaches on religion and gender have become more nuanced. Her research shows that feminists' attitudes to religion are manifest in three discrete categories; 1) the acceptance of secularism as fundamental to achieving feminist ideals, 2) the adoption of alternative spiritual practices, or 3) the acknowledgement of the rights of religious women. By addressing the difficulties that religious feminists encounter when reconciling a belief system with feminist principles, Aune (2015a: 183) is creating space to access 'places where gender equality and women's religious freedom are taken equally seriously'.

Aune's framing of feminist approaches to religion could combat what some scholars see as a 'double bind' of being a feminist and having faith (Ulrich, 1994: 7). Laurel Ulrich, a Mormon feminist historian, whose work includes *'Well behaved Women Seldom Make History'* (2008), feels faith and feminism can co-exist, but at times, believing so has resulted in her facing exclusion from both secular and religious communities. In response to such criticisms, Gina Messina-Dysert, Jennifer Zobair, and Amy Levin (2015) argue for the acceptance of religious feminism in the public feminist discourse as they claim this can give a critical understanding of various religious concepts, beliefs, and practices to challenge inequality. Nicola Slee (2016) suggests theological researchers are transformed by the experience of drawing upon feminist ideals as they develop an ethical sensitivity and political consciousness.

Dawn Llewellyn and Marta Trzebiatowska (2013: 244) see the acceptance by some feminists that religion and gender equality are incompatible, not as a double bind but as a 'disconnection' between secular and religious feminists. They believe that maintaining faith and feminism in conflict with each other lessens the capacity for feminists to understand how religious women are addressing oppressive religious practices and institutions. One consequence

of questioning the contribution that religious women can make as political actors is that feminists may deny them access to civic engagement (Reilly, 2011). Line Nyhagen (2015) suggests that seeing feminist demands as synonymous with secularity risks marginalising the voices of religious women, which could be generating its own form of discrimination. For instance, Afiya Zia (2018), writing about faith and feminism in Pakistan, is reluctant to accept that religious women, in particular, Muslim women, can be activists when striving for gender equality. Rather, she contends that any acts of resistance that Muslim women engage with are driven not by religious imperative but are signs of emerging secular resistance. Zia's position suggests that some feminist scholars continue to compartmentalise women as either liberated or not from religious structures.

Zia's argument that Muslim women are unlikely to remain within an Islamic discourse when challenging patriarchal structures is a direct critique of Saba Mahmood (2005). In her book *Politics of Piety*: *The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, an ethnographic study of a grassroots Muslim women's piety movement in Egypt, Mahmood shows how Muslim women become social agents through embodied religious practices. She contends that for some Muslim women being agential is through faith practices as well as through notions of political rights. Moreover, she addresses what she sees as white western interpretations of feminism that promotes the idea that automatically religious women are enslaved to the dictates of religious structures. Mahmood suggests that religious submission for some women is a form of agency and paradoxically, elements of feminist practice can occur in seemingly hostile anti-feminist religious environments. However, Sarah Bracke (2008) believes that feminist scholars should exercise caution when ascribing agency to devout women as they may be conflating agency with emancipation. In other words, when talking about the hijab as a symbol of agency, the wearing of the headscarf for Muslim women may be agential, but it does not necessarily signify emancipation from patriarchal control. Thus, to translate feminist ideals of liberation and agency into a religious context requires more work to be done by feminists and religious women (Bracke and Fadil, 2012).

In theorising agency, as previously mentioned, Mahmood's argument is that agency for religious women can be embodied religious actions, such as prayer, which women choose to

perform to connect to the divine. Orti Avishai's (2008) work on Orthodox Jews in Israel goes further in exploring how agency is articulated in a gender traditional religion. Avishai argues that when Orthodox Jewish women act, they may be reinforcing a male-dominated religious tradition, but they also work in a way that highlights the difference between themselves and secular notions of agency. In stating that 'religiosity is performed and achieved in the context of a dialogue with a secular Other' (p.420), Avishai claims they are 'doing religion,' expressing alternative forms of what it means to be a woman, in particular, an Orthodox religious woman. Moreover, whilst Mahmood sees Muslim women exhibiting agency through compliance that embodies piety and docility, Avishai considers that conservative Jewish women are displaying agency as active 'observance' (p.428).

There is tension in feminist scholarship about religion and the role that religion plays in the oppression and liberation of women, along with contestation on how religious women access agency as autonomy and display resistance. Rather than a singular focus on autonomy and liberation, Kelsy Burke (2012) contends agency in gender-traditional religions is best understood as a multi-dimensional construction, which can be demonstrated in several forms and responds to different contexts. Burke's categories of *resistance, empowerment,* and *instrumental* are expansions of Avishai's (2008) work on agency, but she replaces Avishai's 'doing religion' with a more encompassing concept of '*compliant'* agency (p.129).

Burke sees resistance agency as actions religious women exhibit that are challenging the structure through private and public activism, which is more in-line with secular views of agency. Thus, Margaret Toscano (2016b) states some Mormon women are showing resistance when joining Ordain Women, a feminist movement that challenges the exclusion of women from the priesthood. Empowerment agency is the way women in gender- traditional religions interpret beliefs as a motivating action to improve their lives. Burke cites as an example of empowerment Muslim women veiling in western countries as they may use it in response to the western sexualisation of female bodies. Similarly, Burke proposes instrumental agency focuses on religious beliefs as forms of empowerment, but the difference being that empowerment agency is more about 'how religion makes women feel' (p.126), and instrumental agency is about material advantages that emerge from religious involvement. One such example of instrumental

agency is the Mormon religiously motivated practice of not smoking or drinking alcohol being seen by the wider society as benefitting people's health. In contrast, compliant agency is about submission, that when deciding to act religious women are willing to be subject to the will of a God (a divine figure).

Analysing to what extent women exhibit agency in conservative religions means acknowledging that ideas of agency are not universal and do not necessarily equate to visible forms of resistance and liberation. Instead, looking at the boundaries of religious women's agency can show how they negotiate between multiple identities in different contexts, including structural oppression that is present in their lives (Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Einwohner, 2017; Singh, 2015). Understanding that religious women draw upon a range of actions to become self-determined recognises the complex blend of agential and non-agential choices they make, akin to those choices that all women make in their different social environments. In return, seeing agency in more complex ways acknowledges the articulations of religious women as diverse forms of agency, emancipation and negotiations of gender (Khurshid, 2015; Moghadam; 2012, Prickett, 2015; Rinaldo, 2013).

In addition to re-thinking agency for religious women, some feminist scholarship is querying the degree the removal of religion from public spaces is benefiting women. For example, Nyhagen's (2015: 768) analysis of Christian and Muslim women in Norway and Great Britain uses the concept of 'religious lived citizenship,' to interrogate whether secularising the public sphere is providing religious women with opportunities to engage politically. There is also more discussion on the extent secularity is instrumental when working towards gender equality (Akan, 2017; Nyhagen, 2017; Schnabel et al., 2016; Scott, 2018). For Joan Scott (2018: 4), perhaps the most high-profile scholar writing in this area, the premise that secularism is symbiotic with gender equality is 'false'. She argues that since the French Revolution secularism as a system of beliefs has contributed to framing both religion and women as inferior to rational male thinking. Scott, in her earlier article 'Sexularism' (2009), and later in her book *Sex and Secularism* (2018), contends the separation between church and state is less about achieving gender equality and more about the way secularism 'functioned to distract attention from a persistent set of difficulties related to differences of sex' (2018: 4). In other words, secularism, in common with

other societal structures, such as religion, is gendered. Such scholarship acknowledging that secularism is as capable of producing and reproducing inequality as it is of generating equality, brings back into the discourse the degree patriarchy informs not only religion but also secular construction of gender.

In researching how Mormon women negotiate gender, I aim, like other feminist scholars, to disrupt traditional sociological inquiry that is underpinned by Durkheimian convention that 'religious force is nothing other than the collective and anonymous force' of society (Durkheim, 2012 [1912]: 210). Contrasting with a functionalist approach to the study of religion, which focuses exclusively on traditional markers of religiosity, such as prayer, rituals and doctrines, I will emphasise Mormon women's 'lived religion'. As the next section outlines, in approaching the study through Meredith McGuire's (2008) concept of 'lived religion', which is the lived experiences, practices and expressions of faith found in everyday life, this thesis can explore the material reality of how some British Mormon women negotiate gender.

Lived Religion

Meredith McGuire (2008: 13) contends that studying religion as lived religion requires us to research 'embodied practices' that are a tangible manifestation of religious expressions. So, the way religious people work, dress, eat and live, becomes, over time, a form of worship or expression of spirituality. She suggests that relying on standard sociological assumptions about religion, drawn from organisational participation and affiliation, assumes uniformity in practice and beliefs between structures and individuals. In its place, McGuire asks scholars to look at the mundane, the seemingly insignificant, the material reality, to gain insight into experiences, expressions and encounters with the divine by looking at the individual level things 'that are not necessarily those religious institutions consider important' (McGuire, 2008: 5). In drawing upon McGuire's religion as lived, this thesis will look at the everyday practices of British Mormon women to understand their negotiations when constructing gender. Doing this rather than merely looking at Church teachings about gender or what happens in formal Church meetings, will tell us more about the interaction between Mormonism and mainstream British society, as well as explore the boundaries and barriers to gender equality in the lives of Mormon women.

In conceptualising lived religion, McGuire incorporated earlier scholars' work on religion and lived practices; these include Peter Berger (1967), Nancy Ammerman (2007), and Robert Orsi (1997, 2003). For example, Berger's (1967: 45) work on 'plausibility structures' suggests that religious belief requires concrete social connections, challenging the notion that religion is only an internal practice. Robert Orsi (2003), like Berger, did not use the term lived religion to describe embodied practices, rather in his study of Italian American Catholics, he called them 'lived expressions' (p.171). Orsi considered that these everyday expressions of religion constitute 'the practice of making the invisible visible…in order to render them visible and tangible, present to the senses in the circumstances of everyday life' (Orsi, 2005: 75). Likewise, Ammerman (2007) understands lived, or 'everyday' religion, as practices that connect the material reality with the spiritual, meaning individual religiosity is constructed through experiences that are often syncretic.

In *Food, Sex and Strangers: Understanding Religion as Everyday Life* (2013) Graham Harvey suggests the study of religion is rarely about belief in God and more to do with intimate connections made through embodiment and participation. He argues there has been a tendency for scholars to focus on God as transcendental and the corresponding interior actions that are unobservable and nebulous, such as belief. Harvey claims focusing research on the supernatural aspects of religion often means studies are ignoring how religious individuals worship as a series of embodied practices. He contends that looking at religion as an everyday activity that includes sensual, tangible and sensory acts is the best indication of what it means to be religious. For him, religion is about the material world and the social interactions that construct religion:

> Religion is lived by people who eat, make love, host guests and worry about strangers. It is a world in which religion matters to people who perform it (from themselves and/or for others) as they and the world continue to evolve and change. It is a world of relationships and performances energised by the possibilities arising from intimacy and imagination.
>
> (Harvey, 2013: 3)

In her article on 'Feminist Spirituality as Lived Religion: How UK Feminists negotiate Religion and Spirituality' (2015b), Aune argues that examining the ways women live religion, as well as theological beliefs, gives a new dimension on discussions on gender, feminism and

religion. Building upon Harvey, McGuire, and Ammerman's work on lived religion, she shows in her study of British feminists, that they see religion and spirituality in more complex ways, which emerges in their lived practices. These women move beyond religious institutions to construct in everyday practices 'feminist spiritualities', that are often religiously syncretic but grounded in material reality. Aune contends that a feminist understanding of lived religion could offer greater possibilities to understand religion in a more intricate framework. Nyhagen (2017: 507) agrees that if secular feminists recognise lived religion as well as institutional forms of religion, they could engage with religious women to address 'women's rights' and 'gender equality'. As the dialogue between secular feminist and religious women develops, she considers this could facilitate greater democratic participation for religious women in the public sphere.

Lived religion is not without limitations or critics. Marta Trzebiatowska and Steve Bruce (2012: 19) caution against drawing inference on religious practices from small samples as they feel that large data sets are a more reliable measure of the religious landscape. They believe a rigorous comparison between gender requires religious affiliation, attendance and 'assent to particular beliefs' to be measured. While Elizabeth Pritchard (2010) critiques the lived religion concept for what she sees as an uncritical examination of faith. She suggests that scholars are less intellectual in their approaches as they are more concerned with recording the ordinary interactions than the structures that devise religious boundaries. There is also the potential that studying religion-as-lived, which focuses on individual encounters, could minimise the tension that exists between institutional power structures and religious discourses (Hollywood, 2015; Larrimore, 2016).

Despite concerns about the ability for studies of lived religion to critique religious organisations, Mark Larrimore (2016) still believes that lived religion is a critical framework in understanding religion. He considers rather than looking at abstract concepts removed from religious actors, looking at the everyday practices of religious people is the 'difference between religion as preached and as practised' (p.64) and succeeds in capturing the material reality of religion. Unlike a functional or substantive reading of religion, seeking out expansive depictions of the multi-dimensional daily practices of women negotiating religion, gender and cultural norms can sometimes mean de-emphasising religious functions and institutional affiliations. Yet

the insights gained on the contradictions, complications and creative ways of living religion can offer an understanding on how challenges to official religious teachings are found through embodied practices (Ammerman, 2014, 2007; Aune, 2015a; McGuire, 2008; Nyhagen, 2017; Orsi, 2003). Studying lived practices of religion can also draw attention to how religious individuals engage with the wider community to construct everyday actions that make sense of their religious and cultural context (Harvey, 2013; McGuire, 2008; Orsi, 2003).

The study of lived religion will not produce extensive generalisable data to understand how Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender. Instead, it offers vibrant, granular snapshots to show how Mormon beliefs transform into lived practice, including the construction of gender. Therefore, for this thesis and this topic, lived practices of religion can show how some Mormon women in Britain transverse across Church doctrine, Mormon cultural norms and secular concepts of gender to construct a multi-faceted, negotiated religious identity.

Approaches to Gender

Gender, Sylvia Walby argues, is a critical but complex social construction (Walby, 2011). Simone de Beauvoir (1949) states that one becomes a woman within a set of cultural understandings about femininity and masculinity. Irrespective of the ascribed sex identity, male and female, the formation of masculinity and femininity is a process of socialisation, constructed through social interactions in the family, workplace, institutions, and the polity (Bradley, 2013; Connell, 1987; Connell and Pearse, 2015; Dworkin, 1983; Haraway, 1991; Oakley, 2005; Scott, 1999). De Beauvoir's thesis that societal structures are instrumental in deciding what it means to be a woman or a man is in direct opposition with traditional ideals that biological difference dictates behaviour. Ascribing to bodies discrete characteristics has reinforced a hierarchy of power and normalised biological essentialism; for example, the idea that men are strong, while women are nurturing (Bradley, 2013).

As second-wave feminist sociologists debated the way society dictates how masculinity and femininity are constructed, which they argued is or can be distinct from sex difference, they began to link gender with systems of oppression (Andersen, 2002; Bradley, 2013; Dworkin, 1983). In *Sex, Gender and Society*, Ann Oakley, (2005) posited, that like patriarchy, gender as an

academic category addresses the power relations between men and women. For Oakley, society co-joins gender, which is socially constructed and contextually defined, around sex difference to maintain structures of power. Gender is then a series of interconnecting constructions that may be associated with sex, as in biological difference, but not necessarily determined by sex.

Understanding gender as a socio-cultural ideal of prescribed binary norms constructed through lived practices recognises the interdependence between the politics of power and gender. However, Scott (1999: 31) suggests as gender is seen by society as value-free, in the way that the term women is not, if 'gender' becomes synonymous with 'women' this has the potential to depoliticise issues of power. Conversely, she suggests that the use of 'gender', rather than 'women', challenges the marginalising of the female experience. Nevertheless, the use of 'gender', rather than 'women', allows the referencing of the extent to which social relations and structures construct the subjective identities of men and women.

Candace West and Don Zimmerman (1987: 125) describe gender as 'something that one does, and does recurrently, in action with others'. For them, 'doing gender' involves everyday social practices that reinforce separate spheres based on sex difference, by codifying female and male behaviours as 'natural'. West and Zimmerman argue the bifurcation between gender and sex is instrumental to how society assigns individuals one of the sex categories, and according to the sex assigned, behaviour is then dictated by societal expectations of gendered norms. For them, doing gender is a performance done in the real or imagined presence of others. As West and Zimmerman (2009) consider that gender is so entrenched in societal interactions, irrespective of resistance, while gender may be 'redone,' it is unlikely to be 'undone'. But Catherine Connell (2010) suggests that trans people are altering normative ideas of gender, not only redoing gender but also constructing new forms of gender performances. I would argue that there is also the possibility, as Mahmood discussed, that in doing gender via pious interactions, religion can become a site of change for gender norms. Either way, gender is an active on-going process shaped by a societal understanding of difference that can reinforce discrete biological distinctions (Baden, and Goetz, 1998; Bradley, 2013; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2017).

Judith Butler (1990:13, 1999, 2004) questions the distinction between gender and sex as she sees gender as 'performativity', a performance of cultural expectations that reinforce a binary

male and female. She argues that forcing an involuntary gender performance upon a person, for example, ascribing both gender and sex at birth as uniform, prevents more fluid embodied lived expressions. In questioning the coupling of gender with sex differences, Butler moves the discussion from gender being societally constructed to the idea that sex 'difference' is, just as much as gender, socially constructed, as 'sex' is assigned to individuals at or before birth for example through speech acts such as 'It's a girl'.

Butler's approach to gender collapses the difference between sex and gender, believing they are both created in unison through language, discourse and repeated performance. Kath Woodward and Sophie Woodward (2009) agree with Butler that gender is instrumental in constructing social processes that define sex difference. But they feel that arguments that completely deconstruct the gender/sex difference could also marginalise the materiality of the body. For some French feminists, such as Hélène Cixous (1976), removing the female body from the discourse is problematic as she feels it is a tool to claim authority and challenge patriarchy as women's physical bodies are politically informed. There is also the argument that sex difference as an analytical category *can* recognise menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause are a material reality without arguing that these are universally experienced by all who identify as women (Bradley, 2013).

In relation to this thesis, informed partly by my Mormon feminist tradition, within which femaleness is not simply a linguistic construct but also connects to a religious understanding of 'sex' as something divinely ordained, my sociological approach is more materialist than Butler's. For me, as for the Mormon women I researched, Mormon female embodiment is entwined with notions of piety. For Mormons, the female form, especially the reproductive body, is a material manifestation of God's power and love (Allred, 2015). My sociological approach to gender draws from the work of Raewyn Connell and Rebecca Pearse (2015: 47) on the 'reproductive arena'. The reproductive arena differs drastically from notions of separate biological spheres, or sex divorced from gender. Gender as a reproductive arena conceives of bodies as sites where social constructions produce and reproduce the 'creation of the cultural categories 'women' and 'men' (and any other gender categories that a particular society marks out)' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 49). Connell and Pearse consider that the reproductive arena positions the body within gender

processes but ‘far from incorporating everything gender is about’ (p.49). The focus on the body as both ‘object and subject’ of social constructions of gender then becomes less about how gender is changing and asks instead, ‘in what direction is gender changing?’ (p.51). Situating my understanding of gender in Connell and Pearse’s reproductive arena means thinking about how gender is socially constructed through social interactions upon a sexed body (Connell and Pearse, 2015) and the way these may be changing.

Mormon Approaches to Gender

Conservative religious communities see biological essentialism as the base for gender scripts and see male/female embodiment as separate distinctive functions divinely commissioned by God (Martin, 2004; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). Studies on Orthodox Jews, Muslims and American evangelical communities show religious leaders position men and women as ‘separate but equal', placing womanhood as oppositional to manhood (Bartkowski, 2001; Dworkin, 1983: 215; Seneviratne and Currie, 2001; Sered, 2001; Gallagher, 2004). In Mormonism, the separate but equal discourse not only centres on gender essentialism but also discrete gender roles are designed by God to be eternal (Hoyt, 2009; McBaine, 2016; Miles, 2006; Pears, 2005; Sorensen, 1992: Sumerau and Cragun, 2015; Vance 2015).

In contrast to other mainstream Christian religions, the priesthood is available to all ‘worthy’ men over the age of twelve. In Mormon terms, being worthy for members is, amongst other things, a belief in Christ, attending Church and keeping the commandments. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is dependent on a lay ministry. Men and women serve as unpaid religious leaders within their congregations for an undetermined time. As only men are ordained to the priesthood, they have sole responsibility to administer to Church congregations and the performing of ordinances of salvation, such as baptism, the blessing and passing of the sacrament, blessing the sick, and calling people to leadership (Handbook 2, 2018). In comparison, ‘callings’ for women to lead are within women-only and young children auxiliary ministries, and while men are encouraged to seek progression in the priesthood, female aspirations are centred around being a wife and mother as this is seen as the ultimate fulfilment of Mormon female embodiment (Money, and Straubhaar, 2015).

One of the most important Mormon text on gender is 'The Family: A Proclamation to the World' (1995), which states that: 'gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose' (1995: para 2). The Family: A Proclamation to the World or to use its shortened title, the family proclamation, is a modern uncanonised edict written by the Prophet at that time, Gordon B. Hinckley, the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles and was read out by the Prophet at a worldwide all-female meeting in October 1995. [6] Traditionally, any canonical alterations to doctrine, such as the 1978 change in policy to allow all faithful men to receive the priesthood, are presented to Mormon congregations as a directive or declaration. In comparison, despite the way many congregations consider the document as canon, the family proclamation does not have official acceptance into the scriptural body (Peterson, 2015). [7]

For some scholars, the family proclamation is a direct institutional response to the debate in the United States regarding the changes in family structures as a result of same-sex marriages (Allred, 2015; Dockstader, 1999; Peterson, 2015). For other scholars, in stressing that the primary role for women is nurturing children and for men as the presiding authority over his family, the family proclamation is ratifying a dominant-submissive paradigm for family relationships that maintains women as an appendage rather than equal to men (Allred, 2015; Kline, 2016; Leamaster and Einwohner, 2017; Sumerau and Cragun, 2015; Toscano, 2007). However, I contend the primary purpose of the family proclamation is to categorically state gender and sex are synonymous. Hence, Church leaders are reminding members that masculinity/maleness and femininity/femaleness are rigid, separate and biologically predetermined identities.

In maintaining the structural dominance of men by claiming an all-male priesthood is divinely designed, Allred (2015: 96) argues that the 'cosmology of the Proclamation is Patriarchal' and the Church inherently sexist. Despite little scriptural evidence within the Bible or the discrete Mormon scriptures the Book of Mormon, the family proclamation suggests that it is God's design for automatic male religious rights over the family, with women being offered reproductive rights

[6] The First Presidency consists of the Prophet and two councillors, called from the Quorum of the Twelve. See Glossary for further details about the Church leadership structure and Gordon B. Hinckley, along with information on other Prophets.

[7] By 1997, despite no formal ratification of the Proclamation as scripture, the proclamation had been read in the United States House of Representatives, presented to the USA President Bill Clinton, and numerous Heads of State including Presidents of Mexico, Italy, Brazil, Australia and South Korea, and been distributed at the UN World congress of families in Prague [www.lds.org.uk] [Accessed 9 April 2017].

as a compensatory role. Yet Sonja Farnsworth (1991) argues that the common Mormon assertion (she calls it a 'couplet') of 'priesthood is equal to motherhood' is disingenuous, as fatherhood is the 'separate but equal' to motherhood, and Priestess is the opposite of Priesthood.

After researching historic Church literature, Farnsworth suggests the positioning of priesthood and motherhood as separate but equal only entered Church teachings in post-Second World War America. She considers that Church leaders appropriated 1950s American conservative cultural norms that advocated for separate male/masculine and female/feminine roles as a way of justifying priesthood-motherhood as divided responsibilities. Feminist scholars, including myself, now accept the priesthood-motherhood equation is one example of how Church leaders, male and female, use theology to reinforce discrete gender roles (Brooks, Steenblik, and Wheelwright, 2016; Ross, Finnegan, Beal, Money, Whiteley, and Carroll, 2015; Sumerau, and Cragun, 2015). Mormon leaders are not alone in re-imagining doctrine to support gender difference as conservative religions also interpret theology to create discourses that maintain idealised conceptions of femininity and masculinity (Avishai, 2008; Dworkin 1983; Chaves, 1999). Yet, work by some feminist scholars shows that gender roles in the Church have not always been so prescriptive or restrictive for women (Kline, 2014; Vance, 2002).

Laura Vance (2002), in her study of official Church publications, found that literature written for women during the early years of the Church was less about maintaining male priesthood authority and more about liberating women from the restrictions of Victorian societal mores. Mormon women in the 1800s were seen by mainstream America to be destabilising the dominant gender scripts by promoting women as 'equal in authority and influence on men' (Brooks, 2016: 4). One reason for this non-Mormon criticism of Mormon women was Joseph Smith's advocacy for women's equal participation in formal education. Smith's vision for women led to an early Church imperative that women are not to be restricted to the domestic sphere as 'the whole world of science, religion, philosophy, politics, history, art and literature are open to them' (Roberts 1899: 901). For instance, some Mormon women found self-expression through writing for Church publications, which often centred on trenchant critiques of narrow interpretations of the religious obligations of mothers and wives (Bushman, 1971, 2003; Ulrich, 1981, 2010, 2017). While, partly due to the difficulties of living polygamous, Mormon women

could access divorce more easily than women in mainstream American society.[8] Religious instructed to be politically emboldened (Utah women received the vote in 1870), this saw some Mormon pioneer women feel empowered enough to challenge existing social constructions of gender (Ulrich, 2017).

In addition, for many nineteenth-century Mormon women in Utah – not all, as they were still subject to nineteenth-century societal constraints – Church practices and policies gained a degree of self-determination that was not available to their religious counterparts. Instrumental to challenging Victorian gender constructions by Mormon women in Utah was the access they had to certain religious rituals that gave them spiritual authority. They gained the power to contest the gendered status quo because their respected religious roles gave them a considerable degree of autonomy. In her essay 'A Gift Given, a Gift Taken: Washing, Anointing and Blessing the Sick among Mormon Women' (1981), Linda Newell records how Mormon women in the nineteenth and early twentieth century claimed priesthood rites to anoint and bless the sick, including consecrating pregnant women's bodies to prepare them for birth.[9] Although several male leaders opposed women giving blessings, Joseph Smith (1980 [1827]) gave prophetic approval to women, as well as men, to give blessings to those suffering ill health or needed spiritual strength.

Smith's tacit consent for women to claim priesthood authority to give healing blessings did not extend to officially bestowing the institutional appointment of women to the offices of the priesthood. As a result, the ambiguity around the authority of female blessings facilitated institutional erosion of these privileges. After years of implicit consent, by the beginning of the Second World War, the Prophet at that time, Joseph Fielding Smith, not only revoked permission but repositioned male priesthood as the ultimate conduit of God's blessings (Newell, 1981; Smith, 1954). Since then, Church leaders have moved further away from Joseph Smith's desire for women to access in equal measure the material and spiritual benefits of men by lauding priesthood as a male privilege (Burton, 2013; Oaks, 2012; Nelson, 2019). Historical research on

[8] Although the 1851 territorial divorce law allowed divorce, Brigham Young discouraged it but if a woman requested a divorce he generally granted one. Brigham Young had 55 wives and only one wife, his 19th, divorced him (Bachman and Esplin, 1992) .

[9] Two priesthood holders give the blessing of the sick by putting oil on the head that has been consecrated for that purpose, and placing hands upon the head of the person whilst a prayer is given.

Mormon women in the nineteenth century, along with other later scholarly work, demonstrates that when women claim religious authority, the institutional Church has responded at differing times to empower and to resist the emancipation of women (Anderson, 1994; Hammond, 2014; Kline, 2014). Likewise, Church leaders are enlarging and contracting of Mormon teachings on gender to reflect the dominant discourse (Sumerau and Cragun, 2015).

Mormon Studies and Regional Practices in a Global Religion

In reviewing the literature on Mormonism, it is necessary to explain the place of theology in Mormon tradition. James Faulconer (2006:2) contends that Mormonism is 'atheological'. He argues there is tension between theology, a systematically developed set of religious beliefs, and a Mormon belief in continuing revelation that can lead to a radical restructure of doctrine. For instance, after Brigham Young publicly announced the practice of polygamy in 1852, some Church ecclesiastical leaders offered numerous theological explanations to explain the religious imperative of polygamy.[10] These theological justifications became meaningless when the Prophet Wilfred Woodruff abandoned the practice in 1890. Therefore, theological studies on Mormon soteriology remain outside of official Latter-day Saint sources (Petrey, 2011).[11] In addition, with a lay ministry, there is no formal theological training. Instead, leaders draw upon Church authorised literature, such as the scriptures,[12] addresses by apostles, and Church-approved materials for knowledge (Millet, 2009). Toscano (2004) contends that knowledge produced about Mormon doctrine (theology) is about who holds power to authorise, which in the case of Mormonism, is the Prophet and the Twelve Apostles. Nevertheless, she feels Mormon scholars play a vital role in unofficial authorising theology as scholarly discourse has the potential to shift the thinking of individuals indirectly.

According to Mormon historian Patrick Mason (2016), the study of Mormonism in the sociology of religion is a relatively new field of academic interest. Armand Mauss (1994a) suggests that an undercurrent of anti-'intellectual' feeling in Church leadership has stymied

[10] By 1841 Smith had taken in marriage his 'first plural wife' and over the next three years historians suggest that he may have married as many as 24 women (Ulrich, 2017: xvi).

[11] Although in this thesis I use Mormon doctrine and theology interchangeably.

[12] The four books of scripture used in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are the Bible (King James Version), the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price).

sociological studies. Members who are also academics and educators have been encouraged to be apologetics (Mauss, 1994), with one Prophet telling them that they had a responsibility when writing for scholarly journals to defend the faith (Benson, 1976). The literature on Mormonism has been dominated by historical accounts, which has resulted in limited studies on the relationship between Mormon institutional structures, doctrine and lived practices (Mason, 2016; Shepherd and Shepherd, 2016). The lack of a substantive body of work on Mormon lived religion is surprising as practice (both informal and formal) rather than belief is central to the Latter-day Saint Church (Faulconer, 2006). When research has been done on lived religion and gender, scholarship has been concentrated on North American Mormon women (Beaman, 2001; Bushman, 2008; Campbell, 2016; Denagh II, 2013; Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Barista, 2018; Miles, 2006; Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015; Peterson, 1987; Shepherd and Shepherd, 2016).

Mason (2016) attributes the reluctance to explore Mormonism outside of the North American context as a result of literature seeing Mormonism and America as symbiotic, as demonstrated by Jan Shipps's (1987) book *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition.* Abandoning the tradition of previous linear historical narratives of the Church, Shipps's book was influential because she was one of the first to interpret Mormon discourse through locating it in the history of the United States (Mason, 2016). Similarly, the sociological work of Armand Mauss on the institutional Church (1994), alongside Claudia Bushman's (2008) lived religion approach to Mormonism, are considered instrumental in understanding the relationship between Mormons and American society in a contemporary framework. While this scholarship has given considerable insight into the growth and evolution of Mormonism, the discourse has revealed very little about Mormon practices outside of the United States (Mason, 2016).

The gap in the sociological literature on regional practices of Mormonism appears to amplify Utah's Latter-day Saint issues and interests as universal issues for all members of the Church (Mason, 2016). Walter Van Beek (1996), a Dutch anthropologist of Mormonism, believes that centring on Utah Mormonism prevents Mormon studies from addressing broader societal concerns such as poverty, environmental disasters and political corruption. Wilfried Decoo, another European Mormon scholar (2016), suggests that the continuing acceptance of American

particularities as symptomatic of all Latter-day Saint practices maintains the cultural supremacy of America, in particular, the Mormon corridor of Utah, Arizona and Idaho. In a Church where there are more members outside the United States, studying Mormonism through an American lens limits understanding of diverse experiences and broader narratives. In response to the increasing globalisation of Mormonism, some Mormon scholars are asking for a shift from USA-based Mormon studies to more evidential accounts of alternative forms of lived practices and expressions of the Latter-day Saint Church (Mason, 2016; Rutherford, 2016; Park, 2013).[13]

In some measure, the institutional Church is contributing to developing a global Mormon scholarship. Recent efforts by the Church History Department to repatriate documentation, journals and other artefacts relating to early Latter-day Saint history, is seeing records moving from storage in Utah and going back to their country of origin. Mormon historians outside the USA when researching their own country are finding it easier to access primary sources, but it does not automatically democratise Mormon scholarship. Moreover, feminist scholars of colour, such as Gina Colvin (2015), Melissa Inouye (2014), and Janan Graham-Russell (2013), feel that in Mormon studies conversations on race, Mormonism and gender are secondary to discussing American history and Mormon pioneers. Instead, they are advocating for more research on Mormonism that adopts an intersectional framework (Crenshaw, 1989). The study of Mormon structures through an intersectional paradigm, which understands identity as complex, inextricably linked with multiple categories, such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion and class, gains particular resonance when discussing black members. Until the late 1970s, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints discriminated against Africans and African- Americans by denying them the priesthood and rites to the Temple.[14] Despite the historic racist practices of the Church, membership in Africa is growing at an exponential rate compared to Europe (Cumorah, 2020). But there is little scholarship on the black Mormon experience outside of America (Brooks and Colvin, 2018).

[13] Professor Douglas Davies established a British Centre of Mormon studies at the University of Nottingham during the 1990s, but ended when Professor Davies moved to Durham. Academic interest in Mormon Studies is increasing in Britain, with more PhDs in Mormon scholarship in the past 10 years than in the previous 30 years put together (Holt, 2011, Johnson, 2014, Powell, 2013, Properzi, 2010, Rasmussen, 2010, Singh, 2014).

[14] Although Joseph Smith had overseen the ordination of the priesthood to black men, from the mid-1800s until 1978, the Church did not ordain men of black African descent or allow black men or women to participate in temple endowments or sealing ordinances <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>

There is also the issue of how some historians and Church leaders' discourse frames ethnicity. Jan Shipps (1977: 765) suggested that Mormons are 'so separate and distinct that new converts must undergo a process of assimilation roughly comparable to that which has taken place when immigrants adopt a new and dissimilar nationality'. Therefore, she argues that, just as Jews and Muslims are distinctive diasporas, due to their uniform practices, Mormons are an ethnic group, as well as a religious identity. In this she links, perhaps even conflates, ethnicity and religion. The idea that Mormons can be considered an ethnic group has seen some Church leaders draw parallels with the discrimination faced by Muslim refugees and the treatment of Mormons in the nineteenth century by mainstream America (Burton, 2015; Harris, 2015). But critics of this view argue that expansion of Mormonism beyond America has resulted in far more diverse practices between congregations to be considered an ethnicity (Mauss, 2013). There is also increasing critique of the history of the Church and race emerging, with work by W. Paul Revee (2015) challenging white privilege in American Mormonism and Ignacio García (2015, 2017) drawing attention to the experiences of Latin American members. More recently, Colvin (2017) considers that Church leaders in a predominately white privileged religion (which Mormonism in many ways is) continue to show a lack of understanding of the complicated relationship between race, religion and ethnicity.

To develop a sustainable Mormon theological, sociological and historical scholarship that is inclusive of global narratives requires a volume of funding and depth of scholarship mainly found in Church-sponsored Mormon Centres that are part of the American Academy. An inclusive Mormon scholarship requires more than open access to Church records and publications. European Mormon sociological and historical scholars still have to navigate a field shaped by a pervasive American discourse. There is also the question for some British scholars on whether Mormonism can even be considered a Christian religion (Bruce, 2011). Indeed, without more institutional commitment and resources to research Mormon communities outside of America, there is a way to go before there is a substantive body of sociological and historical literature on Mormonism in Europe.

Conclusion

The literature reviewed in this chapter began by outlining the relationship between religion, gender and secularism. As other feminist scholars of religious studies and sociology of religion have done, I have suggested de-centring religious studies from academic androcentric structures to develop accounts of how religious women encounter what Durkheim calls the sacred and profane (Aune, Sharma, and Vincett, 2008). I have shown that some feminist scholars are advocating for a more nuanced understanding of religion and gender by looking more closely at lived religion to understand how faith beliefs are found within individuals, local and global frameworks. More needs to be done to record lived religion in Mormon studies to explore further the relationship between gender constructions, Mormon doctrine and mainstream culture,

In outlining the body of work on gender, I have reflected on sociological conceptualisations of gender and clarified how gender is approached in this thesis, suggesting that the Connell and Pearse's (2015) 'reproductive arena' can address the theological, structural, and secular understanding of gender constructions in Mormon congregations. In reviewing scholarship on Mormon women and gender, I have shown that there are limited frames of analysis outside of North America recognising the power disparities between Mormon men and women and the effects of secularisation on Mormon constructions of gender. Focusing my study on how British Mormon women negotiation gender, a topic not previously researched, I seek to contribute and expand the current body of work on Mormonism and gender (Beaman, 2001; Campbell, 2016; Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen, 2016; Denagh II, 2014; Leamaster and Bautista, 2018; McBaine, 2014; Money and Straubhaar, 2015; Ross, Finnigan, Beal, Money, Whiteley, and Carroll, 2015; Shepherd and Shepherd 2015; Sumerau and Cragun, 2015).

Chapter Two: Building of Zion? Mormonism in Britain

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a religion that heavily invests in a symbiosis between doctrine and history, where each gain from interacting with the other (Lloyd, 2008). Mormon institutions construct structures, practices and religious rituals that create 'a common homeland, a common culture, . . . common social institutions, a deeply felt common tradition, and the self-image of a separate and divinely chosen group with its own peculiar destiny' (O'Dea, 1957: 116). In response, the Church claims a cohesive global identity, capitalising on distinctive lived experiences that reinforce cultural hegemony to develop a seemingly 'imagined community' that appears to transcend regional context (Anderson, 2006). Yet, to what degree are Mormons in Britain – and for this study, Mormon women –constructing religious and cultural practices to achieve a distinctive gender identity?

By taking a sociological approach to the relationship between Mormonism and gender in a British context, we can explore to what extent negotiations of gender differ from other religious and non-religious women. Before we can discuss how British women negotiate gender, this chapter will give an overview of Mormon beliefs and historical events to provide a broad understanding of Mormonism and its relationship with mainstream religion and British culture. I begin with the historiography of Mormonism in the British Landscape and the legacy of polygamy for British Mormon congregations. I then shift to discuss Mormon gender theology for greater insight into the construction of gender in Mormon congregations. To conclude, I discuss models of Mormon female embodiment, Eve and Heavenly Mother, which inform institutional and individual Mormon constructions of gender. [15]

[15] See Glossary of terms and explanations of Mormon practices and key Mormon religious figures.

Voices from the Margins: British Mormon History

Researching British Mormon women as a distinct group from American Mormon women means recognising regional practices in a global religion. This requires me to revisit the historiography of British Mormonism to contextualise it within the British religious landscape rather than an appendage to American Mormonism. This approach is not without controversy, as it decouples British Mormon history from a Utah standpoint that has marginalised the impact of early Mormon British migration to the United States on British Mormon congregations (Jensen, 1987). For example, when talking about the experiences of her grandmother-in-law that encountered immense persecution when she joined the Church, Bryony, feels this sacrifice is disregarded by Church history:

> It just seems in Utah they are interested only in their world; I mean look at Church history accounts, all about the pioneers who went to Utah, but my husband was baptised when he was 11, and his grandmother joined the Church in 1915. Very little is written about the members that remained. She was stoned in the Streets in Bradford in the 1920s as she did stay behind (not emigrate to Utah), her best friend married American and went to the States and most of the girls did marry missionaries who served here, but she stayed. She was too poor to go, and she had family and husband who never joined the Church, he remained as a non-member all their lives, but she was very faithful.
>
> (Bryony, 68 years old, convert) [16]

By documenting the experiences of Bryony's grandmother-in-law, I am reclaiming and adding her narrative to a Mormon history located in the British context.

While other new religious movements that emerged in the 1800s in North America: Christian Science, The Bible Study Movement (the foundation for Jehovah's Witnesses) and Seventh Day Adventists, have transcended their American origins to become international movements, Mormonism is considered an American religion that is found in other countries (Rutherford, 2016). This is in part the result of the Mormon Church believing in the Book of Mormon, a scriptural account of an ancient Judeo-Christian civilisation that once inhabited the

[16] The names of Interviewees are pseudonyms.

Americas.[17] The doctrinal importance of the Book of Mormon means from the early beginnings of the Church the United States of America is theologically positioned as 'Zion': a spiritual state and physical location for a Utopian community that seeks to be of 'one heart and one mind, with no poor amongst them' (Moses 7:39). Moreover, as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints[18] was formed in 1830 in Palmyra, United States, this has reinforced the religion as synonymous with America by British communities (Lecourt, 2013).

In presenting itself to religious and secular communities as a global religion, the contemporary Church is continually seeking to re-frame Mormonism as international. But the centrality of America as a sacred place in Mormon doctrine, its role in early American colonisation and the location of the Church headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah means Mormonism for many is seen as the American religion (Fleming, 2003; Shipps, 1987; Yeates, 1939). [19] This makes researching British Mormon communities complicated as literature equates attitudes and lived practices of Mormon congregations as homogeneous with American Mormonism. Global Mormon narratives are submerged beneath a dominant Mormon identity that reveres antebellum America, Utah culture and an American worldview (Givens, 2007; O' Dea, 1957). [20]

The oldest continuous Mormon congregations in the world are in Britain, as just seven years after the Church was formed four Mormon missionaries arrived at Liverpool Docks to convert the British public to Mormonism (Evans, 1937). [21] These missionary efforts were so successful in converting British women to join the Church, especially from industrialised cities,

[17] The use of the Book of Mormon as a scripture accounts for why members are called Mormons. It is also used to refer to members of the Community of Christ and FLDS, which can cause confusion when discussing Mormonism.

[18] During the 19th and early 20th century, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints saw schisms from the main body: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (now known as the Community of Christ) and the Fundamental Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS) who continue to practice polygamy. Neither group are affiliated with the Church in any capacity. According to their World Bulletin (2019) membership of the Community of Christ is currently 250,000 in 60 countries. Membership for the FLDS was estimated in 2005 between 6,000-10,000 (Smith, 2005).

[19] An unsubstantiated account of Leo Tolstoy (Tolstoy 1901 cited Yeates, 1939) is quoted as asking ' I want to know about the American religion. Catholicism originated in Rome; the Episcopal Church originated in England; the Lutheran Church in Germany, but the Church to which I refer originated in America and is commonly known as the Mormon Church'. <https://archive.org/stream/improvementera4202unse#page/n31/mode/2up>

[20] Antebellum America is the period before the civil war. In regard to Mormon history this time frame refers to when Joseph Smith, the first Mormon Prophet and his successor Brigham Young, (seen by some as the Mormon Moses) were overseeing the Church (Givens, 2007).

[21] The Preston ward, near Manchester dates back to 1837 is the oldest continuous Latter-day Saint unit in the World, followed by Eastwood and Derby (1841 and 1842 respectively). The oldest continuous units in the United States were formed in 1849 (Henrie, 2012).

that by the 1870s they were outnumbering American born Mormon women.[22] The early missionaries saw conversion in Britain as a two-stage process, first to get people to accept the gospel and then to persuade them to migrate to America in what was termed the 'gathering of Zion' (Hartley, 1975). To facilitate relocation to the United States the Church created the Perpetual Emigration Fund, which by 1852, over £125,000 had been given to assist poor emigrants, and the Church had its own charter and supply agent in Liverpool. (National Museums Liverpool Maritime Archives 2016).[23]

The principle of 'gathering of Zion' was taken from revelations by Joseph Smith that members should assemble in one place, 'Zion': 'the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land' (Doctrine and Covenants 29: 7–8).[24] This Church initiative, which was present from 1837 until the early twentieth century, served to strengthen territorial occupation and provide a place of refuge from persecution for members both in and outside of the United States (Hartley, 1975). The result was more than 80,000 converts came from Europe between 1840 and 1900 to America, in what one historian called the largest and most successful group immigration in the history of the United States (Hartley, 1975). By 1855 nearly 19,535 of the roughly 21,911 European Mormon emigrants who left for America were of British heritage (Lecourt, 2013). The result was a systemic mass migration of British Mormon converts to what is now called the Mormon corridor of the United States, Arizona, Idaho, and Utah that saw these American communities benefit religiously and economically (Bartholomew, 1995; Hartley, 1975; Stenhouse, 2008 [1872]). [25]

Mormon missionaries conjoined theological discourse of Zionist gathering with economic and social benefits of migration, framing the British Mormon exodus to America as a small sacrifice to gain temporal and spiritual eternal rewards (Jensen, 1987; Perkins, 2007; Stenhouse,

[22] 64% of Mormon women born between 1820 and 1849 were from European countries British women consisting of over 40 per cent of the demographics and American born women accounting for 36%. The majority of migrants to Utah came from the North of England, with three out of four emigrants came from a large town or city (Bartholomew, 1995).

[23] According to CPI £125,000 in 1852 is equivalent in purchasing power to about £17,565,483.96 in 2020 (Official Inflation Data) [online] https://www.officialdata.org/uk/inflation/1852?amount=125000 [23 March 2020]

[24] Unlike the other Latter-day Saint scriptures, the Doctrine and Covenants is not a translation of ancient documents but contains scriptural revelation given to Joseph Smith on unique Mormon doctrine, such as the eternal nature of families, the degrees of glory awaiting men and women after this life, and the organization of Christ's Church.

[25] As Utah grew organically, by the 1880s the diaspora of European converts was discouraged by church leaders so by the turn of the 20th century, more than 90 per cent of members were Utah- born (Grant, 1992, Heaton, 1992).

2008 [1872]). In suggesting American exceptionalism as the solution to eternal salvation, that increased enmity between Mormons and British Victorian communities as Mormonism was seen as a rejection of religious tradition, mainstream values and culture (Lecourt, 2013). The mass migration saw British Mormon congregations become communities in transit, which maintained physical, emotional and social isolation from British society. There was also internal division as members felt that the institutional Church perceived them as less faithful if they remained in Britain (Bartholomew, 1995; Bloxham et al., 1987; Perkins, 2007).

America Mormon congregations are privileged by the history of Mormon migration as it is seen as part of the American history of building a nation (Givens, 2007). Although Mormon membership in the United States is still problematic (Pew Research, 2017), American Mormons are more likely to be accepted then European Mormons into the mainstream framework (Mauss, 2013) to become what Chang Chen and Ethan Yorgasen (1997) term 'the model minority'. One reason for residual tension between mainstream British society and Mormonism is the religious landscape differs significantly from the United States in religious affiliation and proselyting. In the United States weekly church attendance is 36-39% and Mormonism is the fourth largest individual religion,[26] whilst in the United Kingdom, only 5% attend Christian churches regularly, with Mormonism less than 1% of the attendees.[27] Most British people do not attend any church, preferring to adopt a 'believing but not belonging' position (Davie, 1995) and expect religious expressions to remain within the private sphere (Brierley, 2017).[28] As a contested Christian religion and with increasing religious illiteracy and secularisation in British society this will reinforce Mormon practices as alien to the host nation in sacred and secular arenas (Heaton, Johnson and Albrecht, 1987; Mauss, 1994, 2011, 2013).

In addition, the missionary program of the Latter-day Saint Church, which sees young men and women between the ages of 18 to 25 dedicate a fixed period to preach Mormonism, reflects an American religious conversion programme. Mormon missionary structures (i.e. door to door

[26] Pew research (2015). <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/> [accessed 2017]

[27] Figures for Church Attendance in Britain 2015 was 5%, with England the lowest at 4.7%, Wales 4,8% and Scotland 8.9% <https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>

[28] Research carried out by Brierley Consultancy (2017) in the UK found although 5% of the population attended church regularly, 48% had a belief in a higher spiritual power. Furthermore, it predicts that by 2067 Christianity will disappear from Britain completely.

selling) display a North American rationale of positioning churches as religious companies that need to compete in the market place to promote their spiritual goods (Stark and Bainbridge, 1985). Some American scholars suggest that visible Mormonism missionary efforts in Britain are seen as counter-culture as it promotes unsolicited religious discussion in the public sphere (Perkins, 2007; Thomas, 1987).

Both British and North American Mormons have at various times suffered exclusion and alienation from mainstream culture and Christianity (Bloxham, Moss and Porter, 1987). Yet, British Mormon congregations have appeared to not assimilate to the same degree as American Mormonism into mainstream culture (Givens, 2007). Instead, belonging to the Mormon Church will appear to inextricably entwine British Mormon congregations, along with other countries outside of the USA, with American exceptionalism (Decoo, 2013). Yet, the Church is becoming increasingly diverse, with non-American membership outgrowing North America, which suggests there may be mounting challenges from members outside of the USA to stop seeing Utah as the paradigm of Mormonism (Cumorah, 2019; Decoo, 2013; Givens, 2007; Mason, 2016; Mauss, 2011).

Polygamy, Migration, and Relief Society

The influx of new converts from Europe during the 1800s was crucial to the expansion and possibly even survival of the Latter-day Saint Church (Garr, 2007). Conversion of American citizens was declining, partly due to the increased persecution of Latter-day Saints after the Mormon practice of polygamy become known in the United States (Dale, 1992).[29] Although under Joseph Smith's direction the private practice of polygamy had been occurring since the 1840s in Mormon communities, once members were established in Utah by the 1850s polygamy was visible in both private and civic society (Bitton and Lambson, 2012). [30] The Mormon belief that

[29] During the late 1830s, the state of Missouri saw an influx of Mormon converts. Suspicion of the members motives tension escalated between Mormon congregations and Missourians. "It requires no gift of prophecy," stated a citizens' committee, "to tell that the day is not far distant when the civil government of the county will be in their hands; when the sheriff, the justices, and the county judges will be Mormons" (Parkin, 1992: n/a).A key factor in abusive action against members was the extermination order issued by Lilburn Boggs, the Governor of Missouri in 1838, that "the Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace-their outrages are beyond all description" (Dale, 1992)

[30] According to Davis Britton and Val Lambson (2012), precise figures on the polygamous unions are difficult to gauge but it is plausible that 15 to 20 per cent of males and 25 to 30 per cent of females were practicing polygamy.

polygamy is divinely sanctioned initiated severe political repercussions and mounting public opinion against the Church in the United States, including removal of political rights and expulsion from communities (Arrington and Bitton, 1979). Likewise, Mormons in Britain who were subject to persecution and exclusion from mainstream society. However, in contrast, to besieged American Mormon congregations, during the decades from 1840 to 1860, the number of new baptisms reported by the British mission exceeded the total reported growth of membership in the United States (Grant, 1992). In 1851 there were more members of the Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland (33,000) than there were in Utah (12,000) (Grant, 1992).

In the same way, certain aspects of British media see contemporary Islam as destabilising British collective identity (Crawley, McMahon, and Jones, 2016), the popular Victorian press held a deep suspicion of the American origins of the Latter-day Saint Church. There was also critical opposition to the erosion of communities through Mormon mass migration (Lecourt, 2013). British members of the Church were not immune from civic society condemnation of Mormon polygamous unions, which saw Victorian popular literature and press articles framing Mormonism as sexually deviant. The British media intensified anti-Mormon feeling by depicting Mormon missionaries as predatory males who were enticing women to Utah with promises of marriage, but on arrival, would be forced into polygamous unions (Bartholomew, 1995, Lecourt, 2013, Perkins, 2007).

The framing in popular literature of Mormon women as victims of the machinations and sexual depravity of Mormon men become so prevalent that the British Government in 1911 debated whether to expel all Latter-day saints from Britain (Evans, 1937; Lecourt, 2013; Perkins, 2007). However, data from that period rejects the concept that British unmarried women were groomed by missionaries to be future polygamous wives for men in Utah. The majority of emigrating women were either young, married with children or part of an extended family, with few single women choosing to migrate without accompaniment (Bartholomew, 1995).[31] Even Fanny Stenhouse (2008 [1889]), a prominent writer of anti-Mormon literature, contends that British Mormon women's motivation for migration was not for marital options but evidential of

[31] 55,000 to 63,000 women joined the church during 1841-1914 in the United Kingdom, with estimates of up to 25,000 then going on to America.

their piety. In addition, Rebecca Bartholomew (1995) found that English Mormons were less likely to become part of polygamous structures both as husbands and wives.

The British media reportage of Mormonism not only continued hostility towards the Church into the late twentieth century in the public space (Perkins, 2007) but also represented British Mormon women as incapable of rational actions, rendering them susceptible to sexual exploitation. This is seen in the persistent pre-war myth found in anti-Mormon propaganda and public press, which claimed that the Church had built a 'tunnel' from the United Kingdom to the United States to transport young women to Utah (Doxey, Freeman, Holzapfel and Wright, 2007). The belief in the Mormon tunnel was still prevalent in the 1970s, as shown in my interview with Jean, and was one of the reasons why she encountered parental resistance to her decision to join the Mormon Church. The other reason was a fear she would migrate and leave her family:

> I think they thought it was a fad, something I would grow out of, my father was quite a bit older than my mum, and he had instructions from his parents not to talk to those Mormons because in his small village there was a family who were members of the Church. But back in the day, obviously, they didn't think much of Mormons in those days, and I think it built up this idea that they should be avoided, plus he thought, he never said this to me, but I really do believe that he thought this, that I would up sticks and go to America. I mean he was around the days when they have this tunnel, so he was frightened, he was in fear that I would leave, I learnt this from things that been said since then.
>
> (Jean, 59 years old, convert)

The concept of a century-old trans-Atlantic tunnel to transport Mormon women may seem incredulous in the twentieth-first century. Yet, the fear that women once converted to Mormonism will abandon Britain is not without foundation, as out of the 30 Latter-day Saint women I interviewed, seven had a close female relative who had emigrated to Utah in the past 25 years.

It seems for some members that Utah will always wield some attraction to congregations outside of North America, one theory is because Utah is seen as a mature institutional structure that suggests increased Mormon religiosity and family activity (Heaton, Albrecht and Johnson, 1992). This could also be a significant pull for British Mormon women as they seek to replicate

the Mormon ideal of intergenerational Mormon families because few European families will retain all of their family active in the Church (Decoo, 2017). In the absence of literature on contemporary migration patterns of Latter-day Saints outside of the United States, it is difficult to identify the causal factors for continuing emigration by British Mormon women to Utah. Therefore, it is only speculation by European scholars of Mormonism that a small number of European Mormons are relocating to Utah in the 21st century because Mormon culture continues to perceive Utah as the spiritual epicentre of Mormonism. (Decoo, 2013, 2016).

Nevertheless, the idea that Utah is a model of Mormonism in Britain is found in the responses of the women I interviewed. Out of the 30 participants, 26 used Latter-day Saint women in America or Utah as a comparison when talking about the difference between themselves and other Mormon women. A few participants, however, feel no distinction between themselves and other Mormon women. For example, Susie, when asked says: 'I don't feel like there is any difference and I think it's because we've all got the same values' (57 years old, convert). One reason for Susie's belief that Mormon women connect through gospel beliefs could be due to the role of Relief Society has in socially constructing a shared female Mormon identity.

Relief Society is one of the largest and oldest women's organisations in the world.[32] Founded by Joseph Smith on the 17th of March, 1842, it is a space for all females over the age 18 to teach, serve each other and perform charitable works (Daughters of My Kingdom, 2011).[33] Each congregation (ward) has a female Relief Society president, along with two female counsellors. Relief Society leaders are called (they cannot apply) by a male bishop (the ward leader) to be accountable for the spiritual and temporal welfare of every baptised woman. The Relief Society presidency oversees female-only activities and facilitates religious teaching on Sundays for women. She is also involved in monthly ward councils, where male and female

[32] Despite the request from one of the Apostles at that time, Elder John Taylor, for the organisation to be called the benevolent society, Emma Smith (the first president) named it Relief Society as she said: 'the popularity of the word benevolent is one great objection— no person can think of the word as associated with public Institutions, without thinking of the Washingtonian Benevolent Society which was one of the most corrupt institutions of the day— do not wish to have it called after other Societies in the world— … [W]e are going to do something extraordinary— when a boat is stuck on the rapids with a multitude of Mormons on board, we shall consider that a loud call for relief— we expect extraordinary occasions and pressing calls.' The minutes noted that Elder Taylor conceded the point and agreed that 'Relief Society was best' (Daughters of My Kingdom, 2011)

[33] John Widtsoe, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, summarized the Relief Society's purpose as pursuing the 'relief of poverty, relief of illness; relief of doubt, relief of ignorance — relief of all that hinders the joy and progress of woman.' [https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/relief-society-history, accessed 17 June 2017]

leaders meet to decide how best to provide for the needs of the congregation and responsible for reporting on the welfare needs of women.

Historically, Relief Society gained a certain amount of emancipation from male control by its ability to control its curriculum, finances and publications and having access to a sorority that endorses female empowerment and self-determination through religious devotion (Dushku, 1976; Madsen, 1981; Toscano, 1985). As Relief Society leaders could dictate the curriculum, the lessons reflected the concerns and interest of female members, which were often eclectic in approach to gender. For example, Sunday instructions on motherhood were interspersed with mid-week activities on self-reliance through education and political engagement (Daughters of our Kingdom, 2011). However, by the late 1970s under a bureaucratic initiative known as 'Priesthood Correlation,' all Church programs, including the independently run Relief Society, was subsumed under the control of male leadership (Derr, 1987). The move to limit Mormon female authority by removing teaching and financial autonomy from Relief Society saw some Mormon women struggle to reconcile their feminist ideals with Mormon beliefs (Johnson, 1979; Warenski, 1978).

Mormon Soteriology

In the British education system, knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is often gained from history lessons on the American Mid-Western expansion rather than religious education (Head, 2009). This suggests the Church is still seen as a sect rather than a mainstream religion by secular authorities (Bloxham et al., 1987; Doxey et al., 2007; Mason, 2016). Before a new religious movement can be established as a legitimate religious authority, it will go through stages of cult-sect-church (Weber, 1973 [1923]). During the late twentieth century, Mormon leaders made attempts to evolve from sect to church through highly visible humanitarian projects and political mobilisation. However, it still struggles to find acceptance as a Christian institution in Europe (Bruce, 2011; Mauss, 1994b, 2011).

Mormonism is a syncretic movement, taking Abrahamic traditions with New Testament canon (Lecourt, 2013), and exhibits a religious eclecticism as the second Mormon Prophet Brigham Young, the successor to Joseph Smith, stated:

> "Mormonism," so-called, embraces every principle pertaining to life and salvation, for time and eternity. No matter who has it…The truth and sound doctrine possessed by the sectarian world, and they have a great deal, all belong to this Church.
>
> (Young, 1853: 3)

To maintain its fragile public status as a Christian church, the institutional Church has sought to emphasise its credentials by promoting Christocentrism, evidenced by the addition of the subtitle to the Book of Mormon in 1982: 'Another Testament of Jesus Christ'. Patrick Mason (2016) argues that the contemporary Church is engaging in evangelicalism of Mormonism as Latter-day Saint press campaigns shift from focusing on difference to emphasising shared Christian tenets of a benevolent God, and a belief in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of humankind.

Mormonism, as a structure, people and culture, is recognised for its role in Mid-Western American colonisation (Shipps, 1987). Mormons, due to their perceived patriotism, are sometimes represented as a model minority in the media in America (Chen and Yorgasen, 1997). Yet there is still a reluctance to accept the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a recognised Christian religion by other American Christians. For example, Pew Research (2017) found Mormons, along with Muslims and atheists, were the least regarded by religious individuals in America, particularly evangelicals.[34] The differences between Mormon belief and mainstream Christianity are radical, as Mormon theology rejects mainstream Christian concepts of the trinity, the afterlife and salvation. I use the word theology with a caveat that most Mormons see their beliefs as doctrine, not theology. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this is because of an acceptance of continuing living prophetic revelation and personal interpretation when applying practices (Faulconer, 2006).

Mormon soteriology, its doctrine of salvation, is gendered. The Church leaders teach that salvation occurs through families within heteronormative-gendered structures, which informs normative Mormon values and social structures. To understand the multifarious, complex way that Mormon doctrine informs the construction of gender it is important to mention the dichotomy of Mormon doctrine, which is a belief in a personal revelation while demanding

[34] In the age group of 18-29 Mormons were the least liked group by other religious Americans, whilst Muslims were the least regarded in all other age groups. <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/02/15/americans-express-increasingly-warm-feelings-toward-relihetreo-awxugious-groups/>

prophetic infallibility. Latter-day Saint members are taught that every individual is entitled to personal revelation, which cultivates individualistic interpretations of lived practices but is also expected to follow Church leadership guidelines.[35] In describing Mormon doctrine, Mormon scholars (including me) must interpret both the universal doctrines and the personal beliefs of others as well as of themselves.[36] Thus, the discussion on Mormon theology is a reflection of my understanding of prophetic statements as well as my interpretation of others' understandings. I do not claim an authoritative stance but an interpretive position.[37]

The doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints centres on the eternal nature of families, which is the focus of God's 'plan of salvation'. The plan of salvation claims that God is the literal father of all spirits and the act of birth is when the spirit unites with a physical body to live on earth.[38] The experiences gained during the time on earth are preparatory to returning and reunification with God to become part of an eternal family again.[39] Eternal life, which is for all humankind, is made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ, but eternal salvation will depend on individual faithfulness. Mormon salvation comprises of three degrees of glory: Celestial, Terrestrial and Telestial.[40] The highest level is the Celestial, where patrilineal families formed originally on earth live together if faithful. This kingdom is reserved for the most devout, who have lived in harmony with gospel principles. The Terrestrial or intermediate level of salvation is described in terms corresponding to conventional Christianity concepts of Heaven

[35] Latter-day Saint members will seek to differentiate between the letter of the law, a closed adherence to commandments reflecting the Mosaic tradition and the spirit of the law, the law of Jesus Christ, an open acceptance of diverse understanding (Packer, 1990). However, church leaders are responsible for boundary maintenance to reinforce overarching non-negotiable gospel principles (Hunter, 1994). An example would be tithing, members are expected to give 10% of their income to the church (the letter) but it is down to the individual on whether it is on gross or net salary, gifts of money and other bonuses (the spirit).

[36] Members are taught the Prophet Joseph Smith saying that leaders teach principles of the gospel but members govern their actions themselves (Smith, 1830 cited Packer, 1990).

[37] The official Church statement regarding discussion about doctrine in public spaces: 'Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine. A single statement made by a single leader on a single occasion often represents a personal, though well-considered, opinion, but is not meant to be officially binding for the whole Church. With divine inspiration, the First Presidency (the Prophet and his two counsellors) and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (the second-highest governing body of the Church) counsel together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in official Church publications. This doctrine resides in the four "standard works" of scripture (the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price), official declarations and proclamations, and the Articles of Faith. Isolated statements are often taken out of context, leaving their original meaning distorted'. (Mormon Newsroom, 2007).

[38] D&C 93: 33; Book of Mormon 2 Ne. 2: 25.

[39] His purpose is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1: 39). Bible Matthew 5: 48; Book of Mormon 3 Ne. 12: 48; D&C 76: 43-44; Book of Mormon Alma 12: 24.

[40] The Apostle Paul spoke of three glories, the sun, moon, and stars, which differ in glory. He called the first two glories celestial and terrestrial but did not name the third (Bible: 1 Corinthians 15: 40-41,).

as harmonious, peaceful and beautiful, but those who reside are single.[41] The lowest form of salvation, the Telestial Kingdom, is reserved for those who reject Christ's teachings. There is no Hell in Mormon doctrine.[42]

The plan of salvation is instrumental in Mormon foci on the family as individual salvation is located in family relationships and marriage, and parenthood achieves divine purposes (Allred, 1994, 2015; Toscano, 2007, 2012a). The eternal family is central to salvation, which requires both father and mother for the creation of spirits in the premortal life or physical tabernacles on earth, reinforcing biological essentialism and heteronormative relations (Heeren, Lindsey and Mason, 1984; Petersen, 2015). Patriarchal family structures are integral to Mormon concepts of salvation, with the prophetic endorsement of women's roles as wives and mothers and men's presiding priesthood authority leading the family (Hoyt, 2007). The Prophet Ezra Taft Benson, (1987: 2) states: 'God established that fathers are to preside in the home...But a mother's role is also God-ordained. Mothers are to conceive, to bear, to nourish, to love, and to train'. This statement exemplifies Latter-day Saint teachings that men and women have different but closely intertwined roles in marital and family settings, that 'Mormon life is not simply gendered, it is eternally gendered' (Vance, 2015: 47).

Mormon doctrine considers that one of the greatest matriarchal models is Eve, who is 'honoured by Latter-day Saints as one of the most important, righteous, and heroic of all the human family' (Beck, 1992: 569; Smith, 1918).[43] Eve's role in the creation of humankind may differ from certain mainstream Christianity theology as she is celebrated for her self-sacrifice and self-abjuration (Hansen, 1981). Still, Mormon conceptualisation of the Godhead is the greatest and most challenging departure from Christian orthopraxis (Toscano, 1985, 2012b). Mormon doctrine teaches that spirits or souls of individual human beings are created ex nihilo, as literal

[41] Mormon doctrine believes that marriage is the key to salvation, thus single people are denied the greatest exaltation.

[42] Mormon doctrine states that all humankind may be saved: "For Latter-day Saints, being "saved" can also mean being saved or delivered from the second death (meaning the final spiritual death) by assurance of a kingdom of glory in the world to come. Just as the Resurrection is universal, we affirm that every person who ever lived upon the face of the earth—except for a very few—is assured of salvation in this sense...The Prophet Brigham Young taught that doctrine when he declared that "every person who does not sin away the day of grace, and become an angel to the Devil, will be brought forth to inherit a kingdom of glory". This meaning of saved nobles the whole human race through the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. In this sense of the word, all should answer: "Yes, I have been saved. Glory to God for the gospel and gift and grace of His Son!" (Oaks, 1988: para 12)

[43] Mormon scripture records Eve justifying her decision as: "Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient" (Moses 5: 10-11).

spirit children of God. In 1909 the First Presidency issued a statement on the origin of man that teaches that 'man, as a spirit, was begotten and born of Heavenly Parents, and reared to maturity in the eternal mansions of the Father', as an 'offspring of celestial parentage', and further teaches that 'all men and women are in the similitude of the universal Father and Mother, and are literally the sons and daughters of Deity' (Smith, 1909: 80).[44]

Unlike mainstream Christianity, Mormon doctrine sees the Godhead as one in purpose but not one body. Church leaders teach God is an embodied being, along with a Heavenly Mother and their son Jesus Christ, whilst the Holy Spirit is a separate gendered entity, male but without a body (Romney, 1974). Joseph Smith first spoke about a female God that co-resided with God in 1839. Prophets continue to teach the same principle that Heavenly Mother is equal to God in all things (Hinckley, 1991). Members are discouraged from worshipping Heavenly Mother, such as praying to her, for example, President Gordon B Hinckley (1991: n/a) said:

> However, in light of the instruction we have received from the Lord Himself, I regard it as inappropriate for anyone in the Church to pray to our Mother in Heaven...The fact that we do not pray to our Mother in Heaven in no way belittles or denigrates her...none of us can add to or diminish the glory of her of whom we have no revealed knowledge.

This has seen some feminist scholars argue this has restricted Heavenly Mother being recognised as a divine being in her own right (Desimone, 1980; Heeren et al., 1984).

An embodied Heavenly Mother also reinforces the divinity of motherhood. Church leaders have petitioned women to emulate Heavenly Mother, not as a spiritual leader, but as her role as the supreme mother (Benson, 1987; Widtsoe, 1928). In other words, whilst there is a universal acceptance of a Mother in Heaven in Mormonism, there is little elucidation of her role outside of motherhood (Allred, 1994). One barrier to greater visibility of a Heavenly Mother is the lacunae in scripture on the doctrine of a female deity (Bannon, 1992). Mormon feminist scholars consider that knowing Heavenly Mother is a God and a woman gives Mormon women a new understanding and appreciation for their embodiment (Allred, 1994, 2015; Kline, 2014; Toscano, 2012a; Wilcox, 1987).

[44] Mormonism believes not only in eternal familial relationships but a kinship with God (Bible; Romans 8: 16-18).

Conclusion

British Mormonism cannot be singularly explained by researching nineteenth-century depictions of pioneers, polygamy or persecution, or by linking it with American Mormon history (Hunter, 2014). As this chapter shows, to gain an understanding of how British Mormon women negotiate gender includes contextualising Mormon history in the British landscape. This means recognising how Mormonism is a minority in both religious and secular terms in Britain, as this may influence how Mormon women present themselves in the wider community. This requires me to identify not only how Mormon women in Britain are continually navigating increasingly secularised civic society and institutionalised state-approved religious orthopraxis, such as Anglicanism, but also Americanised Mormon doctrine and practices.

The veneration of American ideals and culture through Mormon structures and leaders has negatively impacted on how Mormon norms and values are imported outside North America. The recording of the history of the Church has encouraged homogenising of membership accounts or used regional narratives to support American exceptionalism, such as the historiography of British Mormon migration is celebrated through the American pioneer discourse, rather than a discrete narrative. As later chapters will show, the construction of gender is informed by Mormon doctrine that positions heteronormative family structures as the means of salvation and believes in a Heavenly Mother. A theology that claims a celestial wife and mother as the ultimate female embodiment as wife and mother is a persuasive narrative that is critical in the way it informs negotiations of gender in Mormon congregations.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

Sandra Harding (1993: 56) suggests that 'starting off research from women's lives will generate less partial and distorted accounts not only of women's lives but also of men's lives and of the whole social order'. Yet with all research (feminist or not), it is difficult to say what constitutes social reality as claims of 'truth' are social constructions informed by context (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002). Neither is 'woman' a fixed, essentialist position, but there are material differences between women based on how they are subject to and respond to patriarchal structures (Stanley and Wise, 1993). Likewise, feminism is not monolithic, and when describing my research approach as feminist, is it a reference to political action, to a particular ontological form of feminist thought or am I demarcating it as such because I am a woman who records women's experiences? Simply put, while there is no singular notion of feminist methodologies and methods, what research practices are best described as feminist?

Fran Porter (2018) argues that emancipatory aims and a focus on women's experiences are central to feminist research practices. Feminist research practices are about the way researchers ask questions, engage in reflexivity, acknowledge positionality, and ethical concern for change that benefit lives (Phillips, Porter and Slee, 2018). Therefore, Ursula King (1995) argues that when researching religion, a feminist paradigm can accommodate the socio-historical positionality of the researcher and encourages ethical approaches to research.

This chapter will show how I foreground approaches to knowledge production and develop my skills as a researcher through feminist research practices. I begin by showing how feminist standpoint informs the research questions, leading me to adopt a qualitative methodology and semi-structured interviews as a method. Following this, I discuss sampling, including the use of a gatekeeper, and why thematic analysis is a powerful tool in understanding

how British Mormon women negotiate gender. Finally, I conclude with some reflections on reflexivity and how my positionality informed my interactions with participants.

Feminist Standpoints

Feminist approaches to research challenge the orthopraxis of androcentric knowledge construction by addressing the exclusion of women from knowledge production (Anderson, 1995; Hartstock, 2004). While feminist research is not easily characterised, Harding (1987, 1993) contends that feminist research practices tend to share an emphasis on ethical practices that address the asymmetrical power axis in knowledge construction. I was also aware that other studies in America had adopted feminist research practices and feminist standpoints when researching gender and Mormons (Himonas, 2015; Johnson-Bell, 2013; Leamaster and Subramaniam, 2015; Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015).

For this thesis, I am drawing upon a feminist standpoint. Dorothy Smith (1987) describes standpoint as 'sociology for women' as it approaches knowledge production holistically by refusing to separate women from their located experiences. In conceptualising a woman or women's standpoint, Smith has been criticised for focusing on experiences that imply 'woman' is a fixed identity, which postmodern feminist thought contests (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002). Some postmodern or poststructuralist feminists argue because feminist epistemology should actively be de-essentialising gender analysis, diligence is needed when approaching research through a standpoint to avoid reinforcing rigid gender division (Buikema, Griffin and Lykke, 2011; Staunæs and Søndergaard, 2011). Andrea Petö and Berteke Waaldijk (2011) are more critical and claim all standpoint theories perpetuate a form of gender solidarity, which fail to recognise that woman and women are discursive constructions. Nevertheless, a feminist standpoint understands that generally, because of societal gender constructions, the experiences of women may differ from men as they encounter and are subject to different relationships with power (Hartstock, 2004). Rather than essentialising women, feminist standpoint recognises women as central in the production of knowledge and that the knowledge is partial, socially situated and grounded in women's experiences and differences.

Why Study Mormon Women in Britain?

Epistemology, or in simple terms, 'how we know what we know' (Sheraton, 2017: 1), informs a feminist standpoint. A feminist standpoint when researching 'How do Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender?' emerges from reflexivity on my positionality as a white, middle-aged, married, mother of eight children, researcher and an active member of the Mormon community in Britain.[45] As a standpoint that locates itself in feminist knowledge, I acknowledge that I am influenced by matricentric feminism, which understands motherhood to be socially and historically constructed, and mothering is not an identity but a practice (O'Reilly, 2016). I consider that feminist standpoint makes sense of Mormon concepts of sisterhood as it can reflect second-wave feminist notions of female solidarity and sorority, which also influence my thinking about female-to-female social connections (Dworkin, 1983).[46] In claiming a feminist standpoint, I recognise that there are tensions between what Nyhagen (2019) calls 'hard' secular feminism and religion, and this is true for Mormonism as it is for other religious groups. I am also influenced by Aune's (2004) 'single Christian feminist standpoint', through which she carried out her PhD research as an un-partnered and unmarried Christian woman; such an approach exemplifies approaches that accommodate the researcher's religious, social and feminist standpoint within fieldwork settings where this standpoint becomes key to the knowledge the researcher generates.

There is potential that standpoints produce their own forms of oppression by claiming that women coming from a similar social location are epistemologically advantaged to understand other female marginalised groups (Fawcett and Hearn, 2004; Gleig, 2012; Haraway, 1991; Petö and Waaldijk, 2011; Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002; Ryan, Kofman & Aaron 2011). As a British Mormon woman, I may be subject to some of the same oppressive practices of the women I interview, but that does not mean other British Mormon women share my worldview. Therefore, my standpoint is best understood as emerging from my situated knowledge that

[45] My father served as bishop of Hyde Park ward in London, one of the largest congregations in the UK. My husband and brother in law have also served as bishops. My mother, my sisters and I have all served as leaders in ward and stake Mormon congregations.

[46] Mormon women call each other Sister. 'This recognises that, we all have an inherent duty to reach out to fellow members and include them in our circle, making each ward and branch a family. That is why we call each other brothers and sisters. After all, there is no such thing as an only child in the kingdom of God' (Brown, 2005: para 4).

reflects a particular social location, which may or may not be representative of British Mormon women. But this standpoint potentially can explore the relationship between everyday social actions of women and gender in the Mormon context.

As reflexivity is central to a feminist standpoint, I acknowledge that my overarching research question 'How do Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender?' draws upon my autobiography. To narrow the objectives and aims of the research question, I considered my experiences and assumptions about gender and power in the Church, as well as my understanding of Mormon doctrine. Although I felt it is important to record official Church teachings on gender, I prioritised religion-as-lived as I felt everyday embodied practices could offer a greater understanding of the salient issues for British Mormon women. Therefore, my first research aim was: *1) What are the lived religious practices and expressions of British Mormon Women?*

The second research aim was *2) How do British Mormon women negotiate between religious, mainstream cultural, and gender norms?* To address the gap in knowledge on how British Mormon women construct gender, I considered the subject required a new way of thinking to develop a theoretical framework that celebrates the diversity of Mormon women (Ross et al., 2015). Ross et al. (2015) felt that conventional frames of analysis, including West and Zimmerman's 'doing 'gender' and Butler's performative thesis, are inadequate to explain Mormon women's attitudes to gender. Instead, they suggest 'negotiation' as a theoretical tool as it 'is the process through which individuals integrate religious teachings and lived experiences internally or through external interaction with other social actors, which offered far greater scope for nuanced pathways and discourses' (Ross et al., 2015: 67). In framing the question 'how do British Mormon women *negotiate* between religious, mainstream cultural and gender norms?' I developed critical thinking to explore Mormon women perspectives on the dominant ideology, practices and systems that create inequality. I hoped in exploring everyday practices and experiences to show the extent of Mormon religious embeddedness it would widen the definition of how gender is socially constructed in Mormon communities.

The third aim is *3) How do they negotiate the five key themes of personhood; feminism; Church roles; home, work and religion in public spaces?* This question was a direct response to

the findings of the Mormon Gender Issues Survey (2015). Generated by a group of North American based Mormon and former Mormon interdisciplinary academics, the survey's original purpose was to act as a counterpoint to claims by the Pew Research Centre that the majority of American Mormon women did not want the priesthood (Pew Research, 2014). As the survey aims evolved, the research team decided to include attitudes to gender inequality in other countries to record the scale of dissonance between doctrine on gender and lived practices on a global level. Although much less so outside of North America, the Mormon Gender Issues Survey did draw attention to current Mormon gender expectations and roles in congregational spaces (Beal, Beal, and Stearmer, 2015; Ross et al., 2015; Cragun and Nielsen, 2015; Stromberg, 2015).

The release of the survey findings also coincided with the formation of 'Ordain Women', a Mormon feminist movement who consider that women ordained to the priesthood is the 'ultimate signal of equality' in the Church (Stromberg, 2015: 12). As part of their activism, Ordain Women chose significant Mormon sites in America to protest about gender inequality, introducing tension between themselves and the Church (Deseret News, 2013). However, when speaking with family and friends in my local congregation, very few appeared to be interested in women gaining the priesthood, and even fewer were aware of Mormon feminism or Mormon feminist activism outside of calls for the priesthood. Moreover, although I call myself a feminist, I had never seriously considered advocating for women and the priesthood in congregations.

The findings of the Mormon Gender Issues Survey caused me to question my view, and I began to read around the topic of Mormon women and the priesthood. Like the majority of Latter-day Saint women, I consider structural change requires prophetic revelation (Mormon Gender Issue Survey, 2015).[47] However, I think that some Church teachings on gender are actively detrimental to the wellbeing of Mormon women by limiting opportunities for personal fulfilment and spiritual empowerment. My response to navigating this tension between the desire to support Church leaders and combat structural inequality could be best explained through Deniz Kandiyoti (1988: 274) thesis of the 'patriarchal bargain'. Kandiyoti suggests that women adopt material strategies to maximise their agency within the 'rules of the game'. So, on reflection,

[47] The Mormon Gender Issues Survey, which included men and women, 67% of Mormons said if Church leaders had a revelation for all adults to receive the priesthood, they would be supportive or strongly supportive of women's ordination.

rather than call for radical changes to the structure, when I was in Church leadership positions, I sought to raise awareness about what I considered more pressing matters: addressing domestic abuse, raising aspirations for women through education and challenging individual acts of sexism. So, although the literature on Mormon women (historical, sociological and theological) did inform the research aims, I was also influenced by my own lived practices and social interactions with other Mormon women.

The final research aim was *4) In their approaches to gender, how do British Mormon women navigate between national and global contexts and differences?* The question relates to the Church and its relationship with the United States of America, specifically Utah, which is the centre of Mormon religious capital and control (Quinn, 2001). Reading around the topic, what I found was an absence of sociological research on Mormon women outside of America and Canada, which I felt had allowed an Americanised model of Mormon women to become the dominant frame of reference in the literature (Beaman, 2001; Colvin, 2015; Hoyt, 2007; Inouye, 2014; Kwok, 2012).

Researching British Mormon women enables me to move away from existing standpoints that centre on Mormon women's lives in the United States (Colvin, 2017; Hoyt, 2007; Kwok, 2012). Drawing upon her standpoint as a Maori and Mormon, Colvin (2017) suggests when members outside of the United States construct Mormon practices, as often a convert's first contact with the Church is through American male missionaries, the idealised performance of Mormonism is a white male American. Similarly, Östman (2010) and Decoo (2013) argue, as American exceptionalism is normalised, European congregations continually are trying to find ways to reduce cultural alienation. Asking how Mormon women negotiate gender is one way of exploring not only how women experience being a Mormon (perhaps differently from men) but also how a British Mormon woman may encounter different manifestations of male power from American Mormon women.

Methodology and Methods: Qualitative, Semi-Structured Interviews

Ann Oakley (2005) suggests that sociological disputes over methodological considerations are secondary to selecting the most credible, ethical and appropriate methodology and methods to

address the research questions. Similarly, when talking about feminist research, it is not the methodology or methods per se that make it feminist but the way these are employed (Rubin and Rubin, 2012; Phillips, Porter, and Slee, 2018). As my research aim is to understand how British Mormon women negotiate gender the methodology needed to capture not only the unstable, nebulous and context-specific form of religious lived experience but also document hierarchy of power in gender constructions. Similarly, the methods I used were required to encourage bridge-building or 'responsive' data to encourage deep, 'thick', meaningful material (Geertz, 1973: 310; Rubin and Rubin, 2012).

Qualitative methodology is often seen as coinciding with feminist sensibilities as it affords co-creation of knowledge and transparency about a researcher's social location and addresses asymmetry in the research process (Oakley, 2005; Pink, 2012; Phillips, Porter, and Slee, 2018; Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002; Sullins, 2006). But Oakley (1985) notes that qualitative methods, such as interviews, have at times taken traditional quantitative approaches, which adopt positivist epistemic expectations of a distance between researcher and research. Decades on, Oakley (2005) contends that quantitative methodology and methods are not necessarily antithetical to feminism if the methods used aim to dismantle power differentials (see also Hughes and Cohen, 2011). She suggests that researching women, especially minority groups, would benefit from large-scale data as this can determine the level of collective oppression. Indeed, although my PhD research was qualitative, quantitative methods could produce generalisable findings that can address the lacuna of data on British Mormon women in the sociology of religion. Thus, feminist approaches to research see qualitative methods as but one way of locating participants in the research process to co-produce knowledge.

As methods are 'techniques for gathering evidence' (Harding, 1987: 2), the difficulty for any researcher taking on less-explored topics is selecting what methods are best suited to open up discussion. Reviewing the research team's reflections on the Mormon Gender Issues Survey, some participants felt that the use of a survey meant there were limited options for them to express how they viewed gender (Beal, Beal, and Stearmer, 2015). I shared that concern that pre-selected answers could limit expression, which influenced my decision to use in-depth interviews as I felt a less structured form of questioning was more able to capture the complexity of British

Mormon gender negotiations. Interviews as a qualitative method can explore unaccounted for themes and concerns, as well as confirm existing literature as it allows participants more space to discuss their experiences (Page, 2018). Moreover, many studies of religious women have used interviews as a method, so it was important I could similarly collect knowledge to enable future studies a comparison (Franzmann, 2000; Knott, 1995; Porter, 2018).

Interviews can encourage the researcher and participant to co-create knowledge by being a less formal structure (Edwards and Holland, 2013). Interviews enable conversational spaces that may produce fuller responses to questions (DeVault, 1990; Rubin and Rubin, 2012). In interviewing women, a feminist researcher is actively participating as those she is observing in the process (Oakley, 2005). Therefore, as 'data does not exist independently of the perceiving researcher' the interview can shift data collection to a co-construction with participants (Phillips et al., 2018: 17). But removing the distance between the researcher and participants during the interview is one of the main criticisms of the method by some positivist scholars (Scott and Marshall, 2009). However, Oakley contends that as 'all research involves the political considerations which flow from the researcher's identity' the interview is not meant to be an objective, de-personalised space (2005: 230). I also consider adopting a stance of formality and neutrality could potentially see the interview collapse into an interrogation rather than a dialogic exchange (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009).

Notwithstanding, some feminist scholars recognise that the interviewing is not without difficulties when striving to co-construct with participants (Cerwonka, 2011; Finch, 1994; Page, 2018; Porter, 2018). For instance, Janet Finch (1994) suggests that rapport building can generate too much trust in the researcher, which has the potential to increase power hierarchies in the interview process. Sarah-Jane Page (2018) and Fran Porter (2018) consider that unless there is on-going reflexivity about how participants' consent is given before, during and after research, this will undermine aims of co-production and co-construction of knowledge. One way to minimise the imbalance of power is to adopt narrative, unstructured and naturalistic interviews (Porter, 2018; Shooter, 2018).

However, while I affirm and value the benefits of a fluid interview structure, for this research, I selected semi-structured interviews, which were built around 15 questions based on

the research aims. The decision to have a list of questions was because I felt this could act as prompts or would further encourage discussion on topics, such as women and the priesthood. Similarly, when interviewing religious Northern Irish women, Porter (2018: 95) found that 'sometimes you need a question' to gain more insight. Likewise, Page's (2018) research on young adults felt that discussions sometimes benefited from guidance as some participants were more comfortable when they had a clear understanding of the expectations of the researcher.

Although pre-determined questions informed the interview, I felt the interviews did result in an equal exchange or what Rubin and Rubin (2012: 7) call a 'conversational partnership'. In documenting participants experiences, however, feminist researchers need to be careful not to create shrines to individual experience (Cerwonka, 2011). Simultaneously, Patti Lather (2009) argues there are difficulties with Heidegger claims that experiences can be seen as authentic. Instead, she suggests best practice is for researchers to acknowledge the partiality of experience, both their own and others. In acknowledging that meanings are not stable properties, like objects in the world, I recognise that interviews are constructed, carried and modified through social interaction in a particular context.

Sampling, Gate Keepers and Time Keeping

Part of the process in research design is deciding which participants to engage in the study. In this thesis, I recognise that I have excluded Mormon men from the sample, and there is limited discussion in this thesis on masculinity. This is deliberate for several reasons. Firstly, I place women centrally in the research process, so in the absence of a body of literature on the lives of contemporary British Mormons, it behoves me to seek out women's narratives before I study the lives of Mormon men. This does not mean I discount the validity of Mormon men's encounters with or experiences of gender as there may be similar tension for some Mormon men between Mormon ideals of gender and secular notions of equality as there is for some women (Sumerau, Cragun and Smith, 2017). Secondly, I see selecting women's narratives as a political act because the visibility of male authority in Mormonism pushes women's stories into the margins of scholarship. Too often, Mormon women are defined in relationship to their access to positions of power, which continues a hierarchy of gender and reinforces male privilege.

The sample of research participants consists of 30 Latter-day Saints women who attended wards in the Midlands (similarly to parishes) in three stakes, which is the Mormon equivalent to an Anglican or Roman Catholic diocese.[48] The sample was purposeful as the participants were baptised members who fulfil the Latter-day Saint definition of involvement or 'membership' as 'observing a full religious lifestyle of attendance, devotion, service, and learning'.[49] As 'active members' of their congregations, 25 out of the 30 women held a leadership role in the Church, were attending Sacrament and other meetings weekly and if eligible, held a temple recommend.[50] A temple recommend is a certificate of worthiness obtained through ecclesiastical approval, which as a tangible measure of worthiness entitles the recommend holder to perform religious rituals in the most sacred Mormon site, the Temple.[51]

I did have reservations about only interviewing women who were the most actively involved in the Church. My rationale was these women were more likely to reflect Lori Beaman's description of a 'Molly Mormon'. A Molly Mormon is a 'good Mormon woman, who follows church teachings' (Beaman, 2001: 69). Beaman's definition of Molly Mormon suggests that women who were more active in attendance were more likely to accept official Church teachings, which would inform lived practices giving insight into overlaps and sites of departure between Church doctrine and policies and everyday religion. I was also mindful that the Mormon Gender Issues Survey included in the survey the respondent's level of activity in the Church. This allowed me to compare large-scale findings on attitudes to the priesthood with my small sample to indicate to what extent there were similar responses between women with similar levels of engagement with the Church. Moreover, as I stated earlier, in drawing upon my experiences of Church leadership, I felt that this group of Mormon women had the least opportunities to find a space (in and outside of congregations) to express how they felt about Mormon doctrine and practices, such as female ordination and equal opportunities.

[48] In the United Kingdom, there 333 wards in 45 stakes with each stake consisting of 6-9 wards and branches.
[49] An official LDS definition of member activity is difficult as the Church has no reliable way of measuring how many members have attended one sacrament meeting in the past three months see <http://www.cumorah.com/index.php?target=church_growth_articles&story_id=46> for more information.
[50] See glossary for more on the terms 'active' and 'inactive' member.
[51] There is the Preston Temple in Chorley, Lancashire temples and the London Temple, in East Grinstead. The most iconic temple is Salt Lake Temple in Utah.

The women were between 18 and 94 years of age. The sample reflects a range of Mormon generational membership: ten were converts (first generation); ten were second-generation; nine were third-generation, and one was a fourth-generation member. As Mormon congregations identify and value generational transmission, I include the generation, along with age and name, in the quotations. The sample was white British, except for one, who identified as black British. Race and ethnicity are not recorded on Church membership records, but research in the USA suggests that three-quarters of members are white (Pew Research, 2016). Every woman self- identified as heterosexual, six of the sample were single, three divorced, one widowed. Of the women who were married, only one was married to a non-member. A third of the sample were childless, and of those who had children, the size of family ranged from one to seven children, with the average being three. Two women identified as feminists. Those in employment were predominately involved in caregiving, i.e. nursing or education. The majority were college/degree educated, which reflects research in the United States that shows Mormons are generally better-educated than other Christian religions (Pew Research, 2014).

Although, I am a member of the same community, and Mormon women lay claim to being 'sisters in' Zion'[52] a shared membership and gender does not automatically create sufficient networks to engage people in research that asks difficult questions. Having a gatekeeper for recruitment is useful as it gave potential participants sufficient distance between themselves and me to accept or decline invitations to become part of the study. More by accident than design, my mother became the gatekeeper for this project. She was able to access a broad range of women in several different locations, partly as my mother held leadership positions in various wards and stakes, and was a long-standing member.[53] Initially, I planned to interview 40 women, and with my mother acting as a gatekeeper, in the space of three months, she had gained permission for me to approach 50 women drawn from her contacts. In practice, after I completed

[52] The hymn *Sisters in Zion* was written originally as a poem in 1870s by an English convert, Emily Hill, and has since been adopted as an anthem for Relief Society. It promotes an idealised concept of female sorority in a Mormon context as autonomous divine agent. The first verse states: 'As sisters in Zion, we'll all work together; The blessings of God on our labours we'll seek. We'll build up his kingdom with earnest endeavour; We'll comfort the weary and strengthen the weak. The errand of angels is given to women; And this is a gift that, as sisters, we claim: To do whatsoever is gentle and human, to cheer and to bless in humanity's name. How vast is our purpose, how broad is our mission If we but fulfil it in spirit and deed? Oh, naught but the Spirit's divinest tuition can give us the wisdom to truly succeed' (Hymn 309, The Church of `Jesus Christ of Latter-day saints Hymn Book 1989).

[53] My parents joined the Church in 1960.

30 interviews, I felt there were limited incremental insights, so the number of respondents was decided by saturation, an acceptable practice in interviewing where there is no set number for the sample (Reinharz, 1992).

As a Mormon woman and researcher, I felt an additional responsibility to approach recruitment and consent with an 'ethics of care' (Gilligan, 1982). Although Carol Gilligan's (1982) ethics of care concept has been criticised for essentialising women, her discussion draws attention to the value of empathy, responsibility and relationships as a feminist ethic in a patriarchal framework. Building in an ethics of care helped me when three of the participants disclosed historical physical and emotional abuse, as I was prepared to signpost them to support systems if needed. I am acutely aware that Mormon communities are close-knit, so I became diligent regarding confidentiality at every stage of the research process. One preventative measure to safeguard participants' identity was selecting pseudonyms that were known only to me. Another way to protect anonymity was that I arranged and conducted interviews in the privacy of homes. In adopting these practices, I adhered to Coventry University's rigorous ethical procedure that includes encrypted data storage and transparency about how the data would be kept before the information was removed from the system.

In some ways, I had an advantage when accessing a gatekeeper to recruit participants; I would even venture to say, as I discuss later in the chapter, that familiarity helped when talking about Church teachings with me – although this presented its own challenges. But, I also felt an additional responsibility to the women I eventually interviewed to be rigorously transparent about the project aims. Informed consent is critical to an ethics of care in research. Consent was negotiated at more than one occasion, by text after my mother had consent for me to approach participants, then contact through email confirming participation, and at the interview, where women signed a consent form after we talked through what taking part in the research entailed. Finally, after the interview, I emailed the next day to not only thank participants for taking part in the research but also to re-instate that they could withdraw their interview from the data set, have it destroyed or returned to them up to certain time. I also reminded them that after this period, although it may be difficult to remove the interview notes from the data set, they could still request the notes from the interview to be destroyed or have the notes returned to them.

Unlike ethnographic studies, which can be flexible in the time spent observing and capturing informal social interaction, interviews have a formal structure, which embeds a start and end into the process (Silverman, 2012). Although semi-structured interviews do not have an optimum length (Reinharz, 1992), I had written in the email the interview could take between 45–90 minutes. However, when I began interviewing, as I wanted participants space to express themselves, each interview took up to three hours, with up to an additional hour invested in rapport building. After transcribing the first four interviews and reflecting on the experience, I felt spending that amount of time did not necessarily benefit the research. In her study of her own Chicano community, Denise Segura (1989 cited Reinharz, 1992: 26), contends that familiarity with the culture and personal relationships permitted 'shorter, more focused interviews'. Subsequently, when contacting participants, I would state in the confirmation email what time the interview would start and finish, with the caveat the interview could be extended if they wished. This resulted in the interviews between being 60 – 90 minutes long, which permitted succinct, focused interviews while still allowing flexibility if they wished to prolong the interview. In addition, in the thank you email, I stressed that we could meet again if they needed to add anything, which saw two women reply via email with some written additional insights.

Thematic Analysis: Making Waves

Once the data was transcribed from the audiotapes, the data was analysed using thematic analysis to capture and categorise experiences and meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2012). In taking an inductive approach to coding thematically, I was following convention as according to Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2012), a deductive approach can be used but more often than not the process is inductive. Braun and Clarke (2012, 2013) suggest the best practice for thematic analysis involves a six-phase approach: familiarity with the data; initial coding; searching for themes; reviewing; defining and naming themes; and producing a report. However, rather than a six-phase approach, I carried out the process as waves, conducting 30 interviews in three waves over six months.

The first ten interviews (the first wave) were conducted and transcribed over four weeks, which saw me listen to the interviews several times, code the comments using NVivo and start

to identify emerging themes. The use of computer software is beneficial when qualitative data becomes complex, more so when using thematic analysis. Coding into NVivo helped me identify the extent to which codes were generating analysis to develop a theme. For example, when recording feelings about the male-only priesthood, I started assigning comments into one of three categories: in favour of male-only priesthood; ambivalent about male-only priesthood; against male-only priesthood. But while entering responses, I felt that this coding did not tell me anything that other studies had not already shown: that active Mormon women appear to not want the priesthood. What I needed were codes that could tell me why participants felt women should not be ordained in a more nuanced discourse. Re-reading the transcripts and looking at key phrases, I re-assigned the codes as 'benevolent sexism'; 'God's power'; 'spiritual authority' and 'male administration'. In engaging in reflection earlier in the coding process enabled me to conceptualise the eventual theme, which was how Mormon women negotiated the priesthood as a visible, invisible and hidden power (discussed in Chapter Seven).

The second wave of interviews followed the same timeline (ten interviews over four weeks) but saw me reviewing emergent themes and adding or collapsing categories. One hidden benefit of interviewing, coding and analysing themes in waves was the development of my skills as a researcher. During the first wave of interviews, I asked the following questions:

> Q11. Social Media is used a lot in the Church and by Church members. Are you part of any Facebook groups just for Mormons? Have you seen or heard about any Mormon Feminist Groups on Social Media?
>
> Q12. What do you think are the aims of Mormon Feminists? How do they differ from feminists who aren't members of the Church?

I expected the questions could prompt them to explore their feelings about Mormon feminism and document to what extent Mormon feminist activism was visible. Instead, as the following responses show, most participants felt that they lacked knowledge about the aims of Mormon feminists to comment further: 'I use Instagram a little, but I don't know if I would pick up any feminist groups as it is not related to news that I am interested in and it's not something I've ever been bothered with' (Grace, 27 years old, 3rd generation). Susie, when asked said: 'My

impression is it is all about the priesthood and women having the priesthood, but what is meant by that term, feminism?' (57 years old, convert), while Lois comments: 'I really don't know, I'm guessing as I've never encountered it or seen it, so I'm guessing that they want the priesthood and be part of the upper echelons of things' (62 years old, 2nd generation).

Re-reading the transcripts to code the interviews, I realised that the questions were not engaging discussions about Mormon feminist movements or exploring their feelings about feminist ideology and its comparability with Mormon structures. One option was to rewrite the question; instead, I resolved to introduce prompts to encourage more in-depth responses, as seen in the case of Chloe. Chloe was the first interviewee in the second wave of interviews. When asked the question, her initial reaction, like previous participants, was to claim she had limited knowledge on Mormon feminism so there was little she could contribute. This time pushing the conversation beyond the original reply, it allowed me to record to what extent Chloe thought feminism is 'extreme' and what are the barriers to Mormon women engaging with the movement.

> Chloe: "well, I don't know what the aims of Mormon feminists are, I think they are different from feminism, but most are normally just extreme. Most people in the traditional sense of feminism, where we have equality I do agree with that. So, traditionally a feminist but would never call myself a feminist (laughing)"
> Alison: "So, why is that?"
> Chloe: "I do get it sometimes, but I think I don't want a bigger voice, I'm happy in the place I'm in. I think secular feminism, in a way I guess they're not that different because it's about having a voice, they want to have equal pay and things like that which I'm all for, but most of them who say they are feminists are extreme".
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

Dividing data collection into waves cultivated a self-consciousness as a researcher, which led me to continually question how I could improve the interview experience to provide space for participants to be heard (Kitzinger, 1990). In practice, this would see me frequently offer feedback and ‘push back’ in interviews to gain depth and clarity.

> Alison: to feed this back to you, so would you say your gender informs how you appear?

> Alison: I'd just like to push this back slightly because I think you really could expand on this, so do your colleagues see that's a good thing?
>
> Alison: I mean, I would just like to ask more, you have a complex family structure so do you feel that when you tell people about that, and obviously only speak about this if you're comfortable, both in and outside of the Church are the responses different to your circumstances?

This continual cycle reflecting their words back to them allowed participants to indicate whether I had understood their responses and to what extent they wanted to add more to the discussion.

The last wave of ten interviews were conducted five months after the first wave. These interviews were instrumental in consolidating and defining the themes, so each theme had a clear focus, unique quality and related to the research question. The last stage of the data collection is where I encountered the 'messy reality' of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2012: 122). This is seen in the case of Debbie when she recounted the loss of her son at 30 weeks pregnant. In a moving expression of her ability to deal with death, Debbie shared her testimony of life after death and the resurrection of Christ. Coding the disclosure was unsettling as I felt in deconstructing the experience I was diminishing the pain and caused me to think more about issues of trust when I am given participants experiences like this during the research process.

Coding extracts into NVivo, in and of itself, did not automatically produce themes. Rather it is how the researcher actively makes sense of the connections between the findings, codes, and theories that makes themes (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). When talking about working mothers, some women would endorse Church policy for women to remain home but then in describing their own lived practices advocated non-religious justifications to legitimise their employment status. The contradictions between their stated religious beliefs and their own lived experiences show the complex negotiations found in all our lives, which are not easily categorised. According to Ramazanoğlu with Holland (2002), these competing interpretations are part of the process of analysis, as is the difficult decision on what to include or exclude, which requires considered reflexivity on the accountability and consequences of those choices.

Conducting data collection and thematic analysis in waves meant I had time to reflect more carefully about whether codes captured the full range of meanings before each set of interviews.

Having space to develop codes between each set of interviews was particularly useful when asking participants 'What are your feelings about abortion?' During the first wave of interviews, I realised that coding could not be divided as I thought into simplistic categories of pro-choice and anti-abortion. For instance, Celia felt 'the Church does have a [abortion] policy, which would allow for certain exceptions. That's my view as well, but I think everybody has a right to choose' (41 years old, 2nd generation). Jane states: 'obviously I don't agree with abortion, but I would not like to see it illegal because then we would be taking the choice away from people' (57 years old, convert). Leah thinks: 'Not for myself [abortion], but I'm just for it generally as I think it is necessary to have it as a society (18 years old, 3rd generation).

Conversely, the three participants who stated they were anti-abortion, two felt that while abortion should not be an option, it should be available for victims of rape and incest. As these examples show, attitudes to abortion were complex, so I re-coded into 'anti-abortion/no choice'; anti-abortion/Church; 'ambivalent'; 'pro-choice/not-self'; and 'pro-choice'. Using these codes, what emerged was participants agreed with Church policy that abortion should not be used for 'personal choice' so were not unconditionally pro-choice but did not necessarily agree with women not having the option to have an abortion. Simplifying lived experiences that are often complicated, contradictory and conflicted into themes helped me develop an introspection that added an additional layer to my analysis and improved my reflexivity.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Michel Foucault (1984: 788) sees 'the exercise of power is not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective; it is a way in which certain actions modify others'. The interview process shapes discursive practices as discourse informs material reality. The difficulty when sharing an identity with participants is in the act of theorising, interpreting and representing the lives of others, it can appear that I am claiming ownership of the discourse, privileging my standpoint. Linda Alcoff (2009) in her article 'The Problem of Speaking for Others' suggests four ways that can assist in interrogating my practices to develop robust mechanisms that address

representation. The first way is to learn when to speak or not, as too often those who have been excluded from speaking do not have the choice of whether to be heard or not. A point in case is my interview with Sarah, a 73-year-old convert. Unusually, although Sarah had been in the same ward for over four decades, she had been given very few opportunities to serve in the Church. At the interview, she told me that she had heard me speak at Church and believed that I would be able to articulate her thoughts on her faith in a way that she could not. Continually apologising after every answer for wasting my time, Sarah explained she was uncomfortable about being the centre of discussion. Intuitively, I wanted to fill the gaps by telling her what I thought she had said, but instead, I adopted silences to allow time for her to reflect and process her words. Eventually, she found the words to explain that claiming space in the institutional Church was difficult as she revered male authority and felt she had little to offer as a woman. In doing so, she had become voiceless in congregational spaces.

Second, Alcoff suggests that we continually interrogate our social location and how context is informing the discourse. It is insufficient to disclose our autobiography without understanding how this affects the interview structure. Simply put, declaring I am a white Mormon woman, with strong links to the community, does not erase power differentials and, in some cases, may infer greater authority to speak for and about others. For example, at the start of the interview, I would often build rapport by talking about mutual friends, recent social events and family wellbeing. By situating them and myself in a community context, the interview could feel at times like Visiting Teaching, a unique historical Mormon support system that sees two women assigned as spiritual ministers to visit several sisters from their ward in their homes.[54] In projecting onto me the role of Visiting Teacher, some interviewees were engaging with me as a religious authority and would tell me what they thought about Church teachings, then ask 'is that right?' I thought in acknowledging the degree to which I was embedded in Mormon communities it was addressing the imbalance of power in the research process. When in practice, at times, I

[54] Since the 1850s Relief Society has co-ordinated Visiting Teaching, which since April 2018 has been renamed 'Ministering'. Sister Eliza R Snow, 2nd general Relief Society president stated that 'I consider the office of Visiting Teacher as a high and holy office' (Snow, 1842 cited Daughters of My Kingdom, 2011: 108). The role of Visiting Teachers 'It is the duty of teachers to visit their assigned sisters once a month, to inquire after the prosperity and happiness of the members. It is their duty to speak words of wisdom, consolation and peace' (Kimball, 2006).

was encouraging a hierarchy of knowledge and was reinforcing my social location and its associate status.

In hindsight, I failed to implement sufficiently Alcoff's third practice' that is an 'accountability and a responsibility for what one says' (p.130). Before interviewing I imagined the interviews as giving women opportunities to relate anecdotes, family details and experiences to develop themes, 'focusing less on getting one's questions answered and more on understanding the interviewee' (Reinharz, 1992: 247). The 'messy reality' was at times I was privileging myself, as I was more concerned with positioning the interview as something I was giving to them, rather than seeing I was accountable to them for how the data gave them a voice. Co-producing knowledge requires me to be more considered to develop more equitable discursive practices that dismantle hierarchies of power, including my own.

The final point Alcoff makes is that privilege is indexed when speaking for and about a group. Irrespective of how well-meaning, if the social location of a speaker is perceived as more authoritative than those they are speaking for, their voice will overwhelm those they claim to represent. There is tension as sometimes the practice of speaking about others is the only option to raise awareness of their oppression (Alcoff, 2009). In reviewing Karen's transcript, I now question whether I gave enough consideration to situational privilege. As a black woman in an overwhelmingly white Church, Karen felt being black rather than her Mormonism or being British informed her negotiations of gender. By 'refusing to act like a white woman at Church', as with other studies of black religious women, Karen's lived religion was a form of 'resistance and refusal to accept negative and limiting social definition' (Mitchem 2002: 254). Revisiting her experiences, I have given more thought about the different entry points for those I interviewed on how they negotiate gender and how I can provide space for them to be heard.

I am continuing to navigate my presence in congregational spaces as some interviewees still approach me at Church events wanting to further talk about topics that arose from the interview. Others hold me to account by periodically asking to what extent my findings are creating an impact in the wider community. Indeed, I am conscious that I am, however imperfectly, trying to make the research process transformative for the women interviewed by giving them the option to 'move beyond one's assigned place or help one recognise the

meaninglessness of that place' (Mitchem, 2002: 255). In the future, I hope that I can use these experiences to bring an additional dimension to my reflexivity as I attempt to construct research in a nuanced, effectual and less facile manner.

Conclusion

This chapter has allowed me to explain why I think a feminist standpoint is useful in studying Mormon women in Britain negotiating gender. My argument is that a feminist standpoint can recognise the way a woman's history, experiences and mutual connections differs from men because of the realities of gender constructions that are interconnected with the exercise of male power (Franzmann, 2000; Reinharz, 1992; Stanley, 1982; Stanley and Wise, 1993). I contend that for this study, a qualitative approach was beneficial as this methodology captures emerging themes as well as nuanced meanings and offers the potential for further research that is generalisable (Holliday, 2007). I suggest that semi-structured interviews were a good fit for the research aims as participants have some control over their narratives as they can establish the boundaries of what they wish to tell, which encourages co-construction of knowledge (Booth et al., 2008; Bradburn, Sudman and Wansink, 2004; Silverman, 2012; Taylor and Littleton, 2006). Coding the data through NVivo can identify patterns of behaviour; this aided me in conceptualising themes, themes that demonstrate how some Mormon women negotiations of gender 'are actually engaged in intricate, highly gendered theological worldviews' (Hoyt, 2007: 90).

Positionality is important to address as interviews reduce the distance between the interviewer and interviewee. I, therefore, reflect on the biases I introduce, whether intentionally or in ignorance. This is of particular importance when attempting to record religious experiences and lived practices as those experiences are not anchored to notions of reality, but rather provide insight into complex social location bound to a socio-historical context (Cerwonka, 2011). I recognise that the research process can privilege my voice as I will make meaning of the conversations and decide what is seen or unseen in the discourse (Mazzei and Jackson, 2009). In reflecting on how my social locations and status could generate their own form of power and powerlessness, I have come to some reconciliation between my role as researcher and

membership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In recording the challenges, I hope to add to the discussion on the way reflexivity and positionality can inform practice and improve analysis when researching close to home.

Chapter Four: Negotiations of Gender

Gender is omnirelevant, even more so in Christian communities where religiously observant women are arguably subject to greater gender inequality through patriarchal institutional structures and androcentric religious dogma (Keysar, 2014; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). As previously discussed, Mormon doctrine is committed to biological essentialism. Gender in Mormon teachings is a God-given identity as 'each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of Heavenly Parents', a statement that reinforces biological difference while offering parental equality between Deities (General Handbook, 2020: 2.1). Gender is constructed at the individual level, the interactional level and the institutional level (Wharton, 2012) through daily actions such as the way we talk, what we wear, and the way we engage in social interactions (Butler, 2011). In the case of Mormon women in Britain, as it is through lived practices that gendered identities are formed, this means looking at how gender is constructed in private spaces, congregations, workplaces and the wider community.

This chapter explores how gender is understood in a Mormon context and the corresponding issues of gender equality that emerge from Mormon teachings. I start by explaining why, in this thesis, gender is framed as construction and what I mean by negotiations of gender. I then discuss two gender constructs that are uniquely Mormon (*gender as divinely designed* and the *Heavenly Mother)* followed by one found among Mormons but also supported by many other groups (*complementarianism).* This leads me to argue that one of the factors producing gender inequality is that Church leaders are de-emphasising radical Mormon doctrine on female deification and amplifying conservative Mormon teachings (which co-inside with traditional secular and religious models of gender) that promote the separate-but-equal model. I also suggest that another factor in maintaining institutional inequality is 'benevolent sexism' that seemingly promotes opportunities for women but is instrumental in reinforcing male authority (Connelly and Heesacker, 2012; Glick and Fiske, 1996: 490). Finally, I conclude with how

some interview participants understand equality and equal opportunities and how that is expressed through lived practices.

Construction and Negotiations of Gender

In asking how British Mormon women negotiate gender, as mentioned in the last chapter, I am conceptualising the construction of gender as a series of negotiations that see individuals bring together religious doctrine and lived practices to be transformed into material reality (Ross et al., 2015). Similarly, McGuire's (2008) concept of lived religion, which focuses on the often messy, contradictory and diverse nature of everyday religious practices, can potentially broaden understandings of how gender is socially constructed in British Mormon communities. Therefore, in this thesis, gender is best understood as socially constructed through interactions, cultural norms and historically context projected onto a sexed body (Bradley, 2013; Connell and Pearse, 2015; King, 1995; Scott, 1986).

For postmodernist feminists, gender is discursive, with masculine and feminine seen as unstable categories formed and informed in a particular time, place, and context and not necessarily related in any clear way to bodies (Bradley, 2013; Butler, 2011; Connell and Pearse, 2015; Glover and Kaplan, 2001). Questioning the idea of uniformity in experience between women is broadening the understanding of how previously marginalised groups of women, such as ethnic minorities and disabled women, along with a broad range of gender and sexual identities, negotiate gender (Bradley, 2013). However, shifting from a universal frame of women de-emphasises common identity, which Bradley (2013) argues at times disregards female solidarity leading to political conservatism that undermines women as a political community and the way that societal institutions are gendered. There is also the potential to minimise experiences that women encounter as a collective, for example, many argue that all women (however that is defined), irrespective of race, class, and sexuality, are at greater risk of sexual violence (Storkey, 2015).

In understanding that gender is socially constructed, this means that the category of women is discursively produced (Butler, 2011). The difficulty for feminists, as Ann Snitow (1990) notes, that in deconstructing 'woman' to emancipate women from patriarchal constraints, they

also reclaim woman as a political category. Indeed, Scott (1996: 3) sees the tension between 'the need both to accept and to refuse 'sexual difference'' is the paradox of feminism. The paradox is by universalising female experiences feminism could be reproducing the 'sexual difference' it aims to eliminate. But feminism emerges from paradoxes that are the result of the ways the construct of 'woman' has altered over time in discourse (Andersen, 2002; Butler, 2011; Franzmann, 2000; Ripley, 1988; Scott, 1996).

As 'discourse transmits and produces power' (Foucault 1998: 100), Avishai, Jafar and Rinaldo (2015: 7) suggest the discourse on gender is approached through a 'gender lens on religion' to see how social constructions of gender in religion reinforce biological essentialism, maintain gender difference, and promote androcentrism (see also Bem, 1993). With that in mind, the following section will critically explore Mormon doctrine on *gender as divinely designed* and *Heavenly Mother* through a gendered lens to show the distinctive religious schemas that systemically reproduce male power. As the Mormon Church believes in continuing prophetic revelation, I will also discuss how teachings by Church leaders have moderated the extent women can access to institutional authority. Looking at participants religion-as-lived, I show how Mormon teachings promote the notion men and women have separate but equal responsibilities and what that means in practice. The separate-but-equal discourse is not unique to Mormonism but also found in conservative secular ideals of gender (Dworkin, 1983) and as 'complementarianism' in evangelical religious narratives (Bartkowski, 2001). Thereby, I contend it is not unreasonable to suggest that discourse on gender in the Church is as equally informed by traditional religion and conservative secular ideals of gender as by Mormon doctrine. As a result, in contemporary Church teachings, the reinforcing of the primacy of the home-focused mother and wife continues to rationalise male authority to exclude women from positions of organisational power (Leamaster and Bautista, 2018).

Gender Divinely Designed and Heavenly Mother

According to Church leaders, modern-day prophetic revelation is gender is *divinely designed* to be discrete categories (Benson, 1987; Hales, 2015). The most authoritative document on gender, the family proclamation (1995) makes clear gender is 'an essential characteristic of individual

premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose' with Church leaders emphasising gender is divinely designed difference: 'For divine purposes, male and female spirits are different, distinctive, and complementary. The unique combination of spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional capacities of both males and females were needed to implement the plan of happiness' (Bednar, 2006: 83). Looking at Elder Bednar's quote through Avishai, Jafar, and Rinaldo's (2015) gender lens on religion, by saying that gender difference is a foreordained fixed identity, not only infers that male authority is God's plan (androcentrism), but also reinforces biological essentialism that male authority is ordained by God before birth and continue after death. Accordingly, in Mormon teachings, discrete gendered bodies that maintain difference are instrumental in gaining salvation (Allen, 1987; Hale, 2015; Pears, 2005; Petrey, 2016).

As gender in the family proclamation means 'biological sex at birth' (General Handbook, 2020: 38.6.21), sexual difference is a material reality of a premortal divinely designed characteristic. As a result, in contemporary Mormon teachings woman is a fundamental eternal stable identity (Benson, 1987). For example, interviewee Ellen states when asked to put the identities' woman', 'Mormon' and 'British' in order of importance to her, chooses woman first as: 'that's the very essence of who you are, your gender shapes a huge amount of your life and what you do because it's a genetic thing, a biological thing, it is something fixed' (56 years old, 2nd generation). For mainstream Christianity, the inevitable outcome of seeing sexual difference as God's plan is a religious justification of male leadership and female subordination. But as Mormon doctrine sees discrete gender as eternal, this means greater celestial consequences for those who transgress gender norms as the highest level of exaltation could be denied to them (Petrey, 2011). Therefore, Church leaders 'counsel against elective medical or surgical intervention for the purpose of attempting to transition to the opposite gender of a person's birth sex and taking these actions will be cause for Church membership restrictions' (General Handbook, 2020: 38.6.21).[55]

Most, if not all participants, when asked about being a woman, saw gender essentialism as divinely designed. Embodiment in Mormon discourse is a spiritual as well as a material reality

[55] Church guidelines regarding children who are born intersex leaves the decision making to parents under the guidance of medical professionals and advise that surgery can be delayed unless medically necessary (General Handbook, 2020: 38.6.21).

because ‘every woman has been endowed by God with distinctive characteristics, gifts, and talents in order that she may fulfil a specific mission in the eternal plan’ (Monson, 1971: para 4). Like other gender traditional religious and secular conservative discourses, leaders encourage congregations (in this case, Mormonism) 'to define, institute, and justify "masculine" and "feminine" behaviour and roles for its members' (Zuckerman, 1997: 354). Adam and Eve is one model that Christianity uses to show idealised ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ gender (Cassler, 2010). As one of the most commonly cited mainstream Christian teachings on female subordination, this has helped perpetuate androcentrism because all women are to be disciplined for Eve's role in Adam's fall. Indeed, during the 1800s early Mormon teachings still associated female submission with Eve’s role in the fall, and that Eve needed redeeming, with some leaders using this to justify polygamy (Rockwood, 1987; Young, 1853). Yet, since the early twentieth century in Mormon doctrine Eve is lauded as her actions initiated the conditions of mortality to gain exaltation and she is now considered a model of discipleship (Fielding Smith, 1954; Kimball, 1979; McConkie, 1979; Nelson, 1987; Oaks, 1998; Smith, 1980 [1827]; Young, 1853).

Melodie Charles (1987) believes that the Mormon discourse on Eve is evidence on how some female scriptural examples can positively evolve into models of female authority. But to re-read women in scriptures as empowered, there has to be already examples of potent females of faith in a sacred text. In Latter-day Saint congregations, The Book of Mormon, which is a body of scripture that is part historical record of the Americas and part doctrinal discussion on the nature of the atonement, eschatology and Latter-day Saint rituals such as full immersion baptism, is central to Mormon belief. Yet unlike the Bible, the women featured in the verses are for the most nameless, referenced only by their gender: 'Our women did bear children in the wilderness…our women did give plenty of suck for their children' (Book of Mormon: I Nephi 17: 1,2).[56] In the Book of Mormon, women are only hyper-visual when performing their biological function.

Despite the lack of female models in the Book of Mormon, there is sufficient Mormon doctrine that suggests not only equality between women and men is commanded by God but also shared gender responsibilities and roles are part of that divine design (Beecher, 1987; Charles, 1987; Kline, 2014). Discrete Mormon sacred text, as well as Biblical accounts, teaches

[56] In the Bible 188 women are mentioned by name compared to six women in the Book of Mormon (Pearson, 1996)

absolute spiritual equality of women and men, proclaiming that 'all are alike unto God,' both 'black and white, bond and free, male and female' (Book of Mormon: 2 Nephi, 26:33; Bible: Galatians, 3:28). In his interactions, miracles and teachings, Jesus Christ is seen rejecting cultural proscriptions that relegate women to an inferior spiritual and political status (Bible: Luke, 10:38-42; John, 4:26; Matt, 15:22-28). David Paulsen and Martin Pulido (2015) in their analysis of Church canon, including early Church records and contemporary documents, found that God the Father and God the Mother are framed as co-partners rather than seen as operating in separate but equal spheres. The idea of men and women collectively working together to gain 'oneness' with God has informed key doctrinal discourse, from the oneness of Heavenly parents to the unity found through being a 'Zion'-like people: 'they were of one heart and one mind' (Moses 7:18). More recently, the substantive changes in the language of the rituals performed in the Temple see women now bypass male authority to gain spiritual 'oneness' as they are covenanting directly with God (Hammond, 2014; Riess, 2019).

One of the most egalitarian practices of the Mormon Church is a lay ministry; potentially, every member has the opportunity to preach to the congregation. Theoretically, this suggests the possibility for a bottom-up re-interpreting of gender by focusing on celestial partnerships with equivalent power and emphasising Mormon sacred ceremonies and scripture that show how men and women can equally access spiritual authority. In practice, J. Edward Sumerau and Ryan Cragun (2015: 9) show in their study of Church materials between 1971 and 2012, Church leaders are instrumental in reproducing 'sacred' gender beliefs, that universally and continually reinforce gender as a divinely designed difference (Beck, 2007; Bednar, 2006). Sumerau and Cragun, also note, that although Church leaders claim women are inherently feminine, they invest considerable time in constructing for Mormon women norms of femininity. Therefore, over time, it appears that Church leaders have shifted focus from the doctrine that sees gender-as-partnership to gender-as-hierarchy. Church leaders also control the hegemonic discourse that leads supports for male institutional authority. In Mormonism, 'authorisation' of doctrine is by a prophetic revelation, while statements by general authorities and other Church leaders found in Church publications carry institutional approval (Toscano, 2004, 2016b). Therefore, the discourse on gender is conditioned by ecclesiastic structures and predetermines what is included in

centralised Church teachings and who is permitted to add to or alter the doctrine in congregations.

Similarly, the way that the discourse on Heavenly Mother has shifted in Church literature shows how doctrine can be modified and shaped by Church leaders to limit expansive gender models and justify women's exclusion from power. The Mormon belief in a Heavenly Mother is unlike Roman Catholic Mariology (Bannon, 1992), Wicca ideas of a Mother Goddess or the Devi of Hinduism (Goldenberg, 1995). In believing in a female Deity, Bushman (2016: 263) claims this is 'one of the three great Mormon feminist principles' as she is a female model that is equal in power, might, and dominion to God the Father. [57] As Mormons believe Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have a resurrected body, Heavenly Mother is a tangible being, that 'she is a woman like us; she has a woman's body. Without it, she could not be our mother' (Allred, 1994: 42; Smith, 1980 [1827]; Newell, 1981). For Mormon communities, female bodies are embryonic Deity, so their embodiment is seen as a conduit for divine expression and experiences through womanhood. In believing in a female goddess, some scholars contend, Mormon women can claim spiritual power through the physicality of pregnancy, menstruation and the female form, which offers opportunities for autonomy and empowerment (Allred, 1994).

However, Reid Leamaster and Andres Bautista (2018) argue that Heavenly Mother as a powerful actor is subsumed within Latter-day Saint structures by conservative religious and traditional secular framing of gender performances that equate female embodiment with submission to male authority. Despite a female deity that equates to God, some feminist religious scholars note Church leaders have denied Heavenly Mother any positional power in congregational worship (MacHaffie, 2006; Toscano, 2016b). Instead, although Heavenly Mother is a symbol of celestial equality, Church leaders focus on her embodiment as the paradigm motherhood (Paulsen and Pulido, 2015). In accepting God the Mother as the epitome of womanhood, Church leaders have promoted motherhood not only as a religious expectation but also a source of pragmatic spirituality (Ballard, 2002; Beck, 2007; Nadauld, 2001). Accordingly, as Sumerau and Cragun (2015: 12) argue, official Church literature rigorously reinforces mother as

[57] Claudia Bushman (2016) claims that, along with a belief in Heavenly Mother, the other two great feminist principles are personal revelation and agency in belief and practice.

the ultimate embodiment of spiritual integrity by 'selectively' drawing upon teachings that 'construct and sanctify the gendered expectations they wish to instil in today's members'.

The unique Mormon doctrine of an embodied female God, with a commensurate status as her partner, God the Father, could erode Church sermons that show male authority as the only model of leadership (Toscano, 2012a). Mormon feminists have developed theologies of Heavenly Mother, which have adopted a 'lens on gender' to challenge androcentric teachings (Allred, 1994; Toscano, 2004, 2012a; Wilcox, 1987). The approach that Allred, Toscano and Wilcox take to conceptualising Heavenly mother has much in common with matricentric feminism that sees gender as socially constructed but mothering as potentially agential in addressing oppression. Despite that, Taylor Petrey (2016) argues their arguments have merely served to reinforce biological essentialism by universalising Heavenly Mother and that 'Mormon feminist liberation and empowerment of Heavenly Mother has often shackled her with a new set of discursive constraints' (p340). Yet, I contend Petrey does a disservice to the Mormon feminist theologies as they are not only constrained by what little official doctrine there is on Heavenly Mother but will always struggle to be seen as authoritative voices as they are outside the main body of the Church (Toscano, 2016a). Moreover, as Toscano states in her spirited response to Petrey, in emphasising the divine female to envisage what equality looks like from a Mormon feminist standpoint, she is not arguing for separate but equal but for a female God that can be worshipped by men and women (Toscano, 2016a).

Complementarianism or 'Separate-but-Equal'

In traditional Abrahamic religions, the creation of Adam and Eve (Hawwa) found in sacred texts construct male and female as God-decided (Rockwood, 1987). In time, the idea of men and women being 'separate-but-equal' became embedded not only in congregations but also in secular structures that claimed the rationality of men made then fit to rule (Dworkin, 1983: 203;). This suggests the separate-but-equal model of gender or *complementarianism* is not only reproduced by religious rhetoric but also underpinned by white European philosophies of Aristotle, Locke and Rousseau that biological differences justify female exclusion from male-dominated arenas (Scott, 2018). In turn, sacred and secular structures frame men as better

equipped for authority, while women are taught that they and religion are best suited to the domestic sphere (Scott, 1996).

Robin Bunce (2017) suggests that American Christian right churches are the foremost advocates of complementarianism as early Victorian social observers on America noted that white American mainstream attitudes held rigid distinctions between men and women's roles and characters. If that is the case, that 1800s America societal norms produced and reproduced exaggerated gender divides, then it is not unexpected that a Church that emerged from that milieu would internalise those social constructions of gender. But when Mormon feminists examined early doctrine, official literature, and journals of Mormon pioneer women, they found Mormon discourse on gender was less rigidly prescribed than mainstream America during the 1800s (Anderson, 1994; Bushman, 1971; Madsen, 1981; Newell, 1981; Toscano, 1992; Ulrich, 1994). According to Wilcox (1987), during the nineteenth century in Utah in Church literature there was much emphasis on the influence of mothers to effect change on families and societies, little romanticising of the role, and less said on motherhood as an institution. Instead, advice from leaders (male and female) was practical around diet, health, and the disciplining of children. Mothers working outside was not unusually (Wilcox, 1987), and primitive contraception in forms of herbal methods seemed to be freely available (Hendrix-Komoto, 2020). Rather than a woman's singularly purpose, it seems that motherhood for Utah pioneer Mormon women was a responsibility amongst many.

It was after polygamy was repealed in 1890 and Utah gained Statehood, opening up political, economic and cultural connections with the wider American society, that there was a marked shift in Church teachings. Leaders spoke more from the pulpit about idealised mother love as suited for the domestic space and encouraged reproduction as a divine form of worship (Wilcox, 1987). By the 1950s as the Church sought to lessen the 'opprobrium of the nineteenth century Mormonism' and gain societal respectability in America, it seemed to be adopting social conservatism (Mauss, 1994b: 131). Mauss contends that during that period the rhetoric of Church leaders often had more in common with 'Southern Baptist and sectarian preachers' but served a purpose by increasing baptisms from the Bible belt of America (p.139). For some feminist scholars, this post-war period was a catalyst in motherhood being ascribed as the central

identity of Mormon women and teaching that motherhood equates to the priesthood (Farnsworth, 1991; Wilcox, 1987). By the 1970s, Church discourse on gender had solidified into the construct of 'Molly Mormon', which was a colloquial term for the Mormon embodiment of American conservative and traditional religious stereotypes of women as ideally suited to the home (McBaine 2014). This is not to say that some Mormon doctrine and practices are not instrumental in promoting biological essentialism, as shown in having an embodied Heavenly Mother, but for some feminists, it is more the case that mainstream traditional secular and religious notions of gender found in complementarianism have exacerbated the separate but equal discourse (Anderson, 1994; Farnsworth, 1991; McBaine, 2012, 2014; Wilcox, 1987).

The overlap between Mormon and evangelical teachings can be seen in John Bartkowski (2001) study of American evangelical couples. Bartkowski notes couples talk about how women are less able to lead as they are sensitive to emotions, modest and intuitively spiritual and men are divinely designed to preside as they are inherently logical, rational and instrumental. Likewise, 'The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood' (1987) drafted by North American evangelical leaders predates the family proclamation, but both state that God sees men and women equal in value but assigns them different roles. Therefore, most American Mormon women, like American evangelical couples, accept complementary roles as doctrine (Bartkowski, 2001; Leamaster and Bautista, 2018; Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015).

However, as gender construction is dependent on cultural context (Connell and Pearse, 2015), this suggests what makes sense in the American religious landscape could be likely to be contested in the British context (Bunce, 2017). Still, if American Mormon structures have greater control over the discourse, this could make American ideas about gender appear uniform in Mormon congregations. Applying Bunce's argument to a Mormon context, this suggests that at certain points of policy, doctrine, and practices British Mormon women might diverge with American Mormon notions of gender. However, whether they were raised as members or converts to the Church, the majority of participants agree with complementarianism, making it seem that there is homogeneity in beliefs and practices between Mormon women and Church teachings. It was only when looking at everyday practices was it possible to see how some British Mormon women engaged in complex negotiations of gender. In lived religion, I contend,

participants call upon a broad set of norms to construct gender, including societal shifts that advocate for greater equality in gender roles, and Mormon doctrinal ideas of co-partnerships, as well as discrete difference.

An example of negotiations that sit at the intersection between diverse gender constructions is seen in Emily's response to the question 'to what extent do you think men and women's role differ?' Emily agrees with shared roles and responsibilities in everyday living but also exhibits a pious commitment to gender essentialism:

> I sincerely believe that women are more nurturing and compassionate, and men are good at fixing things. I do think that women are better at the feelings type of things, I know that's a generalisation, and that's not always the case, and you do have a lot of crossovers. I have no problems with couples that choose for the wife to go out to work, and the husband stays at home because, in those circumstances, there is a need. Maybe the wife is more ambitious, or more able to earn more money than the family needs or the husband is unable to work, so there are always these blurred lines and grey areas where things overlap. I mean overall our roles and responsibilities are the same, as we are all responsible for helping each other and doing what's needed to provide for the family and to provide for each other. Still, there are just different ways of providing for that. I do think that women and men have different ways of providing spiritually, physically and emotionally.
>
> (Emily, 57 years old, convert)

Emily's understanding of gender norms appears to contradict and conform to official Church doctrine as she agrees with complementarianism while supporting women who challenge traditional gender roles. But Emily's approach to gender is symptomatic of how people live religion. As McGuire (2008: 17) suggests, lived religion 'rarely resembles the tidy, consistent, and theologically correct packages official religion promotes'. Emily is a case in point of how religion-as-lived draws upon a range of resources, including secular ideas, as well as religious doctrine, to inform religious lived practices. Similarly, Emily responses could be demonstrating Sally Gallagher and Christian Smith's (1999: 224) 'pragmatic egalitarianism'. In their study of evangelical families, Gallagher and Smith conceptualise pragmatic egalitarianism as the way that men and women

theoretically support a male headship ideal, but their lived gender practices are far more egalitarian.

In contrast, Ellen, who works full time while her husband remains home with their disabled child, accepts that she does not follow Church prescribed gender roles. Instead, she considers there is little difference between men and women as they should be equally valued:

> In my little world, there is a lot of difference between the male and female roles, and there are also times it's difficult not to buy into the man in the home should be the breadwinner, should be making the decision, leading the home and sometimes it can be a pressure. But I've learnt to avoid that trap and say actually for whatever reason that is not how I see it. I suppose what I'm trying to say is that the potential, some possibilities there is no difference in the, you know, the worth and value [of men and women], there is no difference because we are so unique.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

Ellen appears to be challenging existing Mormon ideals of complementarianism, reformulating them in a way that offers 'an expanded sense of possibility and authorship in shaping our [Mormon women] lives' (Inouye, 2016: 232).

Negotiation of gender is for some Mormon women, as Saba Mahmood (2005: 14-15) states: 'entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms'. Therefore, while Emily is agential by being compliant to Church teachings on gender, Ellen demonstrates self-determination through other ways as well as through resistance (Burke, 2012). So, for Ellen, agency is not only shown by her not adopting traditional gender roles (resistance) but also is instrumental as she validates her choices through Mormon ideals of divine potential. Notwithstanding, most participants engage in lived religion as a series of continual negotiations to find ways they can express agency, including how they understand and translate daily practices into notions of equality and equal opportunities.

Complementarianism is pervasive in Mormon discourse, as well as prevalent in evangelical and traditional secular socially constructions of gender (Bartkowski, 2001; Gallagher, 2004; Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Bautista, 2018; Warenski, 1978). In their lived religion, as studies in America show, Mormon women see themselves as more suited to the domestic sphere,

while Mormon men are better equipped to lead congregations (Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Bautista, 2018). This can be seen in the example of Hope, who considers living her religion is by giving up teaching to remain home with her children and embracing domestic chores:

> So, I find this quite interesting, as it is quite funny when all these things about feminism in the world and I'm for equal rights and that, and it is an issue in the Church. But this is just my personal feeling that the natural role for women is in the home while the husband works. I think, therefore, even down to the little things, washing up and tidying, all those little domestic tedious chores.
>
> (Hope, 28 years old, 3rd generation)

Most of the British Mormon women I interviewed, whether or not they practice it, understand gender as divinely designed as a bifurcation of the sexes, with two distinctive cultures.

Since Joseph Smith, it seems that Church rhetoric on gender has shifted from a divinely designed model with overlapping gender responsibilities to a model that emphasises reproductive difference and discrete functions (Farnsworth, 1991). There is an inherent dichotomy between Mormon doctrine proposing prototypes of gender-equal leadership in 'Heavenly Parents' and institutional demands for women to be subject to male authority. As feminists argue, Church leaders may teach about a female God, which shows women eternal co-leadership but also strive to maintain motherhood as fundamental to their eternal progression overseen by male authority (Allred, 2015).

I suggest that Mormon women have lost much when Church discourses are reinforcing gender discrete roles that position women as eternal followers and homemakers. One such discourse is the way the priesthood operates in Mormon structures. Unlike other Christian religions, in Mormon congregations, as the priesthood is given to all worthy men over the age of twelve, it is a system where male authority oversees women both in their public and private lives (Bednarowski, 2016).[58] Therefore, the reach of the priesthood means there is a gendered hierarchy situated in every level of a woman's lived practice, including the domestic sphere. In

[58] Joseph Smith, when laying out the responsibilities of the priesthood, had concerns that a male-only priesthood could increase abuse of institutional power as: 'We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion' (D and C 121: 39).

response, as I show below, a small but significant number of participants validate women's exclusion from organisational authority by ascribing to 'benevolent sexism' (Glick and Fiske, 1996: 491).

Benevolent Sexism: Priesthood Authority in the Mormon Church

Institutionally, women are subject to male authority in the Church. The concept of a Heavenly Mother, has, at times, been a symbolic way to justify complementarianism and reinforce male dominance. Presenting the exclusion of women from structural power as divinely authorised, Church leaders create internal processes that endorse men's leadership and women's subservience as 'natural'. For some participants, rather than interpret Church actions as 'hostile sexism' (actions that create overt suppression of women by men), they frame it as 'benevolent sexism' (Glick and Fiske, 1996:490).

According to Glick and Fiske (1996:491), benevolent sexism supports patriarchy in continuing the subjection of women through 'a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles, but that is subjectively positive in feeling tone'. Benevolent sexism maintains the belief that women and men are intrinsically different in the way they resolve issues and problem solving, so men are inherently equipped for positional power (Connelly and Heesacker, 2012). Benevolent sexism supports the bifurcation of women as feminine and irrational, and men as masculine and logical to justify women's exclusion from power in public spaces (Glick and Fiske, 1996).

In Mormon contexts, the institutional structure presents male priesthood as a rational God-approved choice for leadership, often reinforced through benevolent sexism. This can be seen in the comments of Helena below, a stake leader responsible for over 150 young women and leaders. When discussing her interactions with male leaders, Helena sees the way that they deal with her requests not as condescending or demeaning behaviour, but as protective and caring actions.

> I know we act under the direction of the priesthood, but they are very generous in that they sit there in our meetings and allow us to make plans and only say something to us if we are doing something totally wrong. We are allowed to make all the decisions, yes, we

> have to go to the stake presidency for approval, but most of the time it's a done deal because they know we are not going to suggest something ridiculous.
>
> (Helena, 57 years old, 2nd generation)

In interpreting benevolent sexism as effective leadership, Helena shows how she has internalised organisational processes that encourage women to accept subordination.

Helena does not consider that she is oppressed or restricted by being subject to male authority as she states she has the spiritual and administrative authority to act to make changes in the structure. Lori Stromberg (2004: 60) would disagree. Stromberg argues that Mormon women may have 'charismatic power', a superficial appearance of authority through overseeing women's organisation, but they have little or no ability to operate a change in the administration of the Church. In being denied the visibility of male priesthood authority, the material reality is Mormon women are being deprived of positional power (Stromberg, 2004).

Alternatively, Helena's actions could be interpreted as a way of her adopting strategies to remain in leadership. As other studies of religious communities found, women may consider themselves equal in worth, but to maintain unity with the religious group they are prepared to submit to patriarchal control as evidence of their piety (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016). Saba Mahmood (2013) suggests that secular notions of agency as resistance misunderstand religious submission. As the example below shows, Abigail can see why other women feel the injustice of inequality within the Church, but she accepts the exclusion from authority as part of being a member. For her, despite the lack of equal opportunities within leadership, she expresses no desire to agitate for change nor does she feel that a change in Mormon doctrine is necessary for women to be seen as having equal worth to men:

> I think women do an exceptionally fine job, and I don't doubt that many Latter-day Saint women have the mental, spiritual and emotional capacity to fill the same roles as men. I don't think that's up for discussion. I just think in terms of the things that are laid down for us in the different roles, it is made very clear and so I don't feel the injustice that other women do. I don't know the reasoning behind it, but I personally don't doubt that we could do it, but I don't feel that we need to do it.
>
> (Abigail, 26 years old, 3rd generation)

Abigail's explanation of why women are excluded from the priesthood is complex as institutional Mormonism actively promotes spiritual self-determination, while rigidly enforcing a homogenised collective commitment to prescribed gender roles. Therefore, she approaches gender in the institutional structure as a belief that men having positions of power has little to do with capacity or capability and more to do with divine difference, meaning women are not intended to perform that role.

The Mormon women I interviewed when negotiating gender try to make sense of conflicting discourses that propose only men are fit for positions of power *and* claim men and women have equality in their relationship with God. For some participants, these competing notions of spiritual autonomy and exclusion from intuitional spiritual authority impact on how they see themselves within the structure. As Olivia notes that she wishes: 'all women should have the same sense of importance and value that it seems men naturally feel within the Church' (21 years old, 4th generation). The way religious women are excluded from institutional power also means that traditional Christian institutions, which like Mormonism, are founded upon a gender hierarchy, are often seen in direct opposition to progressive concepts of gender equality (Braude, 2004).

Notions of gender equality face the same inherent paradox found in feminist discussions that advocate for women as a special case but also seek to create equality by dismantling gender categories (Scott 1996). Although work by postmodern feminists shows the value of strategic responses that connect equality and difference, discussions of gender inequality are often intertwined with liberal feminist or mainstream feminist concepts of 'sameness' (Bock and James, 2005). That, irrespective of gender, there is equal access to rights and opportunities (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2017; Squires, 1999; Verloo and Lombardo, 2007:23). Radical feminists argue that this approach of equality has been forcing women to fit into androcentric structures, which continue to remain unchallenged. Instead, they claim that gender equality requires positive action that recognises and combats the disadvantages that women face in institutions built on male normative identities (Dworkin, 1983; Gilligan, 1982).

Nyhagen and Halsaa's (2016) work with Christian and Muslim women found that over half of the interviewees saw gender equality as embracing difference, which saw 'women were

perceived as both different and equal' (Nyhagen, 2019: 17). Likewise, most women I interviewed understood equality both as a secular approach that sought equal terms based on eliminating difference and religious idea that operated on differing worth, which can 'differ as much from women to women as they do from men to men' (Holland and Holland, 1994: 101). Therefore, Tasmin demarcates between equality found in the workplace that centres on right-based actions and equality as spiritual worth in her congregation:

> I think it is a different environment and feminism is about equal pay and maternity rights, and it has made a massive difference in the lives of women. But the Church is more about having I suppose, that we have spiritual power you know and that is how we can be equal. I don't feel like I need to be a bishop or High Priest, I mean if I sought that kind of thing I could be a Relief Society president or Primary president, I mean the Church is not all about callings and positions but about our faith.
>
> (Tasmin, 24 years old, 3rd generation)

Despite acknowledging that the legislation that seeks equality has seen maternity rights improved, most participants thought secular 'equality' diminishes what they see as the female experience. They struggle with notions of equality where female embodiment is considered something to be transcended. For Ellen, equality should be about recognising the power of female embodiment:

> Can you not see how motherhood is amazing it is in itself, I just think people who say that [women are limited by being female] are just ridiculous and that's because maybe they are not thinking logically. That is saying 50% of the world population is a bit deficit; it works both ways; it is not just putting women down but that you are making men appear weak.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

As a woman's body is the symbolic and material reality of God's love, some participants argue that in the Church equality is about divine worth. As a construct, divine worth emerges from the paradoxes of Mormon doctrine rather than secular principles of visible parity between genders (McBaine, 2016). In Mormon teachings, the divine worth is the principle that all people can access equivalent opportunities through Jesus Christ, such as the ability to attain eternal life;

therefore, equal opportunity means to access God's love equally (Sorenson, 1992). Divine worth is about a spiritual power that positions women equally with men but does not equate to greater access to administrative power and visible equal opportunities. This leads to some Mormon feminists to claim that the only measure of systemic gender equality is Mormon women being ordained to the priesthood as it is a quantifiable measure (Kelly, 2013; Stromberg, 2004; Toscano, 2016a).

Yet, some interviewees are not persuaded that ordination for women equates to greater opportunities as: 'sometimes we can have legal equality, but that doesn't mean that attitudes have changed' (Leah, 18 years old, 3rd generation). Nor does accepting divine worth as a practice mean that some women I interviewed do not recognise inequality. Moreover, some participants recognise gender discrimination in the formal structure of the religion but contend that it is more important that equality in the Church is understood more widely as mutual respect and worth in social interactions.

The women I interviewed are aware of unequal practices in the home, workplace and congregational spaces, but younger third-generation women were more likely to say that their negotiations are significantly different from their mothers. For example, Meredith comments that she and her husband's division of labour in everyday life as they are striving to address individual oppressive practices:

> My experiences are as people we are not perfect in equality, but I can see it is changing from mine and my husband's parents, we are taught that we should be equal, and that's how I'd like it to be, but we are still working towards it.
>
> (Meredith, 32 years old, 3rd generation)

Equality and difference are not necessarily diametrically opposed (Nyhagen, 2019). Practices that support equal opportunities can be devised to accept difference and dismantle inequality (Bock and James, 2005; Verloo and Lombardo, 2007).

The discourse of equality in policy and practices has moved forward from singular notions of the level playing field to solutions that seek for parity and equity. The Equality Act 2010 is

centred around the belief that difference is not neutralised but is affirmed through recognising different points of entry to access opportunities.

Conclusion

When discussing how Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender, this thesis conceptualises gender as socially constructed, a set of social relations within which individuals and groups attach meanings to bodies that are cultural and historical contextual (Connell and Pearse, 2015). In understanding the social construction of gender, it is not enough to examine doctrine as that fails to account for lived religious practices, the way that bodies are both object and agents of social practices. Through lived religion, negotiations of gender occur at all societal levels and within all structures.

British Mormon women encounter gender constructions in the Church through three paradigms: *divinely designed*, *Heavenly Mother as a model*, and *complementarianism* or separate-but-equal. Yet, the doctrines of the Church show a Heavenly Mother, a co-creator with God, offering models of divine gender that have parity in authority. If the contemporary Mormon institutional structure reflected Church visions of female roles, then leadership would be a cooperative paradigm with men and women equally involved in decision-making and access to priesthood authority.

Indisputably, one major cause of gender inequality in the Latter-day Saint Church is the ideas about gender that the Church promulgates, especially those in positions of authority. These ideas have material consequences as they mean that women lack positional power – they are not admitted to the priesthood or to the most senior leadership roles, meaning that they do not have 'a place at the table' when organisational decisions are taken. The Church's institutional focus on doctrine and teachings that advocate a separate but equal discourse is key to these gender constructions.

Church teachings have reinforced complementarianism, including the veneration of Heavenly Mother as a mother, rather than leaders emphasising her deification or co-partnership with God. Similarly, benevolent sexism reinforces conservative Mormon ideals of gender and promotes an idealised repressive version of female embodiment. In the same way, traditional

secular and Christian versions of complementarianism portray women as emotionally irrational, and men as rational, this view is used to justify male authority and leadership in Mormon congregations (Farnsworth, 1991). As a result, most participants are having to negotiate gender by trying to make sense of Mormon religiously grounded imperatives of divine worth, that all are equal before God while being subjected to systematic structural exclusion due to gender difference.

Chapter Five: Mothers, 'Molly Mormon,' and 'The Guardian of the Family'

For some second-wave radical feminists, a key factor in the oppression of women, religious or otherwise, is the focus on the primacy of being a wife and mother (Dworkin, 1983; Firestone, 1970; Johnson, 1978, 1981). Critiquing what Shulamith Firestone (1970: 11) calls the 'the tyranny of the biological family', they argue that motherhood forces upon women roles that restrict them to the domestic sphere. Moreover, feminist models of gender are seen as instrumental in de-traditionalising roles for women by prioritising the pursuit of self-fulfilment over the demands of domestic commitments, including motherhood (Woodhead, 2001). This places traditional religious teachings that see the desire for motherhood as essential to female embodiment at odds with feminist thought that claims reproduction as an option, one among many, for women.

Mormon doctrine, with its soteriology of divine family structures that reinforce gender essentialism, appears to be in direct conflict with mainstream and radical feminist ideals. Church teachings position marriage and motherhood as a primary role for women with celestial status, not just on earth but also for eternity (Doctrine and Covenants, 131:1-4). In beginning this chapter by comparing and contrasting prevalent feminist and Mormon constructs of motherhood, I foreground later discussions on the way some British Mormon women negotiate gender through everyday practices. Following that, I discuss a particular Mormon gender construction that embodies an idealised wife and mother: 'Molly Mormon', and to what extent some participants accept Molly Mormon as a gender model. I then show that in analysing the mundane, intimate and private spaces, where religious teachings connect with lived realities, some participants are engaging in more nuanced negotiations of gender. These negotiations are causing some interviewees to re-imagine traditional Mormon gender roles, such as Molly Mormon as a nascent form of gender performance, the *guardian of the family*.

Motherhood and Mothering

Motherhood in some conservative religious discourse, including Mariology, is framed as an embodiment of Jesus Christ but is usually centred on the attributes of caring, compassion and self-sacrificing rather than spiritual leadership (Woodhead, 2008b). Evie, a mother of three children, reflects this view. In understanding motherhood as a form of discipleship, she feels she is privileged spiritually:

> Motherhood is part of the plan of salvation. I once heard, I can't remember who said it, but it was a general authority, that motherhood is the only experience that comes close to understanding the atonement. You know, that mothers suffer great pain and sacrifice in order to bring forth life. I really liked that as it made motherhood something really special.
>
> (Evie, 32 years old, 3rd generation)

In positioning motherhood as a divine attribute or role as well as a physical performance, Evie's comments reflect the attitudes of some British Anglican women, who accept and at times embrace motherhood as a religious action (Page, 2011, 2013).

Dworkin (1983: 204) suggests this construction of gender that sees females as piously advantaged because they are intuitively morally virtuous model creates what she calls the 'woman-superior' model. In promoting the 'woman-superior', as found in teachings by conservative Christian Churches, which sees female embodiment equate to greater altruism, has been used by religious leaders to justify claims that women are more suited to the home and child-rearing (Hoyt, 2009). Therefore, being seen as an object of worship rather than an equal allows some Mormon Church leaders to explain the exclusion of women from religious organisational power by suggesting women are too good rather than not good enough for spiritual responsibility (Christofferson, 2013). In doing so, the maternal body has been subject to being monitored, exploited, and marginalised by Church structures to maintain male headship and restrict women from positions of authority. For example, focusing on Heavenly Mother's major function as a mother rather than a working partner with God, Church teachings frame motherhood as an exclusive function rather than an expansive role (Farnsworth, 1991; Sorensen, 2015).

In Mormonism, the essentialising of women as mothers has greater significance than perhaps other Christian religions as Latter-day Saint teachings emphasise that 'female roles did not begin on earth, and they do not end here' (Beck, 2004: 76). Mormon congregations are taught that in accordance with God's plan for his children, the role of a mother will transcend death. Motherhood in Mormonism is more than a biological function and/or a gender construct: it is a way to gain eternal salvation. For many young women raised in a Mormon home, this means their ambitions for life will centre first and foremost on the goal to be a wife and mother (Leamaster and Bautista, 2018). Therefore, despite having a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education and a Masters in creative writing, Abigail prioritises being a wife and mother over her ambitions in the workplace:

> In terms of my roles and responsibilities [as a woman], in an eternal perspective, well I feel my role eternally is to be a wife and mother and that something that I would like to see happen. Although I am happy in the roles, I have now; this is something that I would really like to do more.
>
> (Abigail, 26 years old, 3rd generation)

Church institutional framing of motherhood sees women staying home to raise children as 'gospel truth', while employment is 'a lifestyle choice' (Haglund, 2013: 150).

Therefore, prioritising opportunities for motherhood over a career or education aids celestial progression. This can be seen in the case of Meredith. While studying for a degree in languages, Meredith and her husband felt inspired through prayer to start planning for a family as soon as possible. Meredith contends the response from her lecturer to her desire for children over the opportunity of an additional year of study abroad showed little understanding of what she saw as living her religion:

> My lecturer at University felt sorry for me because he made some sort of comment about religion and about being Mormon, and it was kind of patronising. He wasn't a traditional male; he was very forward-thinking but sort of saw me as oppressed. He was really supportive of me when I didn't go away for a year for my language, but he sort of saw it as my husband dictating to me to stay and me not being able to pursue my career straight

> away. I think they thought it was my husband and my religion that forced it on me, but this was an active choice I made.
>
> (Meredith, 32 years old, 3rd generation)

The comments by the lecturer suggest that his understanding of agency was reproducing feminist concepts of resistance agency, which frame religious women as non-agential if they comply with religious demands (Burke, 2012). In response, Meredith becomes defensive as she sees herself as making active choices about how her religion is to be lived. Looking at Meredith's actions through Burke's notions of religious agency, Meredith is engaging prayer as an act of *empowerment* to act differently from societal expectations, while being *compliant* to religious norms.

As Dawn Llewellyn (2016) notes when exploring childlessness in British Christian congregations, the maternal body is not just about fertility but also about the way social relations construct and subject women's bodies to the ideals of motherhood. Gender operates in a 'reproductive arena' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 11). In other words, although there is no biological reason for gender constructs, social interactions produce practices that suggest sexual reproduction is responsible for cultural male and female distinctions. This includes notions of motherhood (O'Reilly, 2006). The reproductive arena explains how patriarchal religions, like the Latter-day Saint Church, can construct motherhood that regulates female bodies. As a female body is an embryonic Heavenly Mother, every woman is an eternal mother, so motherhood is not only what you do, but it is what you are born to do and what you are assigned to be eternally after death. Thus, some British Mormon interviewees, irrespective of whether they had given birth or not, and in keeping with other studies on Mormon women in America (Leamaster and Subramaniam, 2015), see being a mother as an avenue of embodied spiritual connectivity.

Amy Hoyt's (2007) qualitative study of American Latter-day Saint women found that Church teachings of a female divinity helped some participants feel empowered in a way they thought that feminists would not understand. Likewise, Olivia claims that the Church 'recognises that motherhood empowers as does being a wife, whereas I feel that non-Mormon feminists will see those roles as a social construct (21 years old, 4th generation). Olivia's understanding of mainstream feminism framing of motherhood as something negative could be indicative of how

liberal feminist rhetoric has ignored the potential of 'mothering' as a way of developing a feminist consciousness (O'Reilly, 2006; Rich, 1996 [1986]).

Adrienne Rich (1996 [1986]) believes that motherhood is not synonymous with mothering, as the former privileges a patriarchal idealised female embodiment, whilst the latter draws upon the 'potential relationship of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children' (p.13). Matricentric feminism could help participants, like Bryony, who are negotiating motherhood in terms of divine altruism and self-denial, to understand why she also feels constrained by that model of gender:

> I think it goes on [sacrifice] with women all the time because we are mothers. By and large, most Latter-day Saint women are mothers and have this feeling, the responsibility to nurture, to help but sometimes you just want to break out from doing those things.
>
> (Bryony, 68 years old, convert)

I suggest that matricentric feminism has the potential for Mormon women to negotiate concepts of motherhood and mothering as a central structure of subjugation and emancipation. Gerda Neyer and Laura Bernardi (2011) argue that as poststructuralist feminist approaches reject 'mother' as a fixed category, this is opening up new possibilities of motherhood. For example, the use of assisted reproductive technology and broader definitions of a mother as an identity could see the notion of mothering becoming negotiated as a more inclusive, less gender prescribed social construct.

Traditional secular framing of motherhood has, at times, reinforced conservative religious teachings (Dworkin, 1983). In the case of Mormonism, as the previous chapter stated, some feminists suggest that Church teachings insisting that the most important role for women is their responsibilities as mothers and homemakers can also be found in post-Second World War American gender constructions (Allred, 2015; Anderson, 1992; Farnsworth, 1991; Hoyt, 2007; Johnson, 1979; Mauss, 1994b; Sumerau and Cragun, 2015; Wilcox, 1987). Over time, this Church model of gender with its 'exclusionary focus on stay-at-home mothers with its guilt-inducing perfectionist overtones' (Brooks et al., 2016: 239) became known in congregations in America as Molly Mormon.

Molly Mormon

According to Joanne Brooks (2016: 11) in response to the persecution and stigmatising of early Church members in America as radicals, from the 1950s onwards some congregations re-invented themselves as models of white conservative American 'family' values. Again, in the 1970s, partially through correlation of all Church teachings, there was re-emphasis on a uniform, stable, unilateral identity of a Latter-day Saint member, including the reinforcing of discrete gender roles (Brooks, 2016; Mauss, 1994b; Wilcox, 1987). It was also in this decade Molly Mormon, along with the male equivalent of Molly Mormon 'Peter Priesthood', made its first appearance in Mormon literature (Brooks et al., 2016). The term Molly Mormon is little known outside of Mormon communities, nor is there much information on how Molly Mormon found its way into the Mormon discourse. By the end of the 1970s, however, Molly Mormon became associated with Mormon women that displayed hyper-femininity, extreme orthopraxis and defined her value through reproduction (Brooks et al., 2016). Interestingly, although Peter Priesthood has all but disappeared from the Mormon lexicon (Farnsworth, 1991), Molly Mormon remains in congregational usage as the archetypal conceptualisation of Mormon womanhood.

The work of Lori Beaman (2001) on Canadian Mormon women is instrumental in gaining a sociological definition.[59] Beaman conceptualised a typology of Mormon gender performance: Molly Mormon, Mormon feminist and Moderate, which she suggests are models that related to degrees of religious observance. According to Beaman, a Mormon feminist exhibits radical views that conflict with Mormon gender norms. In comparison, moderate Mormon women are content to comply enough to remain within mainstream Mormon notions of gender and local cultural context to appear acceptable to both communities. However, as previously noted in Chapter three, Molly Mormons are seen in congregations as a 'good Mormon woman, who follows church teachings' and promotes domesticity as essential to Mormon female embodiment (p69). Molly Mormon as a gender construct seeks to maintain a theological emphasis on biological essentialism and a separate but different narrative that upholds a patriarchal hierarchy (Allred, 2015; Farnsworth, 1991; Johnson, 1978).

[59] Beaman's study was conducted in Alberta, Canada, which was colonised by Mormon pioneers in 1887 and 2.05% of the provincial population are Latter-day Saints. In comparison, 0.55% (1 in 181) are Latter-day Saints in Canada, whilst 0.29% (1 in 347) are Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom

Beaman found that Latter-day Saint women in Canada who self-identify as Molly Mormon sought out this role as they considered conservative gender values increased personal security and purpose. Therefore, Molly Mormon corresponds with other traditional religious congregations that reproduce social constructions of gender that venerate motherhood and reinforce female home centred roles (Dworkin, 1983; Neitz and Spickard, 1990). Molly Mormon is also influential in boundary maintenance as Church leaders evoke the model to remind Mormon women that their role is to defend the idealised family structure of a stay-at-home mother and a father as the provider (Beck, 2007; Kimball, 1979; Packer, 1998).

Significantly, for most of the participants, irrespective of whether they were converts or had been born into the Church, the degree Molly Mormon was found in lived practices was more related to how participants understood the role of motherhood. In understanding motherhood as a religious practice that centres around the home, several younger stay at home mothers saw their daily interactions governed by the belief God has designed women to be responsible for the family's spiritual and material welfare. Ascribing motherhood and mothering as a discrete female embodiment that connects with the divine was also manifest in discussions with other North American Mormon women (Beaman, 2001; Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Subramaniam, 2015). Hope, a mother of two children, when talking about her role exemplifies how most participants felt towards motherhood, whether or not they had children and reflects fundamental constructs of Molly Mormon:

> I do feel that the role of motherhood is divine. That we have the ability to be spiritually aware, to be close to the spirit or even if they're not close to it [family members], to be worthy of the spirit's influence when it is needed and to be submissive, but it's a willingness, not a weakness. I think as women, we do have these characteristics, so we are teaching the gospel in the home.
>
> (Hope, 28 years old, 3rd generation)

Another way that Hope reproduces Molly Mormon constructs in her everyday practices is that apart from when she is pregnant, she takes full responsibility for domestic tasks. As taught by the family proclamation (1995), she sees her role is to care for the home so that her husband can concentrate on the economic provision of the family. It is worth noting that while Hope is

accepting inequality in the division of domestic labour, she voices her frustration that her husband is not playing an equal part in teaching their children Mormon values and is shirking his spiritual duties.

Hope's concern at her husband not being involved in religious instruction in the home reflects Church teachings on parenting. Church leaders teach the Mormon idealised relationship is a monogamous heterosexual marriage with a father, a priesthood holder, providing for the household and a mother caring for the family and are equally committed to raising their children in homes centred on Latter-day Saint practices (Bednar, 2006). The majority of participants, who were married, had married in the Temple, where they are 'sealed' to their husbands for eternity.[60] But not all of their husbands had remained active, and some are divorced. Remarrying is particularly difficult for faithful Mormon women. Unlike divorced and widowed Mormon men, who can be Temple sealed to more than one woman, before they can remarry, Mormon women are required to get a Temple sealing annulment from the First Presidency, which may or may not be given (General Handbook, 2018: 38.5.1). Therefore, recently divorced and with the last of her four children leaving home when asked about her role as a woman, Emily says: 'I'm still working on that as I haven't worked out how to define myself'. For Emily, as with all other women I interviewed, their negotiations of gender are interconnected with a Mormon idealised family form of mother and father residing in a home that is centred on reproducing gospel values and Mormon practices.

Molly Mormon is not only about endorsing Church teachings on the importance of being a wife and mother but also is found in everyday embodied practices, such as the number of children, career choices and being married to an active member in the Temple. Molly Mormon then for most women I interviewed became not only a representative of a unique Mormon gender construct, but the concept is embedded in a particular place and context: 'I get this impression of a Utah-Idaho Mormon woman. She must be absolutely perfect at baking bread, making all their children's clothes, having numerous children' (Emily, 57 years old, convert).[61]

[60] The marriage sealing is a religious ritual where a man and a woman, after being civil married, take out covenants in the temple that 'seals' them together so death cannot separate them [online] available from <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/temples/what-happens-in-a-temple-sealing?lang=eng)> [March 1. 2020]

[61] 57% of residents in state of Idaho are Mormon (Mormon news room, 2017).

This perceived association between Mormon women in Utah and Molly Mormon meant many participants were reluctant to be called or associated with the label. For example, Lois, who appears to embody all the attributes of Molly Mormon, including seeing motherhood as central to her lived practices, seems uncomfortable when presented with the model as lived by American female Church leaders.

Lois is a second-generation Mormon, whose father was a prominent leader in the United Kingdom from 1960 to the later 1970s. Lois appears the archetypal Molly Mormon as she is married with five children, served a mission and her husband has been a Bishop. I suggest that in many of her lived religious practices, Lois draws upon Molly Mormon ideals. For example, her decision to become a teacher and then leave the profession when she had her first child is driven by her belief that fulfilment as a woman best comes through mothering in the home:

> All I wanted to be is a wife and mother; I had no ambition career-wise. It [motherhood] was like a career, and my husband was always like 'you are wasting your degree, you've got a degree', but I would say 'my degree was teaching young children and that's what I am doing, you know in my home'.
>
> (Lois, 62 years old, 2nd generation)

However, when asked if she thought of herself as a Molly Mormon, Lois is conflicted. Although Lois sees herself as a 'good Mormon women', when she compares the way she lives her religion against the way American Mormon women embody the role, in this case, the Latter-day Saint general women's leadership, she claims not.

For Mormon women, the institutional reinforcement of Mormon female homogeneity is through the general female leadership that are nine women who represent Relief Society, Young Womens and Primary at the highest level. Overseen by the Prophet and the Twelve Apostles, one of the purposes of the general female presidencies is to establish practices, ideologies and norms to cultivate meaningful connections between Mormon women internationally. Based in Salt Lake City, Utah, these leaders will serve for a period of three to five years and are expected to give global broadcasts on a regular base where they instruct women on lived practices, which, for the

most part, imply uniformity of belief (Burton, 2013).[62] However, Lois sees these women as 'sugary', an artifice of how she feels Mormon women should appear:

> It was a Sister's conference, when they first allowed eight-year-old girls to go to it and it was lovely because there was my daughter, with her daughter and me and also her mother-in-law, we were able to sit together, it was such a lovely feeling, it was wonderful. It was an all-women conference watching the sisters, but the conference, it did feel rather sugary whether it is because they are American, the American side of it or the Utah side of it, we didn't know. It just felt a little bit earnest, as you are not sure if they're in the real world. Although one of Young Women presidents talked about a run, she made up a mountain, that sort of thing but you do get the impression it would be in her expensive new trainers and joggers.
>
> (Lois, ibid, 99)

Noticeably, Lois did not critique female leadership for upholding Molly Mormon as a model for women. For her, the issue is how American, in particular Utah, female Latter-day Saint leaders present themselves. So, when contrasting herself with the general Relief Society presidency, Lois rejects the way that some American Mormon women represent the role rather than the concepts.

Similarly, although serving as Relief Society president in her local ward, Tilly also struggles with how female Church leaders are embodied. For example, she signals out for criticism the clothes the leaders wear as Tilly feels it exaggerates what she sees as their Molly Mormon particularity:

> Now I'm really being honest; while I am all for women having a greater profile and everything, I really struggle to identify with the likes of general women's presidencies within the Church. When we have the general women's meetings, I just can't get past the sickly sweetness, I mean, when they called the new Primary presidency in their coloured jackets, it was just too much to bear.
>
> (Tilly, 36 years old, 2nd generation)

[62] Unlike male general Authorities, general female leaders all reside in Salt Lake City and surrounding areas.

Tilly's issue with how female Church leaders present themselves in public seems to be centring on the visual 'otherness' of Mormon women in Utah. In focusing on how female leaders dress, this can impact on how some participants respond to significant religious events, as seen in Mary's response to the reintroduction of women praying at the bi-annual general conference.[63] In April 2013 after a fifty-year gap, a Latter-day Saint female leader gave a prayer at general conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, a profound shift towards greater visibility of Mormon women leaders at a significant religious event. Mary's comment about this historical event was a conditional celebration: 'recently, I have noticed more women speaking in general conference, and we are sort of, wow, a woman saying a prayer in conference'. However, she then went onto to point out that little appeared to have changed as 'although they [female Church leaders] still look the same, wearing those suit things' (71 years old, convert).

Lois, Tilly and Mary do not necessarily recognise these women present themselves as idealised forms of Molly Mormon embodiment. Nor are they making connections between the highest female ecclesiastical leadership being seen as a highly feminised form of Mormon womanhood and the continuing all-male priesthood discourse. Looking at how Church leaders have taught about gender since the 1970s, Sumerau and Cragun (2015) found no alternative views on gender in authorised sermons, literature and media outlets in over 40 years, reinforcing the official position that gender is a fixed, stable identity. Therefore, in the absence of diverse representations of gender, I suggest, rather than question why Molly Mormon is the only model taught by the Church, Lois, Tilly and Mary recourse is to be critical of the female general presidency representation of Mormon women.

Mary's and other interviewees' diminishing of the general women's presidency could also be symptomatic of the power differentials between Mormon women. Being called to the highest level of female leadership requires these women to propagate the merits of Molly Mormon. Conversely, in accepting a calling that is equivalent to running a worldwide corporation that takes them away from home, female general presidencies have been given institutional approval not to be bound to these social constructions of gender (Burgoyne and Burgoyne, 1977). This could

[63] The bi-annual general conference held in Salt Lake City in October and April is a showcase for Church Leaders to discuss changes in policy, re-inforce Church doctrine, and make suggestions on lived practices.

account for why some participants are reluctant to accept counsel from the female general presidencies as they are encouraging women to exemplify the Molly Mormon embodiment without necessarily complying fully with this model. Alternatively, by rejecting these female leaders as distorted Utah Mormon gender performance, they could be mobilising opposition towards what they see as American dominance within the Church.

Molly Mormon is arguably not only a form of Utah exceptionalism, but it is shaped by white American concepts of femininity and religiosity. There is little literature on the degree Mormon gender constructions inform global south Mormon women's understanding of female embodiment. One of the few Mormon feminist scholars of colour, Grace Kwok (2012), believes that there has to be greater consciousness-raising on the still-inherent racism in Mormonism, a religion that barred black members from full participation in religious rituals until the late 1970s. Kwok argues that Mormon women of non-white ethnic backgrounds encounter 'triple marginalisation'. As minority women in a minority faith, she believes white middle-class Utah women are projecting an orthodoxy that reinforces the power of white American Mormon exceptionalism and patriarchy.[64]

This 'triple marginalisation' can be seen in the experiences of Karen, the only black woman I interviewed. Karen joined the Church as a teenager after the restrictions on black members had lifted, which meant when she turned twenty-one, she could go on a mission. She was assigned to proselyte in Tennessee USA, and immediately encountered a series of microaggressions both in the wider community and by other white sister missionaries:

> My trainer had big hair, big voice, big everything in the American way and she got on well with everybody else, but she just couldn't connect with me, and she was from Utah. I was always on the outside because I didn't fit in the clique, and every time the sisters[65] (American female missionaries) got together, they would leave me out.
>
> (Karen, 51 years old, convert)

[64] 85% of Mormons In USA are white, 8% are Hispanic, 5% mixed, 1% Asian and 1% black. (Pew research, 2014)

[65] Mormon female missionaries are not known by their first name but use the title 'Sister' whilst male missionaries are known as 'Elder'.

Karen's experiences suggest Molly Mormon, as embodied by sister missionaries, can appear to reinforce white Utah values. Thus, Karen says 'I didn't speak like a black American, I didn't act like a black American, but I was black' is faced with companions that struggle to understand diverse expressions of a black Mormon woman. In response, Karen feels she did try to adjust by adopting what she calls 'the white Church girl'. Instead, she felt this emphasised her sense of alienation 'even if I look at the pictures, I just stand out. I just stand-alone, and I tried so hard to fit in'.

In Karen being 'hyper-visualised and invisible at the same time' reflects the sense of displacement encountered by other black American Mormon women in white congregations (Graham-Russell, 2013: 267). Some participants did recognise the racist past of the Church, Lois, Tilly, Mary and Bryony all commented on the lack of diversity in female general presidency and committees.[66] However, in the same way, that several participants see the issue with Molly Mormon is the representation by Utah female leaders rather than its underlying construction, those who spoke about racial prejudice saw it is an individual response than structural failure.

Notwithstanding, while most participants refused to be called a Molly Mormon, they still were subject to and adhering to its gender constructions. Brenda Brasher (1998) argues that conservative religious women will often reinvent perceptions of circumstances to position themselves as social agents to avoid acknowledging the embedded inequality and oppressive practices of institutional structures. Therefore, some British Mormon women are ascribing the hyper-feminised representations of Molly Mormon as Utah exceptionalism rather than, as I would argue, a way for patriarchal institutional structures to patronise women and isolate them from alternative models.

Guardian of the Family: A Nascent Form of Gender Performance

Despite claims that Molly Mormon is a caricature of Mormon female embodiment, most interviewees agree with the underlying gender construct of Molly Mormon, which is a devout woman who desires the role of wife and mother because it is pivotal to her salvation. The

[66] In addition to the general Relief Society, Young Women and Primary presidencies, there are three all-female boards that advise them. In 2018, out of the 30 women serving, 26 are white, of which 12 are Utah born and 7 were born outside of the United States. However, 24 women having studied at BYU and four studied elsewhere in the United States (including other Universities in Utah), which suggests the vast majority have resided in Utah during and since their late teens. 26 are married, one widowed, and three single and never married. 26 have children with the average being four.

difficulty in categorising Molly Mormon, as Beaman acknowledges, is there are always points of departure in lived practices. Likewise, framing participants as either moderate or feminist is problematic, as their attitudes to abortion show; the material reality is far more negotiated and fluid in position. Therefore, I argue the literature on Mormon women and gender would benefit from the addition of a new categorisation that extends ideals of Molly Mormon to include negotiations of gender that at times are at odds with Church teachings.

During the coding of themes on motherhood, most interviewees used stereotypical frames of reference to describe the function: nurturing, caring, considerate. But I also noticed that some women, when asked about their role in their family, saw it as 'protecting' or 'providing', words that the family proclamation attributes to men and conventionally masculine gender constructions. [67] For example, Tasmin notes: 'I mean in the home people would say it is a man's role to care for the family, I mean that protectiveness of it, but the woman does it as well' (24 years old, 3rd generation). I suggest, looking at how some of the participants negotiate gender, they are approaching lived expressions of gender as the *guardian of the family*. These syncretic negotiations of gender are more complex and less prescriptive then Molly Mormon. So, when asked how she saw her role as a wife and mother, Debbie said: 'You know, I don't see myself as some separate thing, but I see myself as a guardian of my family' (43 years old, 2nd generation).

As an approach to negotiating gender, I contend that this conceptualisation of guardian of the family captures more fully how British Mormon women negotiate gender in family relationships as they seek to protect and provide, alongside caring and nurturing for their families. The overarching negotiations that underpin the guardian of the family are *mothering as guardianship* and the *sacralising of the home.* In drawing attention to the way that some women are constructing the guardian of the family, I am also reflecting how many participants are averse to the label Molly Mormon but still desire to accommodate some of the principles. Instead, these approaches to gender include a range of lived practices that embody both Mormon and mainstream norms in a British context, which potentially could allow for more diverse forms of gender.

[67] Ten participants used the word 'protect' or 'provide' when discussing the role of a mother.

Mothering as Guardianship

Church doctrine stresses agency is the divine right for every person to have the option to accept or reject God. The belief in the right to choose whether to be a believer or not sees Latter-day Saint leaders emphasise how the family unit is central in reproducing gospel norms and overcoming worldly influences to continue affiliation to Mormonism. For Mormon parents, 'no other success can compensate for failure in the home' (McKay, 1924 cited McCulloch, 1924: 42). For some women I interviewed, while they recognise that individual families may be repressive and dysfunctional, most believe that the defect is not inherent in the structure.

Second-wave feminism contends that socially constructions of motherhood are produced and reproduced by patriarchal institutions to encourage women to value themselves according to their ability to reproduce (Dworkin, 1983). Based upon Dworkin's premise, Mormon teachings on motherhood have created an institution that not only highly values women when they are mothers but also measures them by the success or failure of raising a child. In doing so, motherhood as a Mormon institution sees the 'home is the centre from which woman rules the world (McKay, 1947: 641). The structural reinforcement that Mormon mothers are the primary force within the home, also sees Mormon women, more so than Mormon men, face accompanying guilt and shame when their children no longer remain active in the Church (McBaine, 2014).

In contrast, mothering, O'Reilly (2016) suggests, is about gaining female control of the discourse, and seeing the female experience of reproduction (potential or actual) as a route to empowerment. Looking at mothering as an analytical category in Mormon congregations offers insight into the way the divine mandate to be a mother is translated into everyday practices. Moreover, in taking the concept of mothering further, I suggest that constructing mothering as 'guardianship' recognises how women when mothering (whether or not they have given birth) are taking responsibility for their own wellbeing as well as their families. Through the concept of guardianship, we can see the negotiations between religious ideals and feminist notions of equality that occur in lived practices, such as making choices about having or not children, whether to leave or remain in the workplace and the allocation of domestic labour in the home.

The social construction of mothering as guardianship is enacted in everyday life through negotiations of gender that engage with agency as resistance, empowerment, instrumental and complaint (Burke, 2012). For example, Emily, who after staying at home with her four children for 13 years and said 'my only ambition in life was to be a wife and a mother' re-entered the workplace after divorce. In applying for jobs, she feels that by responding to Church leaders counsel to improve her ability to mother (Benson, 1987), the skills learnt could be applied in the classroom. Emily is compliant with essentialist Molly Mormon ideals (women are meant by God to nurture) but also through the knowledge gained through mothering uses them instrumentally when making her career choices. When she says 'I am happy with what I have got, I like who I am because of what I've done with my life', she resists liberal feminist notions that meaningful work can only be found outside motherhood and domestic labour (Firestone, 1970).

Another negotiation of gender as guardianship is shown in the way Jill lives her religion. As a married mother of two children and a teacher, Jill sees her primary function as wife and mother, but she does not feel that means being restricted to the domestic sphere:

> When we first got married and when I was growing up the traditional woman, especially a Latter-day Saint woman, identified with old-fashioned but very traditional roles, the husband goes out to work and wife stays at home and looks after the children and clean the house. And we have had a period where we have those roles, but things are changing, not just across the Church but also for everyone, and around my peers it's a rarity, and less and less common that women stay at home. So, I don't feel so much that I'm not being and acting out what is expected of me.
>
> (Jill, 38 years old, 2nd generation)

Officially, Church leaders maintain mothers should be at home with their children. Still, there is a gradual institutional acknowledgement that the traditional role of a single male provider is negotiable, albeit reluctantly, with the caveat that Mormon women are to seek employment out of necessity rather than personal enrichment (Beck, 2007; The Family Proclamation, 1995). Likewise, as changes in the British workplace means the notion of a sole male provider and a stay at home mother is disappearing (Office of National Statistics, 2019), Jill finds support from her

friends (members and non-members) for her decision to work while she still cares for young children.

By being employed outside of the home in a job that she enjoys, Jill's lived practices could be claimed as representative of mainstream feminist concepts of resistance (Burke, 2012) as she is not conforming to established Church teachings. However, she sees herself as complying with Church counsel (if somewhat re-interpreted) by explaining that choosing to return to work was done after prayer. McGuire (2008) notes that there is often a dissonance between Church teachings from the pulpit and how it manifests itself in the everyday lives of the congregation. So, when Jill claims she is 'acting out what is expected of her', she is demonstrating a complexity of negotiations of gender that embody multiple gender constructions, which includes reshaping Church teachings to co-inside with her lived practices. Jill also makes a telling comparison between herself and her married sister, who lives in Utah:

> I think, having talked to my sister in Utah, it's still very traditional rules over there. There is an expectation that the family is falling apart if the wife goes out to work, whereas I think the norm here [Mormon congregations] is that women can go and do go out to work.
>
> (Jill, ibid: 106)

This comment suggests that Molly Mormon as represented by Utah female leaders may be rejected by some British Mormon women but can still find space in conservative Mormon communities in America (Basquiat, 2001; Beaman, 2001; Vance, 2002). There is also the possibility that in Utah, Molly Mormon is more culturally familiar so appears to be more embedded into mainstream social constructions of gender (Farnsworth, 1991).

As a British Mormon, Jill may feel more able to deviate from the Church model as she can claim Utah representations of gender is counter-culture. Correspondingly, Sally Gallagher and Christian Smith's (1999) study on evangelical couples found that despite religious teachings that emphasised the separation of roles, most couples were far more egalitarian in the distribution of labour in the home and workplace. Jill could be negotiating gender as pragmatic egalitarianism, where gender practices are constructed through negotiating traditional religious norms and a 'changing set of material resources' (Gallagher and Smith, 1999: 230). Lived religious practices

are drawn from numerous diverse resources (McGuire, 2008), which means mothering as guardianship is as much about how Mormon women negotiate their cultural context as it is about female embodiment. Similarly, Jill's actions could be interpreted as a moderate Mormon woman.

Beaman's (2001) notes that the moderate Mormon woman is an individual that negotiates gender within sufficient Mormon and secular ideals to remain acceptable by both communities. However, mothering as guardianship is more than the way Beaman's moderate Mormon woman negotiates the tension between Mormon norms and mainstream societal expectations. It is also about the extent some British Mormon women are reacting to 'Molly Mormon' as an American model. The guardian of the family is less about maintaining the status quo and more about how some participants are altering Church norms of discrete roles for men and women in lived practices. This attitude is shown by Chloe's understanding of how she and her husband negotiate their roles. As the main earner, Chloe discusses how she regards her husband as still providing for and protecting the family in accordance with Church ideals, *by* him staying home with the children:

> I do think they [her husband] do feel that they should look after you and protect you, so it does feel like that sometimes. But I say yes, you are doing that, but in a different way because if it weren't for you, I would not be able to work and then we wouldn't have any income, so he is providing for us. I don't think it matters if it's a man or woman who is the main caregiver.
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

Unlike the Molly Mormon stereotype that focuses only on the women's capacities to meet these expectations, Chloe and her husband are negotiating roles that reflect the doctrine of the Godhead, which has God the Father and God, the Mother as co-partners in caretaking as protecting and providing for families.

The Sacralising of the Home

Since post-Second World War, the idealised Mormon home is a heterosexual couple, where women are the gatekeepers of the spiritual, emotional and physical norms of a family, and men preside over the structure as providers and priesthood holders (Leamaster and Subramaniam,

2015). This family structure appears similar to the paradigms of the family found in other gender-traditional religions (Bartkowski, 2001; Gallagher and Smith, 1999). However, for active Mormon women and men, due to a belief in a temple sealing, marriage covenants extend beyond life and into eternities, which means marrying within the Mormon faith assumes much greater significance. Yet being sealed in the temple also sees a man and woman as equal partners when standing before God, particularly concerning their duty to teach the gospel to their children.

The radical feminist critique of the family and home as an institution of repression for women, where women 'are suffering a slow death of mind and spirit' (Friedan, 1963: 248), finds little support among the Latter-day Saint women I interviewed. As other studies on Islamic women and Orthodox Jewish women have shown (Avishai, 2008; Mahmood, 2005), all the participants I interviewed spoke about how religious devotions performed in the home did at times become a process for empowerment. In conceptualising the guardian of the family, I aim to recognise the significance of Mormon rituals and practices that see a gospel centred home as a material reality of the Mormon soteriology of families.

Sacralising the home is about how some women see the home as a place of worship. In the case of Sonia, a mother of five and stepmother of two, she sees her faith as inherently bound to the domestic sphere, in the minutiae of mundane acts within homes, and in the mutual connections that arise from that space:

> I organise family scriptures, family home evening, family prayers and things like that. [68] So, I feel I have as a woman I have a greater influence of my children, but it is also the way I keep my house clean, the work I do, the books I read to the films I watch. I've always felt this will influence the children. I've always wanted my home to be a sanctuary, to be a place where the gospel can live, so I try to provide that environment.
>
> (Sonia, 61 years old, convert)

Sonia sees the 'sacralising of the home' is done in two ways: firstly, she determines that by self-censoring her lived practices, in this case, the media, she is a role model to her family. Then, as

[68] Pew research (2016) on Mormons in America found 85% of active members participated in family prayers and 77% read scriptures daily. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/30/6-facts-about-u-s-mormons/ [3 March 2020]. Family Home Evening is a programme that designates every Monday evening for time spent with the family, which can be formal lessons, informal activities and outings. (LDS.org., 2018).

the guardian of the family, she is implementing religious structures that support family activities, such as family prayer to counteract secular discourses in the home and meet her religious responsibilities to provide a spiritual place of learning.

Sonia's lived practices co-inside with Utah Mormon women negotiations within the home (Holbrook, 2016). Kate Holbrook (2016) suggests that American Latter-day Saint women exhibit two approaches to their roles in the home. Either a woman's role is irrevocably tied to her ability to maintain the happiness of her family or Mormon women will manage the domestic sphere to allow them time to develop both self and family religiosity and community obligations. I found that both approaches were apparent, sometimes discrete and other times in tandem, in the way some British Mormon women follow Church directives to make their homes a sacred place. One way was several women were re-imagining the role of men from solo provider to a dual responsibility to be economically active and share in domestic chores, justifying this shift to a more shared responsibility as being beneficial to the well-being of the whole family.

Most women I interviewed were comfortable in demanding equality in the allocation of domestic chores, irrespective of whether they worked outside of the home or not. The majority of participants of all ages were resistant to women being seen as having ultimate accountability for all domestic labour relating to housework. For example, Elaine states in her home: 'we make decisions together in terms of domestic responsibilities, well when I was working it was much more shared, but now I'm at home I do that because he's at work because I have the time to do it, but it's not my role' (54 years old, convert). Similarly, Meredith, a young mother with three children, refuses to match her husband's expectation that she is to perform all aspects of domestic labour as she is at home during the day. Rather, she demands that he was equally involved with household chores.

The de-coupling of women from expectations to be solely responsible for household duties suggests that for some women sacralising the home includes apportioning domestic responsibilities more fairly. The home then potentially becomes a site of change to produce lived religion with negotiations of gender that undermine the notion that women are best suited for domestic labour or motherhood is best performed in the home. Conversely, while some women claim that they and their husbands are equal partners in the home, few openly reject priesthood

authority over them in Church structures. Arguably, being able to negotiate shared domestic labour in the home could be seen as more a patriarchy bargain, that this is compensation for allowing Church teachings on men presiding to remain unchallenged in public (Kandiyoti, 1988).

As previously mentioned, there is no male equivalent to Molly Mormon. Still, the concept of the guardian of the family could offer insights into how some British Mormon women view male negotiations of gender as Mormon men may still be resisting co-partnership in other areas to monitor and curtail the agency of women. In the case of Karen, who is married to an Afro-Caribbean man, she rejects the way her husband interprets guardian of the family as a way of protecting their family:

> My husband will say you are talking too much; it sometimes feels he is trying to white me, to make me like a white woman. I think with my husband; he tries to protect me to get me to fit in more because he feels that if we stand out, you know it could cause problems. He feels we should conform and that we should not upset people, that we should just be like them, but I don't feel that way.
>
> (Karen, 51 years old, convert)

Karen's husband's attempts to control her actions are less about her transgressing socially constructed gender and more about Karen's refusal to conform to what could be ascribed as white values in the Church. Karen's husband, like Karen, has to negotiate gender and race in white spaces. Could it be that as a black man in a white church, he feels as vulnerable as Karen? As a result, possibly her husband is monitoring Karen's expressions of what he sees as her blackness is his understanding of what it means to protect in and outside of the home.

The guardian of the family concept interrogates the extent to which negotiations of gender, through lived religion, are sacralising the home. Mothering as guardianship is conceptualised as protecting and providing as well as more traditional notions of care. In the home, it appears Mormon women, just as much as Mormon men, are engaged in joint decision-making that improve the capability and capacity of the family and access pathways to greater opportunities for equality.

Conclusion

Mormon women are asked by Church authorities to construct their gender ideas and practices that follow directives from Church leaders to 'be seen as distinct and different—in happy ways—from the women of the world' (Kimball, 2006: 222–23). For some participants, this means developing lived practices that value motherhood as female embodiment, which they consider is devalued in feminist secular narratives. Simultaneously, several interviewees are actively identifying and resisting Molly Mormon that venerates a hyper-femininity and religiously orthodox model of gender through lived practices. I suggest that Molly Mormon appears in part to replicate white American values; this could be placing women of colour in tension with conservative Mormon ideals of gender. Moreover, several participants feel that the highest level of Mormon female leadership is projecting an idealised Mormon model of gender that embodies Utah exceptionalism. Whether or not their lived practices embody Molly Mormon, most participants are rejecting the label but not necessarily the values.

To recognise how some interviewees are uncomfortable with naming their negotiations of gender as Molly Mormon, I have conceptualised the role many of them aspire to as the *guardian of the family* and focus on just two practices: motherhood as guardianship and sacralising the home. These practices see some Mormon women in Britain performing pragmatic egalitarianism concerning the workplace and domestic chores, which in some ways are indistinguishable from secular norms of gender. As a concept, the guardian of the family emerges from the domestic sphere, where religious and societal norms collide to provide relationships, practices, and ways of thinking that inform gender negotiations in the public sphere.

Some Mormon women in Britain feel they are more emancipated than their sisters in Utah. However, most of the women I interview still import into their understanding of embodiment that their spiritual value is interconnected with their marital and reproductive status. This suggests there is potential for the concept of guardian of the family to be applied to Mormon men to understand through their everyday social interactions, the ways they engage in negotiations of gender. Thus, the guardian of the family can explore to what extent both Mormon men and women become agents of change when secular and sacred values become synergistic in the domestic sphere.

Chapter Six: Secularism, Mormonism, and Gender in the British Landscape

The overarching aim of this thesis is to understand how British Mormon women negotiate gender. The case of Mormonism, with its central and abiding concern with essentialist gender relations, makes it an ideal example to understand the construction of gender in religious communities with patriarchal structures. Hitherto the body of literature on Mormon women is, by and large, informed by American concepts of gender, religion and national identity. Re-locating the discussion on gender in the British Mormon context offers an alternative discourse to American-centric research by providing an insight into the relationship between gender and religion in a European context.

To understand how Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender, we have to ask what it means to be Mormon, British and a woman and then examine these in their social contexts. For example, while the United States, like the United Kingdom, is considered a democratic and industrialised state, America has relatively high levels of church attendance, while British affiliation to religion is increasingly diminishing (Bullivant, 2018). Arguably, British public perceptions of religion often associate faith with femininity, seeing it as 'backwards, emotional and biased'. At the same time, men are perceived as synonymous with secularism, which connotes 'reason, impartiality and a liberated mind' (Nyhagen, 2017: 498). Therefore, Mormon women in Britain are encountering secularisation at differing levels than the USA and are negotiating religion, gender and secularity within concepts of male and female, masculine and feminine (Akan, 2017; Aune et al., 2008).

To begin this chapter, I start by discussing secularisation and religiosity in the British landscape, which gives insights into secular and religious framing of Mormonism. Following that, I show the ways some British Mormon women practice their faith in everyday life in the public space: *religion as private* and *conflict prevention.* In conclusion, I contend that understanding the lived religion of Mormon women in the workplace, schools and other public institutions offers insights into their negotiations of gender.

Secularisation and Religiosity in the British Landscape

In a recent Guardian article on the rise of the non-religious in Britain Stephen Bullivant (2018), summarising his report on Europe's young adults and religion, stated that 'Christianity as a default, as a norm, is gone, and probably gone for good – or at least for the next 100 years' (Sherwood, 2018: para 3).[69] Accordingly, the decrease in affiliation or attendance in traditional Christian churches corresponds with claims that the majority of British people are no longer believing in or belonging to religion (Voas and Crockett, 2005). However, while affiliation to organised religion is undoubtedly declining (Voas and Bruce, 2019), other studies reveal the majority of Britons still consider themselves Christian (Ashcroft, 2017).[70] Paul Weller (2009: 111) explains that these two conflicting positions are due to a state religion (the Church of England) making 'Britain *de jure* a Christian country, but *de facto*', it is a partially secular and religious society'.[71] Consequentially, despite some public declarations that Britain is now a secular state, Christianity is still a presence in contemporary British society, albeit considerably reduced in influence and status (Voas and Bruce, 2019).

The sociological writings of Max Weber, Emilie Durkheim and Karl Marx saw secularisation as a process of progression: as societies modernise, religion will retreat into the private sphere (Bruce, 2011). To re-clarify, 'secularisation' is the process that sees religious practices, rituals and institutions lose social significance (Wilson, 1982). While 'secular' refers to the non-religious, 'secularity' is the 'non-religious state of being' (Scott, 2018: 5). 'Secularism' as a discourse favours the historical situation in which religion loses social and cultural significance, with religion and the state being separate (Bruce, 2011; Martin, 1969; Scott, 2018; Wilson, 1982). The secularisation thesis contends that as western European countries continue to be progressively industrialised, faith institutions will steadily lack cultural authority. The corresponding ascendance of rational thinking sees religious organisations have little or no social power in

[69] The British Social Attitudes survey found 51 per cent of Britons surveyed reporting no religion in 2013, against the census of 2011 that reported a lower proportion of 25.7% of the population are non-religious. See also UK Census Data (2011)

[70] The latest large-scale political poll commissioned by Lord Ashcroft, and conducted online among 10,153 electors on 21-28 March 2017, included the question about religion: 'which of the following religious groups do you consider yourself to be a member of?' It revealed that the religious profile of Britain is currently 50% Christian, 6% non-Christian, 41% no religion, and 2% prefer not to say.

[71] David Phillips contends that 'If being a secular state means keeping religion out of public life and out of education then quite clearly Britain is not a secular state' (2006: 101).

societal institutions, allowing some scholars to claim secularism will become the universal authoritative voice in the British public space (Bruce, 2011; Wilson, 1982; Woodhead, 2008).

The belief that industrialised societies will inevitably become secular democratic states fails to recognise how religion responds to societal changes (Inglehart and Norris, 2011). As Peter Berger (1999:3), one of the original leading proponents of secularisation theory, notes, 'to say the least, the relation between religion and modernity is rather complicated'. Lois Lee (2014) argues that one reason secularisation theory has failed to explain why religion is enduring is the lack of acknowledgement that religion is influenced by the same modernising factors that cultivate secular thinking. While Linda Woodhead (2008c) suggests that British history, with religious schisms, such as Henry VIII's break with Catholicism and the formation of the Church of England, facilitated ambivalence about the way religious structures are embedded into British society.

Ulrich Beck (2010: 24) argues that often secularisation acts as a *gestalt* switch as the removal of a dominant religion from the public space sees non-traditional religions benefit from the decline of established religions. If the combination of secularised-leaning governance and a state-endorsed church challenges religious monopoly, this could account for why Britain is becoming increasingly diverse in religious practices (Field, 2018). In addition, alongside the shift from a monopolistic state established religious structure to a broader community of faith congregations (including non-western and non-Christian religions), is the legal recognition of the right to worship without prejudice enshrined in British law (Equality Act, 2010). The resultant consequence is public institutions responses to pluralistic Christian, and non-Christian religious beliefs appear to be accommodation as long as religion has little or no influence upon the structure or policies of civic society (Dinham and Jackson, 2012; Voas and Bruce, 2019).

Gender, Secularism, and Religiosity

In every measure, in the United Kingdom, women continue to engage with religion more than men (Davie, 2013; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). Women are more devout, more receptive to spiritual expression and more committed to religious organisations than men (Mahlamäki, 2012; Schnabel, 2015). Religious identity is not only gendered, but gender inequality is reinforced

through religious structures, mode of operations and religious rituals (Casanova, 2007). There is systematic inequality as the production, administration and distribution of religious goods has been almost exclusively in male hands. In the divine hierarchy, where humanity is subservient to a male God, Christianity appears to be sanctifying a social hierarchy in which women are submissive to men (Daly, (1992, [1979]); Warenski, 1978).

The most prevalent public discourse on religion is that it dictates and regulates gender, demands control over the female body and denies agency for women, (Aune, Lövheim, Giorgi, Toldy and Utriainen, 2017; Beaman, 2012; Neitz and Goldman, 1995; Neitz, 2014). The actions of some conservative religious groups see claims by women's groups and policymakers that, as the Council of Europe (2005) statement on religion states: 'religion is seldom benign for women' (Nyhagen, 2017: 505). The feminist scholar Shelia Jeffreys (2012) contends secularism is the preferred option in the public sphere as religion is instrumental in reinforcing gender inequality and the continuing oppression of women. She argues that one way that traditional religions are in conflict with the rights of women is the way religious teachings are used to justify the constraint of female bodily autonomy. For example, in the State of Ohio, USA an evangelical Christian group, 'Faith 2 Action', was instrumental in lobbying for legislation making abortions illegal when a heartbeat is detected and makes no exceptions for cases of rape and incest (Glenza, 2019). In promoting secularism as a better way to achieve equality, some feminists such as Jeffreys may be unduly optimistic about the degree to which secularism is gender-equal. Indeed, recent scholarship has shown that far from being gender-neutral, secularism has a close historical association with masculinity and men (Aune et al., 2017; Neitz, 2014; Nyhagen, 2017, 2018; Schnabel et al., 2016; Scott, 2018).

Nyhagen (2018) believes that simplified framings of religion as feminine and private and secularism as masculine and public have disregarded the way that domestic space could be political. She also points out that religious structures are patriarchal, and this means that religion can be seen as both “feminine and 'soft' and masculine and 'hard" (p. 256). Applying this to Mormon women in Britain, they are required to negotiate secular framing of religion as 'soft' or irrational and an institutional structure that reinforces 'hard' or rational leadership. Therefore,

Mormon women, like other Christian women (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016), will encounter inequality in their congregations and the wider community on several levels and in complex ways.

The perceived association between religion as feminised, irrational and emotional and secularism as a masculine, rational and logical is also found in politics. For instance, in the United States, the Democrats are often framed as feminine as policies emphasise social justice and compassionate policies, while the Republican values are seen as being active, independent, and decisive, which are connected to masculinity (Schnabel, Hackett and McClendon, 2018; Winter, 2010). Similarly, associating Christianity with femininity that is framed as emotional and therefore weak implies that neither religion nor women are fit or can be trusted in positions of influence in the public space (Scott, 1999).

Scott (1999, 2018) contends that constructing fixed binaries, male and female, masculine and feminine, that are expressed through religious, legal, political and scientific structures, has allowed secularism to assume dominance. She suggests that gender is at the 'very heart of the secularism discourse' (2018: 22) and is instrumental in maintaining discrete spheres based on difference: male, public, and rational and female, private, and religious (irrational). Promoting the public-secular-rational model as the only paradigm for gender equality implies secularity saves women from an irrational, emotional, and feminised religion (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). While some feminists ascribe the Marxist idea of ‘false consciousness’ to women participating in religion, as they consider religious women are misguided by patriarchal religious organisations to see inequality as God’s will (Jeffreys, 2012; Johnson, 1979).

In situating women as either operating under a false consciousness or non-agential if they are religious, means some feminists are equating liberation with resistance (Avishai 2010). But religious women can operationalise agency in forms other than resistance, and these alternative forms of agency can also offer challenges to gender inequality (Burke, 2012). For example, Lisa Baldez's (2003) study of women's movements shows how some religious women affect change by using church resources, such as space, funding and networks, to assist female movements to access the political arena and the workplace to campaign for greater equality. Moreover, by concentrating on 'official' religion, such as the creed, rituals and institutional edicts, this ignores

how women show their faith in their everyday lives (McGuire, 2008: 16; Neitz, 2014; Nyhagen, 2018; see also Ammerman, 2015; Woodhead, 2012).

Mary Jo Neitz (2014: 514) considers that 'public rhetoric of male authority and dominance does not necessarily align with the experiences of most women (or men) for whom religion is a resource'. She contends that as Christianity is far from a monolithic religion, it differs according to the theological, social and political contexts of the community. Alternatively, the narrative of secularisation could be more telling about men's relationship with religion, so 'when men leave religion, religion is said to be dying, regardless of its continuity in women's lives' (Aune, et al., 2008: 5). Religion may be a prescribed dogma that can reproduce gender inequality, but adherents can transform it into dynamic forms and beliefs, shaped by an individual's understanding of those practices and embodied through everyday social interactions (Ammerman, 2014, 2015; Aune, 2015a; Avishai, 2010; McGuire, 2008; Neitz, 2014; Nyhagen, 2018).

In the case of Muslim women, much is made by some feminists of the hijab as a symbol of repression (Zia, 2018). Yet the hijab is often also a visible everyday practice, and as the hijab (and other forms of covering) are many and varied, it is just one way of Islamic women showing their faith (Eid, 2015; Woldesemait, 2012). As Scott (2018: 29) notes religion has been critiqued for regulating female bodies by demands for a de-sexualised body, while secularism is attempting to subject the same constraints on Islamic women by demanding that 'uncovered' bodies equate to emancipation. As societal mores shift, for some women, religion acts as a resource to create communal stability and becomes an act of resistance against postmodern concepts of fluid boundaries and changing social constructions of gender (Neitz, 2014; Aune et al., 2008). As seen in Sarah's comments on being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints:

> Life wouldn't be the same if I weren't in the Church, it covers so much, every thought you have, it clarifies your thinking, you don't have doubts when people come up with whatever they think about life, you hear so much rubbish and see so much rubbish [about the state of the world] … but being a member gives us focus.
>
> (Sarah, 73 years old, convert)

Deborah Kaufman's (1991) work on women who reconverted to Orthodox Judaism found a similar narrative: returning women felt the application of strictly rigid but transparent Jewish rules of behaviour offers security. Therefore, in seeing the secular promotion of self-determination and individualism not as emancipation but as disruptive to their sense of personhood, women may seek a religious identity as a means to feel secure (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). The issue of religion dictating prescribed expectations of gender becomes instead for some women, a positive affirmation of female embodiment and a place where motherhood is revered (Dworkin, 1983; Woodhead, 2001).

For most participants, they appear to construct gender within negotiations that at times are synonymous with and at other times in conflict with secular thinking on gender. So, when asked what her role as a woman was, Hope commented:

> My role as a woman in terms of fulfilling my potential, I think is done in different ways, you know, in the way that there are certain levels that you achieve and then there's the gender role as well. I think with a woman, there's a divine role of reaching my potential as a woman and then the expectation of that role as a woman and they are combined, but they have slightly different perspectives.
>
> (Hope, 28 years old, 3rd generation)

However, some of the participants that were born in the 1950s and 1960s believe that conflicts between religious ideals of womanhood and secular frames of gender stem from British society no longer valuing what they claim are 'feminine traits'.[72] Woodhead (2005) suggests that the idea that religion is feminised comes from the way organised Christianity has emphasised Jesus Christ as embodying compassion, piety and caring for others, which are traditionally ascribed and enacted by females. Historically the feminisation of religion was purposeful as, according to Scott (2018), it allowed men, rather than a Church, to monopolise the public space. Arguably, secularity served as a tool to disempower both women and religion, maintaining patriarchal structures in both religious and secular institutions.

[72] By feminine traits I am referring to The Bem Sex Inventory. The Bem Inventory is the work of US psychologist Sandra Bern (1974). Although some query its relevance the scale is widely used (Colley, Mulhern, Maltby, and Wood, 2009). This questionnaire assesses 'Masculinity' (how masculine is your psychological profile) and 'Femininity' (how feminine is your psychological profile). The Bem Sex Inventory defines feminine outlook as being emotional, intuitive, compassionate, passive, affectionate and caring.

As shifts in employment patterns in Europe and North America see more women enter and remain in the workplace, there appears to be a corresponding decline in women attending churches. Penny Marler (2008) maps this quantitatively in the USA, showing that the more time women spend in paid work, the less time they spend on religious activities. Some scholars argue that the same modernising factors that saw men leave organised religion will see women follow the same trajectory and reject religion as an identity (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). In claiming that patterns of female disaffiliation from formal religious worship reflects men's relationship with religion presupposes that women encounter the structures of religion, gender and secularisation in the same form as men (Aune et al., 2008; Woodhead, 2001, 2008b). Woodhead, while not dismissing the utility of the argument that late modernity is leading to secularisation for both women and men, proposes that women's changing lives are leading to more variations in their religious and spiritual commitments. For example, Woodhead argues alternative forms of spirituality such as Reiki or neo-Paganism do a better job of supporting the 'dilemmas of selfhood' (Woodhead 2008b: 156) faced by women who are 'juggling' work and home.

Secular Expectations and Religious Piety in Public Institutions

The Weberian (1973, [1924]) thesis that industrialised societies will see public institutions become increasingly secular and specialised in roles means places of worship will no longer be a central authority in areas of health, education, welfare and social control.[73] In contemporary Britain, as state institutions have become more secular, religious organisations are seen some members of the public as untrustworthy and more likely to increase tension between communities (Voas and Bruce, 2019). Drawing upon their report on British social attitudes towards religion, Voas and Bruce (2019) evidence that just under half of the British public have little or no confidence in religious organisations, while almost two-thirds consider that religion 'brings more conflict than peace' (p16). Therefore, when British religious women engage with public institutions, such as the workplace, hospitals and schools, they may be subject to constraints on their lived practices and/or confront religious indifference (Inglehart and Norris, 2011).

[73] Linda Woodhead (2012) believes the creation of the NHS was instrumental in diminishing religious control over health.

The prevalent British attitude to Christianity, according to Steve Bruce (2018: para 5), is 'indifference' rather than an active promotion of secularist beliefs, which suggests that religious beliefs are not overtly rejected but are often regarded as irrelevant in operational and interpersonal civic institutions. Nyhagen (2015) believes this lack of recognition of religion (both Christian and non-Christian religions) in the public space, along with the privatisation of faith belief, is excluding women of faith from the democratic process. As a result, in prioritising secular ideals, by default, the right to expression in civic structures is more difficult for religious women (Alvizo, 2016). Limiting avenues to discuss religious beliefs in public could mean some British Mormon women may struggle to find space for faith expressions or feel they need permission before they can speak about their beliefs in the workplace.

The Equality Act 2010 states that along with religion, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity are all protected characteristics. Employers are prevented from banning discussions on religion or belief in the workplace. However, they are permitted in certain circumstances to restrict expression to protect the rights of others if it damages a firm's reputation (including the use of social media) and when an employee is a figure of authority or in a position of power (ACAS, 2019). In theory, the Equality Act protects the rights of people to talk about their religion in the workplace. But as I discuss below, most British Mormon women approach social interactions in the public sphere in one of two ways: *religion as private* and/or as *conflict prevention.* These often overlapping strategies show how some participants develop lived practices that are contextual and dependent upon social location, shaped by uncertainty about the degree that Mormon women in Britain can claim space for their beliefs in the public sphere, in particular the workplace.

The first way women approach social interactions in public, I call *religion as private.* Beck (2010: 27) contends that in Europe as religion can 'no longer claim to be the expert on everything, but only on spirituality and religiosity'; religious discourse is retreating into the private sphere or found only in the congregational space. As secularism becomes more prevalent in public, Beck believes this encourages religious plurality as diverse faith communities become more open about their affiliation and to some extent lived practices. In return, he argues that religious

individuals refrain from discussing theology or proselytising in public unless requested. The trade-off Beck identifies (marginalised religions are legitimised but with the tacit acceptance of limited public presence) places participants in opposition to Mormon missionary efforts. The Latter-day Saint Church's modus operandi is proselyting and reflects the American religious marketplace (Finke and Stark, 1998). Added to the visibility of Mormon missionaries that are called to convert people to the Church, members of the Church are encouraged to invite their colleagues, friends and family to Church meetings and activities. [74]

Thus, religion as private is an approach that some participants engage with that satisfies institutional Church demands that they proselytise *and* secular expectations that faith remains in the private sphere. Translated into lived practices, religion as private means they are prepared to declare their religious affiliation publicly, but without disclosing doctrine or appearing to try to convert colleagues, friends and family who are not members:

> I let people know that I'm a Mormon, and then I wait for them to see what questions they ask me. It's okay for it to come up in conversation, but I probably would feel awkward if we might steer away to things that are more about doctrine.
>
> (Olivia, 21 years old, 4th generation)

But not all participants who framed religion as private saw it as a way to balance between Church requirements to evangelise and British mainstream secular ideals of the workplace. For example, Susie claims that she avoids talking about the Church to those who are non-religious 'because people switch off about it' (57 years old, convert). While Beatrice, who is the only member of the Church in her family says 'I go every Sunday, and they [her family] always say have a good day, enjoy yourself, but I can't talk to them about it. I can't express how I feel what the Church does; it's all inside me' (94 years old, convert).

To clarify, when discussing the reticence of some Mormon women to disclose their faith, I am referring to how they perceive the extent they can talk about their doctrine and practices rather than the freedom to declare their religious affiliation. The women I interviewed, who can

[74]In 2018 regional Church leaders implemented the programme 'To Bring Us to Him' that instruct members to bring 'a friend' to Church' [online] available from <https://uk.churchofjesuschrist.org/acp/bc/cp/Europe/area-plan/2019/pdf/plan/2018-06-2019-Europe-Area-Plan-A4-eng.pdf> [26th January 2020]

be considered devout, were not frightened to say that they were members but were filtering Church teachings and lived practices that they felt could be shared with the wider community. For example, some participants mentioned that they were open about the Word of Wisdom practices, such as not drinking tea and coffee or alcohol, as a practice that non-members can easily recognise as a religious health code.

The idea that religion, either as everyday practices or as a set of beliefs, can consistently be excluded from the private space is arguably problematic. Inevitably, as Mormon women live their religion through their daily social interactions, their faith will manifest in some form in secular structures. The expectation Mormon women seem to feel that religion as an identity can be removed at will when they enter the public space means some Mormon women experience tension when negotiating when and how they are permitted to display their religiosity in the workplace. In the case of Meredith, this means continually moderating her faith to allow herself to feel part of the community at large: 'So, it's hard, our children need to understand not to be ashamed, but we have to live in a community, and sometimes there is a really good reason to explain why you believe, but other times there's not' (32 years old, 3rd generation). This suggests some Mormon women are sensitive to the wider community responses to faith beliefs and monitor how they disclosure doctrine and practices accordingly. The continually filtering of their faith expressions to remain in minimum tension with societal norms of religious expressions is particularly apparent in the negotiations of participants who worked in the public sector.

Out of the 30 women I interviewed, 17 were employed in the public sector, working with children and vulnerable adults, teachers or nurses. In understanding that religion is private, these participants, like those that worked in commerce and retail, were prepared to disclose their membership in a limited form. However, those employed in the private sector appeared to have more space and opportunities in the workplace when deciding to what extent they discuss their religion. In contrast, those working for public institutions are interpreting policy as being legal requirements to suppress religious identity. Therefore, despite the Equality Act stating that workplaces can only limit religious expression when asked the question about faith in the workplace, Emily, Jane, and Abigail, who work or had worked in schools, responded in the following way:

Q4. Do public institutions, such as health care providers, schools and nurseries, allow for you and your families religious practices?

> No, but that's more to do with the position I have at work. I have to be careful what I say; I work with children so if a child lost a relative or is sad I can't give them the answers that I want to give, because you know you can't say things that influence them, even in a generic Christian kind of way.
>
> (Emily, 57 years old, convert)

> There was an occasion, where a child at school lost [died] her mother; I found her crying in the library. I wanted to say more comforting words like you will see your mother again, but I didn't because I would have caused offence, as she could have gone home and told her family and they might not feel the same way.
>
> (Jane, 57 years old, convert)

> When I was working as a teacher, I found that schools do expect you not to talk about religion. It stops anything that could influence the children you know unduly, and so it was conversations that I just didn't have. I mean in the staffroom people were aware that I was very heavily involved in my religion and other people were also religious, but it was something we just didn't discuss.
>
> (Abigail, 26 years old, 3rd generation)

The above women's readiness to avoid religious expressions in the workplace is they claim driven by the need to protect the children. However, looking at Polly's comments, also a teacher and a mother of six, there may be a less altruistic motive for removing personal religious expression out of schools. She contends that: 'It is primarily the responsibility of parents to decide how they want religion to be taught to their children'. She then goes onto say: 'I feel that a teacher coming in and teaching it from their own perspective of faith well, parents won't know what's happening'. Agreeing to keep religion as private may not only be about safeguarding other people's children but also for some participants, it ensures that their children are not exposed to religious teachings that conflict with their own.

Nevertheless, most participants who worked in schools claim a motivating factor in keeping their religion private is that it could improperly influence their pupils or undermine

parents' value systems. They understand the privatisation of religion when they are in a position of authority as an ethics of care for all children. This attitude reflects how some religious women understand being a productive member of the community is an 'ethic of tolerance, respect, love and care towards others' (Nyhagen, 2015: 781; Predelli, 2008). Similarly, Nyhagen and Halsaa (2016: 215) in their work on Christian and Muslim women in Europe found that 'participation and belonging' was a critical component in how they saw citizenship. Similarly, as shown below, Chloe justifies being silent at times about her beliefs in public as a way of maintaining social cohesion. For example, when schools teach sexual norms within a secular morality, her explanation for letting her children receive conflicting positions on sexual norms shows how she negotiates the tension between religious rights and societal rights:

> What they teach about sex education is very different from what we believe, so they would teach that it is okay to masturbate, but we don't quite feel the same. But you can't go into the school saying you can't do that; you just have to do those things at home and talk to them in the home about it because a school has the responsibility to teach everybody.
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

For Chloe, in accepting dominant social constructions in public but refuting them in private, it suggests a pragmatic approach to religion-as-lived. However, not all those in educational establishments are silenced when talking about their religious convictions. Abigail offers an interesting comparison between her time spent as a teacher and now as a post-graduate student: 'I find that now I'm at university I can talk about religion and how it influences my creativity, and they're very open to that, but when I was at work, I would not speak about it at all' (24 years old, 3rd generation). Abigail's responses suggest that the public sector is uncomfortable when Christianity is present in a role that has a position of power over minors or if religion tries to exert any influence over the structure.

Paradoxically, even though some participants that worked in the public sector felt more compelled to limit discussions of religion at work, laws and policies have been implemented in Britain to accommodate and protect the individual right to practice religion in public without censure. In addition to an ethics of care, perhaps the willingness of some Mormon women to

mute their religious identity is a response to the way the historical oppression of Mormon women was left unchecked, and at times, even facilitated by the state. Therefore, the second approach in public interactions, *conflict prevention,* could be seen as an attempt by some British Mormon women to reduce tension between themselves and mainstream society.

For some of the Mormon women I interviewed, the historical legacy of abuse and harassment for their religious affiliation still feels present, so in lived practices, they aim for conflict prevention as a protective measure. In the case of Meredith, her method of conflict prevention is becoming quietly religious in public gatherings as the experiences of her teenage niece confirm her suspicions that the non-religious can be hostile to faith expressions:

> I'm not ashamed of my religion, but I don't want to have to deal with the fact that you know, people might not understand it, so my niece is at secondary school, and she does stand up, and she does stand out and does get criticised for it.
>
> (Meredith, 32 years old, 3rd generation)

Ellen (56 years old, 2nd generation), who is employed at a university, observes that when talking about her faith: 'it is always very generic', however when asked why she replies: 'do I think institutions cater for religion? No, they don't because people are too frightened to talk about religion and I would say it's about religious understanding and they don't understand it fully'. Conceptualising these women's approach as conflict prevention references not only the tension between the non-religious and religious but also how other religions see Mormonism as a legitimate expression in the British landscape.

In Britain, the societal framing of Christianity as inherently English and predominately Anglican, irrespective of whether that is the case (Voas and Bruce, 2019), is informing how Mormon women negotiate gender. If Mormonism is considered a sect by British secular and sacred institutions, there will be boundary work by members to avoid persecution (Mauss, 1994, 2001; Properzi, 2013). Although some participants felt there is less intolerance towards Mormonism as a religion as perhaps their parents faced, they still feel an unspoken pressure to limit lived religious practices in public to avoid conflict between themselves and the wider community

A gendered religious identity does not function in isolation. Through lived religious practices, British Mormon women embody ideals, traditions, expressions and discourses that are informed by dominant societal and religious constructions of gender. The reluctance by established Christian denominations to accept Mormon communities as religious actors in public and private spaces means Ellen accepts her religion is outside of the mainstream religious community as well as on the margins of mainstream society:

> As I have a position of responsibility over my colleagues, I don't talk about my beliefs not because I'm ashamed but to protect myself and maybe it's because I think they don't have a very good perception of Mormonism. I'm very careful about not expressing any faith belief. I don't know if that is because of my perception that we are becoming an anti-Christian society, because I do talk to my colleagues and parents about their beliefs and their religion, but I would never express my own.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

The sense that some participants feel a heightened vulnerability as Mormon women could be due to the lack of privileges afforded to non-mainstream Christian religions in Britain.

Mormonism is a small and often hidden religious community. The distrust created by a residual fear of persecution encourages Mormon congregations to isolate from their surrounding religious and non-religious communities (Rasmussen, 2016). Mainstream institutions may find it difficult to accommodate Mormon practices when there is little understanding or visibility of Mormon values and beliefs:

> We are very into multicultural and acknowledging that people are different, in terms of Mormonism I don't think people, with such a minority, even register with them [institutions]. How can a hospital recognise when they don't even know what Mormonism is and that's hard to express your religious beliefs? I think because Mormonism is a hidden religion, the structures are good at providing for overt religion, you know, apparent something tangible.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

Beck (2010) contends that marginalised religions will separate themselves from other religions and secular societal structures if they are denied an outlet in the wider community. If so, some

participants could engage with conflict prevention as a negotiation to come to terms with how they perceive Mormonism is contested in the British landscape. For example, one of the women I interviewed felt revealing her religious identity is more problematic than disclosing a sexual identity:

> I would share it [Mormonism] cautiously as my one sister who is not active at the moment said that with friends at work it would be easier for her to say that she was gay than to say that she was a Mormon. When I think about it properly, it is the sense of social shame.
>
> (Tilly, 36 years old, 2nd generation)

As some religious groups still see Mormons as heterodox, Emily encounters anti-Mormon sentiment from her previous religious minister and family, who are all Church leaders of other faiths:

> The only time I have felt attacked for my religion is from my family and the local vicar before I got baptised. I've had a really negative response from my family because my mother was a Church of England vicar and my brother is a Methodist Minister, and I can't spend time with him without him preaching to me and questioning my faith. I've no idea why he does it because I've been a member so long, but he feels he's right and I'm wrong. I sometimes think it's rather bigoted, which makes me sad because my brother and mum profess to be Christians, but they are not Christian about my faith.
>
> (Emily, 57 years old, convert)

These attacks on Emily's faith by other Christians could be symptomatic of what Nyhagen (2018: 269) found in attitudes of UK Church of England men towards Islam, who appear 'territorially defensive' towards religions associated with twentieth-century migration to the UK. Similarly, a lack of awareness by some Christian women on the advantages gained by belonging to the dominant religion of their country (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016) could exacerbate the distance between Mormon women and other Christian faiths.

Conversely, Voas and (2019) Bruce's study on British social attitudes on religion found although there was concern about religious extremism and many felt religious organisations were untrustworthy, the majority of British people are neutral or have positive views towards

Christians. Therefore, for some in the community who are unaffiliated to religion, the way Mormon women live their religion sees them become an acceptable religiosity. As Mary (71 years old, convert) recalls: 'I remember a couple of years ago, a neighbour stopped me [who is not religious] and says to me after I did something [in the community], you're such a great example of your faith. And I hadn't really thought about what I was doing in that way'. This suggests that non-members consider that the sincerity of a religious person's everyday practices matters more than affiliation. Although most participants are less likely to discuss their doctrine in public, they feel judged by the wider community but not always negatively when living out their religion. For instance, they found that those who do not attend or belong to a religious congregation would often ask them to pray when major life events happened, such as illness and death. It seems that some Latter-day Saint women who are devout are being asked to act out religious rituals on behalf of their non-member family, friends and associates.

Davie (2007: 22) contends that when a believing minority function as religious proxies for those who neither attend Church nor have a formal set of faith beliefs, this is a form of 'vicarious religion'. However, Bruce and Voas (2010) dispute Davie's explanation of vicarious religion as they say it fails to recognise how clergy, such as Church of England ministers, are employed to perform religious duties, such as praying for others on their behalf. Instead, they argue that the non-religious requesting ministers, priests, and rabbis to perform religious rituals without the obligation to attend, or even believe, is more about the secularising of roles in the Church. But when Mormon women are asked by the non-religious to pray for them, these women have no status as they have no Mormon religious authority (priesthood) nor are they paid for this role.

By seeing some Mormon women as gatekeepers to God, non-religious individuals are using them as an informal religious resource when religiosity is needed, such as death, birth and other life-changing events. This challenges the notion that vicarious religion is only applicable when the majority uses an employed representative of a religious organisation. Moreover, this suggests vicarious religion as lived religion gives some Mormon women religious authority in secular communities, in a way that is denied them in the formal Mormon Church structure.

Conclusion

In Britain, the secular and religious landscape is complex and nuanced, as 'in the historical processes of European secularization, the religious and the secular are inextricably bound together and mutually condition each other' (Casanova, 2007: 11). While there appears to be no concerted state attempt to achieve full political or social emancipation from traditional Christianity, there is a decline in formal religious affiliation, with certain religious practices being discarded and replaced by religious indifference (Bruce, 2018; Casanova, 2007; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012; Voas and Bruce, 2019).

The secularisation of the public space, in some ways, has facilitated not only the emergence of new religious movements but transformed previously stigmatised religions from sect to Church (Beck, 2010, Weber, 1991 [1922]). Mormonism has, to a degree, benefited from the *de facto* decoupling of religion from the state and the growth of religious pluralism. However, alongside an acceptance of greater religious diversity, is an expectation that religious expression remains within the private sphere (Glendinning and Bruce, 2011). There is also the continuing association of religion with that which is irrational, unreasonable, emotional and feminised. In contrast, secularity is framed as rational, reasonable, measured and masculine (Nyhagen, 2017, 2018; Scott, 2018). Men and women in conservative religions, such as Mormonism, are in religious institutions that embrace male leadership. Church structure embodies traditional or patriarchal notions of masculinity – that men are more suited to authority in public spaces – and reinforces femininity as caring and feeling-driven in decision-making.

In suggesting some participants are quiet about their faith in public, I do not mean they are not prepared to tell people they are a Mormon but more they are hesitant to know when to share their faith or discuss religious teachings outside of their congregation. Some participants encounter tension between the Mormon imperative to talk about faith and mainstream or secular norms about religion being a private matter. Still, for the most part, in being circumspect about expressing faith in the workplace, most women I interviewed were building resilience to real or perceived criticism by adopting *religion as private* and/or *conflict prevention.*

Conversely, some Mormon women are finding themselves acting out religion vicariously for non-religious friends and families. In the Mormon context, Davie's (2007, 2010) concept of

vicarious religion shows how some Mormon women's perceived faithfulness allows them to minister to non-members in a way that may be denied them in their religious congregations. Requesting a Mormon woman to act religiously (for example, pray) on their behalf could signal that those unaffiliated with a religion see devout Mormon women as equivalent in religiosity to orthodox Christian clergy. If the case is the non-religious look beyond formal Christian structures and theological frameworks to acknowledge religion, then religion-as-lived is becoming a more public measure of religious conversion.

Chapter Seven: Women and the Priesthood

Gender, in Mormon terms, is seen as a divinely designed binary role; with doctrine positioning women as possessing 'a unique feminine identity' that emulates the legacy of Eve as the 'Mother of all Living' (Anderson, 1994; Beck, 1992: 1574; Cassler, 2010; Sumerau and Cragun, 2015; Vance, 2015). However, an overview of Mormon gender theology gives only a partial insight into how British Mormon women negotiate gender. Drawing upon the way religion is found in mundane everyday encounters (McGuire, 2008) demonstrates how Mormon women construct gender within Church structures, the domestic space and the workplace. This locates Mormon women in the broader societal context, contextualising Latter-day Saint religious beliefs within secular concepts of gender roles and representation.

As the Latter-day Saint church leadership (local, regional and global) is male at almost every level, this chapter will discuss how notions of gender are embedded within the institutional structure of Mormonism as visible, hidden and invisible power (Gaventa, 2006). The first section will focus on British Mormon attitudes to the visibility of an all-male priesthood. Subsequent sections will then discuss hidden and invisible power forms and the degree of tension British Mormon women find when negotiating gender between Mormon patriarchy and secular expectations of gender equality. Examining the gendered divisions in Mormonism, with its associated gender power differentials help us understand how British religious women negotiate gender in a partially secularised state.

Mormon Priesthood and Patriarchy

Historically, the symbiosis between Christian men and priesthood saw structural gender inequality as sanctioned by God. The recent changes by the state religion, the Church of England, to allow the ordination of women at all levels of leadership has eroded male-only ordination, raising awareness of the barriers religious women encounter in accessing positions, privileges

and equity (Page, 2013). The Mormon institutional response to some Christian churches ordaining women priests is to reaffirm that it is God's will for a male-only priesthood (Oaks, 2014). Maintaining that the priesthood is gendered by divine design has seen visible conflict arise between some American Mormon feminist groups and Church leaders and congregations (Kelly, 2013). As for the majority of Mormon women in North America, surveys suggest that they appear to be content to submit to patriarchal authority and reject priesthood ordination for women (Campbell, 2016; Pew Research, 2014).

Mormon leaders claim, while pray is initiated by individuals and directed towards God, the priesthood operates as a spiritual conduit from God towards individuals (Benson, 1987). Mormon doctrine references the priesthood in two forms: priesthood as the power and authority of God and priesthood 'as the power and authority that God gives to man to act in all things necessary for the salvation of God's children' (LDS.org, 2018: para 2). Thus, Church leaders have taught that physical attributes, emotional composition, and family responsibility between men and women differ to meet the priesthood's purpose to unite the Mormon community with God, (Packer, 1977). The pious Mormon women, therefore, accepts male structural authority as God's will for men to administer the priesthood, and lay claims to the priesthood in their individual lives as a transcendental power.

To achieve gender parity in the priesthood that is accessed by all worthy males and accept the (perhaps secular) notion that equality can be quantifiable, this would involve all members over the age of 12 being able to be ordained to the priesthood (Kelly, 2013). Giving the priesthood to men and women would destabilise the Church, as the gendered nature of the priesthood is integral to the structure, alongside Mormon doctrine that situates men as a conduit for a divinely ordained power (Crawford, 2015; Nelson, 2015; Talmage, 1914; Widstoe, 1940). But some Mormon feminists argue that some Church doctrine, history, texts and structures can address priesthood 'maleness' and 'the inherent gender equality in Mormonism just needs to be seen by extracting it from other distracting elements and contents' (Hanks, 2012 cited McBaine, 2014:35). For example, in an address to the Relief Society, the Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith acknowledges that women have not been given the priesthood, but that doesn't mean they can't act with priesthood authority. He states: 'a person may have authority given to him, or her, to do

certain things in the Church that are binding and absolutely necessary for our salvation, such as the work that our sisters do in the House of the Lord' (1959: 4). This prophetic statement suggests that Mormon women can claim priesthood authority to use as a positive divine force to gain individual and institutional connections to God. However, whether or not the priesthood operates as a spiritual power outside of men, the priesthood has administrative functions that exclude women from power.

For Mormon communities, the priesthood dominates structural leadership as a form of divine power. I suggest the priesthood operates according to John Gaventa's three principal forms of power: 'visible', meaning the overt control of a structure; 'hidden' as the 'mobilisation of bias' and 'invisible' that is the 'internalisation of powerlessness' (Gaventa, 2006: 27). Before I discuss how some participants negotiate gender when encountering the structures of power and the priesthood, I need to define what I mean by visible, hidden and invisible power in a Mormon context. I understand visible power as the institutional authorisation and reproduction of male-only offices in the priesthood to administer (Handbook 2, 2018). Hidden power is how those who wish to retain power covertly dictate the agenda to exclude alternative narratives (Gaventa, 2006). So, for example, Church teachings that represent Mormon men as God's proxy on earth justify removing women from crucial decision-making or agenda-setting. 'Invisible' power is where those with power normalise dominating ideologies, values and forms of behaviour as the only viable option (Gaventa, 2006). I contend invisible power is the Church emphasis on discrete gender roles that frame men as divinely designed men to be presiding authorities. Invisible power is instrumental in Mormon women being more likely to see men as an authoritative voice in the home, the Church and, to an extent, in the wider community (Sumerau and Cragun, 2015).

Priesthood: The Visible Power to Act in God's Name

Gaventa (2006: 29) suggests that historically, studies of power have mainly looked at visible power, which is about 'who participated, who benefited and who lost in order to see who had power'. The confirmation of the priesthood to men-only is visible power as access to the priesthood as a religious function is based on gender, rather than worthiness, commitment or faithfulness. Mormon women are not only denied the sacred rights to bless and pass the

sacrament, but also cannot authorise and decide callings in any capacity. As the Mormon feminist scholar Margaret Toscano (1992: 412) asks, 'How can women become equal members of the priesthood order when they must receive permission to function within that order from men?'

Mostly all the British Mormon women I interviewed, like American Mormon women (Pew Research, 2014), sustain a male-only priesthood. Neylan McBaine (2014) argues that Mormon women accept priesthood inequality in the Church as the organisational structure is so different from the paid and trained clergy of traditional Christian religions. Yet some participants would accept alterations in the priesthood structure if they come from divine inspiration through a male Prophet of God, as the comments by Meredith shows:

> So, based on the fact that we've been given different roles and responsibilities, for me if women did have bigger roles, then there will be actual reasons for it, that the Lord has decided it. But it would have to be the Lord; it can't just be because of what we want because that would conflict with what we believe, we believe that the Lord leads the church.
>
> (Meredith, 32 years old, 3rd generation)

The belief that changes to the priesthood could only occur through an act of God correlates with the findings of the Mormon Gender Issues Survey on attitudes to women and the priesthood (Cragun and Nielsen, 2015).

The Mormon Gender Issues Survey found that female respondents were overwhelmingly negative towards women having the priesthood until a caveat was added to the question asking whether they would support female ordination if God revealed it to his Prophet. The survey team concluded that as Mormon women have an implicit belief that God oversees priesthood unless given official Church sanction, it feels heretic to be questioning the gendered division of the priesthood (Cragun and Nielsen, 2015). However, Church leaders see the reluctance to protest at the exclusion from the priesthood by the majority of Mormon women as justification for maintaining the all-male structure. Gordon B. Hinckley (1999), the fifteenth Prophet of the Church, when asked whether there was a possibility of ordaining women, stated that 'the women of the church are not complaining about it' (Bushman, 2008: 115). Correspondingly, David Campbell's (2016) smaller scale survey, which asked 'the fact that women do not hold the

priesthood sometimes bothers me' found that only 20 per cent of women were 'bothered' by not having the priesthood.

The Mormon Gender Issues Survey and Pew research findings suggest a uniform fixed position on women and the priesthood. In comparison, Grethe Peterson's (1987) much earlier qualitative study of devout Mormon women in Utah suggest attitudes to the priesthood and lived practices were more complex than suggested by the Mormon Gender Issues Survey or Pew research findings. Petersen found that the women she interviewed may agree with male church leadership in organisational spaces, but in everyday life were minimising the priesthood's influence over their relationship with God. Looking at some Mormon women's lives in granular detail, Peterson shows that some Utah Mormon women's attitudes to the priesthood are more multi-faceted than suggested by survey findings. Like Peterson's study, rather than accepting the priesthood, as a formal structure, having authority over their spirituality, some participants lived religion resulted in negotiations to connect to God's authority and power in their own lives.

In common with the women Peterson interviewed, several participants were de-coupling the priesthood from mortal men, as in seeing it as God's power rather than a male ecclesiastical function. A strategy, which has official approval as a female Church leader requested that women do not allow men to own the priesthood when talking about it as the power of God:

> Priesthood is not the men of the Church. The priesthood is the power of God, and we all work with that power—not necessarily with keys or even with duties described in the scriptures, but we all have this power as we fulfil our covenant responsibilities. Even saying 'support the priesthood,' we're really saying, 'support the power of God'. I think we even need to go better and say we support those who work with priesthood power so that priesthood doesn't take on this human identity…We need to get out of that habit.
>
> (Neill F. Marriott 2017: para 5)

To remind themselves of their ability to access priesthood without going through male mediation, some participants would say they go to the temple and take part in some of the rituals. Their actions were not a challenge to the male hierarchy but instead, I suggest, a way for them to re-connect to the priesthood as God's power. I would also argue in de-coupling the priesthood several participants are separating the spiritual aspect from the institutional function. This

approach can be seen in comments by Grace, a young working mother of two, who feels that she is not bound by the Church hierarchical structure but considers the organisation as a vehicle to improve her spiritual connections.

> I meet people who get caught up in those [women and the priesthood] things because it is a reflection of how they think they appear, and some want the Church changed to it being seen like it's more equal. But for me, the Church is a way of recouping feelings and motivates me to do more, rather than relying on Church structures and who's in power, if I can use the term.
>
> (Grace, 27 years old, 3rd generation)

By stating her religious piety is the ultimate authority in deciding her everyday practices and the institutional church as inconsequential, Grace disarms criticism if she chooses to deviate from rigid expectations of Church gender roles.

Despite the inequality found in the structure due to an all-male priesthood, Jill argues that Mormon women can still claim authority for spiritual direction in both private and congregational spaces. She justifies women's exclusion as a secondary consideration compared to carrying out her everyday religious practices:

> Obviously, it is part of the structure and who's been chosen is recognised, but it isn't a blue and pink church, I mean whether women conduct meetings or not doesn't stop us from worshipping. I don't think it would affect my spiritual life or my commitment [having or not having the priesthood], as I believe the foundation of the Church has a plan for us and what we were doing in different callings is completely irrelevant. This means everything, therefore, is irrelevant. It's not about the structure; it's about how we live the gospel.
>
> (Jill, 38 years old, 2nd generation)

Jill comments show firstly, the early Latter-day Saint teachings that women make covenants with God directly so are entitled to ask and receive divine counsel and direction (Snow, 2006 [1884]). Second, Jill uses those teachings to frame systemic inequality in Mormonism as inconsequential in comparison to her intimate relationship with God found in her everyday practices.

Linda Woodhead (2007) suggests that religious women's commitment means they are not persuaded by reason but prioritise inspiration from their faith when lived practices. Conversely, Trzebiatowska and Bruce argue that secularisation, accompanied by modernisation, will cause women to reject religious beliefs as irrational as they become 'enlightened' [it will] 'make us less likely than our forebears to entertain the notion of a powerful divine force external to ourselves' (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012: 160). By situating their faith as central in determining their actions, religious women have been subject to criticism that they are deluded or unreasonable, diminishing spirituality as a potent agential force in contemporary women's lives (Giorgi, 2016). Moreover, just as there is a long-asserted association in contemporary British culture of faith with feminised irrationality and secularity with male logic, some sociologists of religion likewise assert that women are 'lagging' behind men by remaining religious (Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012: 178).

Drawing upon spiritual revelation via prayer and scripture to navigate structural gender inequality appears to conflict with secular 'rational' notions of resistance. Irrespective of secular notions of equality, Mormon women's negotiations of gender are informed by religious devotion (Campbell, 2015; Hoyt, 2007; Johns, 2008; Leamaster and Bautista, 2015; Petersen, 1987). Their lived religious expressions allow them to interpret the priesthood as God's power – a power but does not automatically equate into resistance against structural gender inequality. Thus, Jane, who has served in several leadership positions in the Church, believes mobilisation for ordination for women is unnecessary as the priesthood reflects individual covenants to God rather than adherence to hierarchies that elevate men. She contends that 'to me, it (the priesthood) is a perfect organisation and if there are women administrating or working under the priesthood, they will have their voice heard as far as I'm concerned'. In being compliant to a structural male priesthood, Jane is accepting visible male authority as a condition of being a member of the Church.

Through lived religious practices, such as studying of scriptures, some British Mormon women are reshaping the priesthood as a spiritual authority, a relationship that operates between self and Deity. This permits some Latter-day Saint women to act in opposition to the

institutional structure if they believe God has permitted them to act as can be seen in the case of Bryony:

> I mean, they will quote to you that the early pioneer sisters gave blessings or participating in what we now consider priesthood duties and they want to know why they stopped and who stopped all of that. But if I was the only person standing after a car crash, I wouldn't wait for priesthood holders, I would give a blessing, yes, I would, whether you would consider it a prayer or a blessing, but I would, and I wouldn't stand there wondering. And why would I do it? Because I'm an adult member of the church, and I would feel that I was fulfilling my duty.
>
> (Bryony, 68 years old, convert)

Polly, a divorced mother of six, contends that women should speak out in congregations if they disagree with priesthood decisions, as 'this is as much your house'.

Campbell (2016), in his study of gender and Mormonism in American congregations, found similar attitudes of defiance from women to the Church structural demands for obedience. He found that when asked about being obedient to priesthood hierarchy: 'women are more likely to see church counsel as something to be confirmed through communication with the divine-without mediation by priesthood leaders (i.e., men)' (Campbell, 2016: 205). In addition, Mormon men were more committed to obeying Church instructions without question than women. Campbell's findings concur with Grace's comments earlier in the chapter (p. 133) that in practice some Mormon women at times respond to priesthood authority by placing an individual confirmation (spiritual witness) before unquestioning obedience when faced with Church demands.

If some British Mormon women are shifting from institutional approval to act independently, as shown above by Polly and Bryony, this could be exhibiting what Simon Speck (2012: 157) calls 'reflecting faith'. Using Kantian approaches to Protestant Christianity, Speck believes that 'reflecting faith' is religious individuals taking action against Church structure, which is not seen as disobedience, more as evidence of faith manifested as the exercise of autonomy. In a Mormon setting, reflecting faith could be interpreted as the way some British Latter-day Saint women are minimising institutional forms of the priesthood and claiming moral authority

to evaluate to what extent priesthood, as a Church function, informs their lived practices. Alternatively, they may be displaying Burke's (2012: 125) concept of empowerment agency, which 'does not require that women challenge or attempt to change religious beliefs or practices, but rather that women change their response to beliefs or practices'. An indicator of how some British Mormon women are exhibiting empowerment then is how they gain hidden power by choosing to decide when men are acting in their capacity as representatives of the priesthood.

Priesthood: Hidden Power and Resistance

Hidden power, or the 'mobilisation of bias', is the power to dictate the agenda; about who decides what actions and issues are to be implemented in the public sphere (Gaventa, 2006: 30). To maintain their power and privilege those who hold visible power will use hidden power to reinforce barriers to participation, decide the level of exclusion of people from the dominant discourse and discredit the legitimacy of change (VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). Power to oppress can emerge in hidden ways, so can strategies of opposition and resistance to effect change and reclaim authority to challenge inequality (Raji and Pettit, 2011; VeneKlasen and Miller, 2002). Hidden power becomes a way for women to challenge or dismantle male authority and women's exclusion from power.

One form of hidden power as resistance occurs in the ability to conceive of the priesthood as a conduit that creates relationships between Deity and self rather than androcentric structural control. This gives some Mormon women space to reclaim spiritual authority. Previous studies on American Mormon women show that many women are empowered through delineating the priesthood as a universal sign of God's power, which decouples priesthood from the belief that 'man is to act in all things' (Campbell, 2016; Hoyt, 2007; LDS.org., 2018: para 2; Peterson, 1987).

Some feminists critique how Mormon women claim they have access to God's authority as they are still restricted from full autonomy by an embedded patriarchal hierarchy (Stromberg, 2004). Leah is aware that not having the priesthood restricts opportunities and that hidden power, through prayer or rethinking doctrine, cannot always compensate for exclusion from authority:

> I don't want the priesthood myself, but I do know that for some women they think that we should have but whether it makes us more equal? I guess for other people; it would be because they can give blessings to other people, that they want to help in a different way than they do now. I mean you can do prayers, but it is not the same thing. It doesn't mean the same thing because prayer and blessings are not the same thing, but also it stops us from being leaders in the church, and it does restrict us in a way, that we can't be a bishop, so we can't be major decision-makers.
>
> (Leah, 18 years old, 3rd generation)

By starting 'I don't want the priesthood myself but', Leah's comments show the tension between her recognition being excluded from the priesthood limits spiritual opportunities and remaining loyal to Church norms. To negotiate this tension, some Mormon women are surreptitiously rebelling against gender inequality through discursive practices:

> When I hear bad things about the priesthood, I think well that sucks, but it doesn't make me think less of the church, it might make me think less of that person as the doctrine is true but sometimes the people administering it are idiots.
>
> (Polly, 47 years old, 2nd generation)

Rather than openly framing the priesthood structure as unequal, Polly constructs discourse around the priesthood as being subject to male fallibility. In choosing to be compliant to male structures means Polly is distinguishing between priesthood leadership and male behaviour so that they can label individual priesthood leaders as sexist rather than the Church. Her comments suggest that dominated groups often express resistance in hidden forms to regain power, so the use of language can become politicised (Scott, 1990). This disrupts ideas that Mormon women are only agential when they are resisting visible gender power differentials.

Becky Johns (2008) in her study of oral histories of female Mormon missionaries noted that their feelings towards God, including notions of submission, piety and virtue, were also called upon to defy male authority in the Church in what she calls 'hidden resistance'. Johns suggests that female missionaries find themselves participating in a traditionally male sphere, where missionary norms embody what can be considered masculine qualities: competitive,

assured and a greater public presence as spiritual leaders. In response, some sister missionaries learn to be prudent to hide their objections, but 'routine compliance does not mean that one cannot sense unfairness, inequity or injustice' (p76). Johns records how sister missionaries use 'ironic mimicry' as a subversive language to criticise Church male leaders; language that appears to mimic ultra-feminine submissive but are eroding male authority.

The practice of using language to reclaim congregationally space (if somewhat limited) can be seen in how some participants will talk ironically about the 'Brethren' when discussing them as priesthood leaders. Other women were more radical in challenging male leadership as the ultimate authority in their lives, such as Ellen, who refuses to address male leaders by their ecclesiastical titles:

> The thing is I'm not immersing into that Mormon culture, so I call the bishop by his first name, and I've never had a bishop with any issue with that. I'm sure [there are] some men who might find it challenging, but I'm not into that male Church culture.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

Ellen's resistance to Church protocol can be interpreted as a way of her claiming equality in formal Church settings as she reduces the power axis between herself and her religious leader. As most British Mormon women I interviewed see religious agency as personal and not institutionally directed, (shown by Polly's comments p. 137) I suggest there is little incentive to disrupt the dominant narrative. Instead, some British Mormon women are finding ways to undermine patriarchal dominance to become empowered through hidden strategies but without engaging in systematic collective action to address Mormon priesthood inequality.

Despite recognition of the exclusion from structural authority and acknowledging unequal practices, only one woman I interviewed openly expressed the desire to be ordained to the priesthood. The oldest participant at 94, Beatrice is the only member of her family to convert, and she feels she has been spiritually disadvantaged by being married to non-members as she has never had a priesthood holder in her home. Beatrice thinks if she had been given the priesthood, this would help her feel equal to married women with member husbands.

If the ordination of the priesthood is viewed as individual acts of empowerment, then women being ordained will not automatically dismantle male institutional authority. This can be seen in the case of Bryony when she spoke about her time as stake Relief Society president and how the presence of women in Latter-day Saint governing bodies struggles against hidden privilege:

> I mean in the 1970s and 1980s, sisters were just ignored, they were not listened to, but I would hear in a stake meeting visiting general authorities telling us to speak out and brethren to take note. So, when I was the stake Relief Society president, we would be invited to attend meetings, but it felt like we were being invited to join them rather than it being equal space.
>
> (Bryony, 68 years old, convert) [75]

Toscano (1993: 435) believes that only a radical transformation of the entire Mormon priesthood system will create an equal structure. She contends that an inclusive priesthood means restructuring language, increasing the visibility of female deity and dismantling the existing priesthood as an operational function.

In conceiving of an expansive priesthood framework, this could address the discomfort that many interviewees expressed, that to achieve female empowerment, it requires them to gain acceptance into a male structure. Furthermore, just as for some British Mormon women priesthood ordination was not essential to feel equal; paradoxically some felt enriched by a structure that oppresses them (Ramshaw, 1995). As the next section shows, the very religion that visibly dis-empowers women, also allows them an avenue to mount an offensive on male control through invisible power narratives.

Priesthood: Making the Invisible Visible

In organisations, invisible power is the ability to situate the dominant discourse as 'natural', which stymies opposition and reproduces power over groups that are powerless (Gaventa, 2006:

[75] Stake Relief Society president is one of the highest positions of authority that a Mormon woman can hold. The next female authority above her is the general Relief Society presidency and board. The stake Relief Society president is governed and reports to Priesthood authority.

29). In the Latter-day Saint context, invisible power elevates men and reinforces their power as deified patriarchal hierarchies (Campbell, 2016). As previous sections have shown, participants are avoiding direct action against visible gender inequality in preference to exerting hidden forms of resistance by decoupling men from the priesthood authority but not from institutional control. For most of the women I interviewed, the priesthood is a divine power between themselves and God, and although accessed through men, is not owned by men. This mobilisation sees the authority of men diminished rather than dismantled by revering personal revelation.

A critical barrier to activism aimed at visible priesthood authority is as devout members, as previously mentioned by Meredith (p.131), they are taught that as God has given the priesthood to man, this can only be changed by a prophetic revelation. By believing alterations to the structure is by divine power given through male leaders, there is a reluctance for Mormon women to address structural priesthood inequality, which could be symptomatic of the way that invisible power operates as it causes individuals to internalise 'what the power holders who shaped those places want to hear' and present it as their voice (Gaventa, 2006: 29). Conversely, invisible power, like hidden power, can become an agent of change. A visible challenge to visible power is only one form of resistance, for example, in some lived practices, several participants show invisible power by claiming spiritual autonomy and exercising empowerment agency when deciding how they submit to the priesthood. This approach means Mormon women are capable of negotiating some form of opposition to patriarchal Mormon structures but are more likely to exercise this through a lexicon of sacred thought, which includes re-imagining gender lived practices and being subversive through every day encounters with the priesthood.

One fundamental Mormon structure that some of the women I interviewed use to dismantle the invisible power of male priesthood leadership is Relief Society. As mentioned in earlier chapters, Relief Society is a Church organisation that was initially formed in 1842 by women but not recognised until it was given divine priesthood approval by the Prophet Joseph Smith (2007, [1883]: 451), who stated that 'the Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized'. Relief Society is now seen as an intrinsic part of the Church institutional structure. It has evolved from a vehicle for meeting the welfare needs of families to

a space that develops community service, education, sorority, and spiritual growth (Cannon and Derr, 1992).

Relief Society meetings are held in the last hour of worship on every other Sunday, where men separate from the women under the direction of same-sex leadership.[76] Every member of a congregation (male and female) has the opportunity to be called into some form of Mormon leadership, but positions of authority are gendered (General Handbook, 2020). On a local level, bishops and Relief Society presidents often have equivalent levels of responsibilities and visibility yet Relief Society presidents and all-female leadership roles in Young Women and Primary are seen as more a supportive role as the local priesthood oversees them.

There are also gender differences in the leadership training, as unlike the men, who are instructed from the age of 12 on priesthood responsibilities, women have fewer expectations placed on them in how they present themselves as a religious authority in public spaces. This can be seen by Tilly's comments, who as a newly called Relief Society president of her local ward, envisages her stewardship as a way of changing the way women are seen as leaders as 'I like to see women that we can identify within leadership roles, women that are strong and spiritual, rather than this fake niceness, they need to be aspirational for our young women'. This indicates Tilly considers there is a possibility for Mormon women to position their leadership roles as an opportunity to offer alternative gender models of power.

For some of the British Mormon women I interviewed, they consider as 'sisters' within Relief Society it cultivates women-only spaces that are empowering and recognises the values and virtues of women. Other women I interviewed saw Relief Society as a public religious forum for women to set the agenda on gospel issues without male interference, mirroring secular feminist concepts of separatism (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2017). Relief Society is seen as a vehicle to develop a sisterhood, which defined in Latter-day Saint terms as 'the bonding among women on both personal and public levels, from simple friendships to massive organisations' (Derr, 1987: 154). Jill Derr (1987) argues that notions of sisterhood emerge from polygamous marriages of the

[76] The second hour of every other Sunday is divided into classes according to age and gender: priesthood, all males over 18 and Young men's, all males 12 -18, Relief Society, all females aged over 18 and Young women's, all females 12-18. Primary children, ages 18 months -12, are taught in mixed classes with both male and female teachers called. The Primary presidency is the only all-female leadership that is over both male and female members. The curriculum on what is taught is decided by the respective leadership and is discussed based.

early pioneers that created extensive extended family ties. This theory does not transpose onto a British Mormon narrative, as not only was polygamy not practiced in the United Kingdom but British Mormon women also lack the generational longitude of Utah Mormon members that establish inter-family relations. Instead, I suggest that British Mormon women create close bonds through a sense of heightened religious belonging in a partial secularised state.

Relief Society, as a collective organisation, encourages women to inform the Mormon discourse, all be it only between women, to become empowered by the divine female (Derr, 1987). Therefore, Ellen, a life-long member and mother of five girls, when talking about Relief Society, goes onto to talk about her feelings towards women having the priesthood:

> I know there's a big drive in the church at the moment about women having the priesthood and I find the whole concept laughable to a certain extent and by women saying they want the priesthood that means they see themselves as deficit. And I do not believe that women are deficit for one minute, I believe that women are whole, they are unique and as powerful as men. You don't need to compensate for that, it (the priesthood) shouldn't be seen as a consolation prize. I've got five beautiful girls who are perfect as they are, they don't need some magical religious powers to become more powerful, to be more whole.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

She feels that women are not disadvantaged by not having the priesthood or to be seen as vassalages as they are already privileged by womanhood.

In seeing Relief Society as a discrete sphere of influence, it becomes a place where gender, doctrine and priesthood are explored through a female-only gaze. Mary Bednarowski (2016: 325) believes that when women are without priesthood governance, they generate 'theological creativity,' cultivating sacred tools to address invisible priesthood scaffolding that reproduces inequality. Relief Society is a platform where women are in visible leadership roles, which does mean the Relief Society presidency can exert influence in the broader leadership framework. Some participants, who have served in these calls, as not all women do, claim that they do have access to power, albeit restricted spheres of influence, and see themselves as agential, even when submitting to authority.

However, several of the younger participants, who were all generational members, feel that Relief Society, with its associated leadership, is insufficient to dismantle priesthood privilege or facilitates real authority. Thus, Leah, the youngest interviewee at eighteen, recognises that Church male leaders may promote women as valued, but the structure remains androcentric, and women are still disenfranchised:

> When you think about it, men are always telling us about how great and wonderful we are, but we are still not in leadership, they would say it so wonderfully, but this is still telling us what we should be doing or like just praising us for what we are.
>
> (Leah, 18 years old, 3rd generation)

Leah is less tolerant than older participants of the inequality in the institutional Church but still stops short of asking for significant structural changes to become more gender-equal. Mormon feminist scholar Aimee Hickman (2016) states it is irrelevant if Mormon women are increasingly prioritising personal spiritual authority over priesthood authority because irrespective of the autonomy that brings, they are still subject to male-dominated structures. In other words, like Zia's framing of Muslim feminists, Hickman claims that unless Mormon women show resistance to an all-male priesthood, they are complicit in reproducing gender inequality.

Recently, Church leaders are making attempts to address the gender imbalance in the administration of the Church by changing policy by incorporating women leaders into male-only executive meetings. As well as the promoting of spiritual discourses by women through publications,[77] addressing the absence of female voices as theologians in church approved literature. The difficulty is whether these changes, along with others, are evidence of an institutional shift towards inclusion rather than limited integration of women into the decision-making process. One way to record whether these policy changes are significant shifts or still uphold male privileges is by looking at the everyday life of Mormon women as it captures the social interactions between congregations, leadership, doctrine and Mormon women.

[77] On the 2nd March 2018 the book 'At the Pulpit: 185 Years of Discourses by Latter-day Saint Women' was released. A Church publication edited by women, rather than priesthood leaders, it is according to the Church 'in addition to be a scholarly history, At the Pulpit is intended as a resource for contemporary Latter-day Saints as they study, speak, teach, and lead' (Mormon Newsroom, 2 March 2018).

Conclusion

My interviews revealed there is awareness amongst some Mormon women in Britain about the scale of gender discrimination in the Latter-day Saint Church and the way gender prevents access to priesthood ordination. One reason many participants do not agitate for entry to the priesthood is that they see the demands for female ordination as undermining the power of womanhood as a force in its own right. For other women I interviewed, hidden forms of resistance are done by the demarcation between the administration and the religiosity of the priesthood, which sees them constructing lived practices that resist and comply with the institutional structure.

Similarly, several Mormon women who ascribe in sexism within the Church as due to the secular actions of individual men do so, arguably, so that they do not place themselves in conflict with the institutional Church. Their interpretation of secularism suggests a misunderstanding of the historical relations between gender, religion and secularity, relations detailed by scholars such as Scott (2018). It is not helpful for Mormon women to see secularism and gender equality as inseparable because it limits the development of Mormon doctrine that advocates for greater co-partnerships in leadership, such as God the Mother and God the Father. This raises an important question, is there sufficient theology to claim that gender equality in the institutional structure is a religious aim? However, unless there is the prophetic revelation to give the priesthood to women, most participants will continue to accept male-only priesthood and resort to finding ways to lessen inequality without dismantling the patriarchal structure.

As an all-female space, Relief Society does encourage female spiritual sufficiency as Mormon women can create some form of autonomy from male control. Relief Society can develop a sorority that facilitates a certain amount of female emancipation. Recent instructions from the general leadership that Relief Society presidents play a formal role in what was previously priesthood only discussions makes women leaders more visible and embedded in priesthood decision-making councils.[78] The change in the status and reach of Relief Society presidents is an opportunity to generate resistance to the invisible power of male authority.

[78] The newly called Prophet Russell M. Nelson implemented several changes in the priesthood structure in 2018, one being that the Priesthood Executive Committee that was held by male only leaders has been replaced with a Relief Society and priesthood joint meeting.

However, the Relief Society organisation is still beholden to a gendered hierarchy that retains male bastions of priesthood power.

The majority of the British Mormon women I interviewed do sustain the traditions of male priesthood. However, the idea that Mormon women simply show a 'false consciousness' by accepting male authority unchallenged fails to account for the many varied ways that Mormon women show agency. More importantly, participants see themselves as having active choices when negotiating priesthood structures, including to what extent they engage with priesthood authority. As Burke (2012: 130) argues 'all religious women exhibit agency in some way' against visible, hidden or invisible power.

Chapter Eight: Mormon Feminism and Ordain Women

Historically, Mormon feminist discourse sought self-definition, self-affirmation and self-determination, rather than direct action against patriarchy to limit tension between their religious and political lives (Bushman, 2007). But recent co-ordinated activism by Mormon feminist group 'Ordain Women' to protest against male-only priesthood has shifted from individual actions of resistance to large organised protests. Post-millennial Mormon feminists contend that Mormon feminist mobilisation is entering a new wave with 'unprecedented numbers, level of organisation and communication and global reach' (Brooks et al., 2016: 291). If so, an international Mormon feminist movement corresponds with a resurgence in universal feminist activism in global religions such as Catholicism, Islam and Orthodox Judaism (Redfern and Aune, 2013).

Latter-day Saint leadership response to visible Mormon feminist campaigning for priesthood ordination is defensive, claiming that the aims of feminist groups are not representative of the beliefs of the majority of Mormon women (Toscano, 2016b). There is also growing criticism from some Mormon women that feminism is creating tension within Latter-day Saint communities by dividing congregations (Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015; Pew research 2014). In addition, while American feminist movements are active on social media consciousness-raising, there is a lack of British Mormon feminist movements and activism addressing gender issues and inequality in the public space. As there is a lacuna of literature or empirical data on British Mormon women's attitudes to feminism, this chapter will attempt to address this gap by discussing how some Mormon women in Britain understand British Feminist and American Mormon feminist aims. To do this, I start by exploring how participants understand feminism in secular spaces, followed by an overview of Mormon feminist aims and history. I conclude by examining the extent to which the women I interviewed accept Mormon feminist ideals and the degree feminism informs their negotiations of gender.

British Mormon Women's Attitudes toward Feminism

Feminism is a nebulous term of reference, which has been appropriated, distorted and delineated as both an emancipatory and an oppressive form of political action in secular and religious spaces (Aune, 2004, 2015a; Dworkin, 1983; Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016; Walby, 2011). Andrea Dworkin (1983: 195) claims that a distinctive feminist agenda on altering power to generate gender equality has seen feminism become a 'much hated political philosophy'. The overarching principle of feminism is the affirmation of social, political, economic, and intellectual equality for humanity (Ruether, 2011). In the case of Mormonism, Mormon feminists see feminism as much about the recognition and value of the diverse experiences of Mormon women as it about the historic and contemporary tension around the role of women in the Church (Brooks, 2016; Johnson-Bell, 2013; Ross and Finnegan, 2013; Ulrich, 1994).

Feminist religious discourse has the potential to dismantle androcentric practices that are a barrier to equality in religious organisations (Alvizo, 2016). Feminist movements can be instrumental in negotiating space for religious women to be included in civic engagement (Nyhagen, 2015). Yet for some feminists, there is resistance towards seeing religious women as equal participants in feminist discussions (Jeffreys, 2012). For secular feminists, Mormonism and feminism is a paradox (Ulrich, 1994). Likewise, Debbie sees how feminist efforts have benefited the secular sphere, such as voting rights and employment but still feels that it is irrelevant to religious congregations:

> I think feminism has been good for women because women have got more rights now because of what they've done, I mean they can go out to work if they choose to and we got the right to vote, and we can drive, and we can teach, we can go to school, but at the same time feminism in the Church, there is no place for it.
>
> (Debbie, 43 years old, 2nd generation)

One explanation for Debbie's belief that religion and feminism are incompatible is Beck's (2010) contention that secularism has caused formal political action to be seen outside the scope of religious spaces. This separating of feminist activity from Mormon cosmology appears to confirm

that some interviewees do see faith and feminism are distinctive discrete identities, and feminism is only productive and relevant when restricted to civic issues and secular structures.

Catherine Redfern and Kristin Aune (2013: 8) believe that many women do recognise the value of feminism but are reluctant to identify as a feminist as they 'cannot always translate this historical awareness into concrete support for feminism'. In turn, the women I interviewed adopted, what Line Nyhagen and Beatrice Halsaa (2016: 188) call a 'contingent recognition' of feminist achievements. A contingent recognition of feminism is praise for feminism but 'limited to achievements of the past'. For example, when talking about equality in the workplace, Keziah readily acknowledges the role that feminism has played in achieving greater options for women in the workplace when she talks about equality:

> It is not about being the same as men but being given the opportunities and treated fairly, despite you know, physical limitations and I think this is where feminists have got it right. I can see that in the British employment laws and the way it recognises women give birth and have children.
>
> (Keziah, 25 years old, 3rd generation)

Keziah's comments show she does understand feminism as a positive agent in improving the lives of women. Still, her approval is circumscribed as she only references gains made in the workplace.

Noticeable, relegating feminism to historic achievement rather than as a relevant form of challenging inequality within their religious community was cross-generational. Elaine, who joined the Church during the 1970s at the age of seventeen, thinks feminism, as in suffrage, is positive but since then feminine has become a self-interested chasm: 'I don't think they are fighting for our rights now, they are fighting for themselves'. Likewise, Leah, an eighteen-year-old third-generation Mormon, also believes 'people can use feminism for the wrong reasons, I think sometimes they use it for their own ends rather than to better the lives of women'. Elaine and Leah vocalise a contingent recognition for feminist achievements as they appreciate feminist efforts in acquiring political and economic empowerment but accompany it with the caveat that they perceive contemporary feminism to be flawed in purpose. As well as a contingent

recognition, several participants approached feminism in a 'mixed feeling discourse' (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016: 188).

In their study of Christian and Muslim women in Britain and Norway, Nyhagen and Halsaa conceptualised four discourses towards feminist ideals and ideology: 'anti-feminism', 'pro-feminism', 'mixed feeling discourse' and 'post-colonial discourse' (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016: 188). The mixed feeling discourse regarding feminism is 'where women positioned themselves between the pro-feminism and the outright dismissal of feminism' (Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016: 203). Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen (2016) found a similar narrative in her study of Mormon women in Europe, where feminism was perceived more favourably due to the gains made in secular spaces but did not necessarily feel that feminist activism served a purpose in the Church. Thus, while Grace tells me she is not a feminist nor supports calls for the priesthood for women, she also draws inspiration from feminist achievements:

> I think feminism has benefited me, yes definitely, it has given me the opportunity to think the way I think, to be able to make the choices I have. I have the opportunities to make life as I want to, and there's more equality between a man and a woman. I think it's probably got negative connotations to it in some ways, but in other ways, it's about change, it can be quite inspirational.
>
> (Grace, 27 years old, 3rd generation)

As Redfern and Aune (2013) earlier noted, the acceptance that feminists have gained tangible measures that improve women's lives, such as employment rights, improved childcare and maternity services does not mean women identify themselves as feminists. Therefore, even though some participants were conflicted about the role that feminism had in congregations, they still could see the benefits of feminism in the workplace.

In Susie's case, she could express admiration for early suffrage and feminist protests to gain equal pay. However, when she was asked if feminism is still germane to everyday lives, Susie was frustrated by the lack of clarity in what secular feminists meant by gender equality in a religious context:

> What is meant by that term, feminism? I have no idea what it means, when people say are you a feminist? What do you mean by that? If people in the Church say it, do they mean they want equal pay? Do they? I don't know what they mean, it's one of those terms that you know people talk about, but they never really define it, I mean if I did have to say what it is, I would say it is used when they (feminists) feel inferior.
>
> (Susie, 57 years old, convert)

For her, contemporary feminism is less transparent on what equality means to religious women in lived practices. The consequence of a lack of feminist engagement with religious women is secular feminism may not translate into a language that can be understood in a British Mormon context.

Jennifer Johnson-Bell (2013) contends that American Mormon women have tended to understand feminism as one of two discourses: a secular concept of gender equality that undermines the male-only priesthood or one that devalues motherhood and has limited solidarity with their religious beliefs of the divine nature of woman. Correspondingly, Emily defends the importance of mothering by claiming the women's role in the home is being diminished by a feminist ideology that devalues the domestic sphere:

> **Alison**: so, do you think feminism has been good for women?
> Emily: I think, in some ways. I think feminism has been good for women, I think women's rights were severely trampled on in previous generations, but I think, I don't think that some things have been good for us, as some feminists can breed discontent. I think there's nothing wrong with being a wife and a mother, but I feel that my mother felt that she needed to be more. So, I was born in the 1960s, so my mum was caught up in that feminist revolution, and she didn't realise that being a mum she was doing something important, she felt that she had to do more. It was not enough for her to just be a mother.
>
> (Emily, 57 years old, convert)

Emily's comments suggest that feminist rhetoric in Mormon communities is not transforming into a range of diverse feminist expressions, such as matricentric feminism, which celebrates mothering as a form of empowerment (O'Reilly, 2014, Rich, 1996).

Instead, as Johnson–Bell (2013) suggested, most British Mormon women I interviewed understood feminism either within a radical framework that campaigns for liberating women from traditional gender roles or liberal feminism that focuses on opening up opportunities in the workplace through eradicating difference. For most participants, secular feminism, and as I will show later in the chapter, Mormon feminism, is seen as a homogenous discourse rather than a collective of standpoints.

Notwithstanding, the work being done by feminists to identify the prevalence of androcentric privilege means that Ellen acknowledges not only Mormon men but also most men have a disproportionate amount of power:

> It [feminism] makes the assumption Mormonism is male-dominated; this means that they got to have inequality and male-dominated practices, so it automatically makes the assumption that the model is patriarchal. Yes, I do think there is a lot of disproportionate power to the men in the Church, and in the Mormon community, the Mormon men do have access to power. But, I mean in my job where I have a lot of responsibility, I have a huge team, I have a huge budget, but it is still a male-dominated arena. It is about recognising a male-dominant culture, as it's everywhere.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

It not surprising Ellen identifies the omnipresence of patriarchy in and outside of the Church as traditional Western religions have been at times instrumental in generating religious women that challenge existing structures and practices (Brownmiller, 1999). But she is also critical towards feminism for pre-supposing that she is unable to identify institutional discrimination in the Church, as she is equally subject to patriarchy in secular structures. In equating being agential within a limited definition (Burke, 2012), feminists may overlook when and how women in gender traditional religions are social agents and miss what non-agency looks like in a religious context. Either way, participants approach feminism in more complex understanding than previous Mormon studies and discussions have demonstrated (Brooks, 2016; Johnson-Bell, 2013; Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015; Ulrich, 2010).

Mormon Feminism: Aims and History

In some respects, Mormonism, with its belief in a female God, spiritual agency and personal revelation, has access to a progressive gender theology (Bushman, 2016). Ulrich (1981: 28) considers there is sufficient doctrine to claim there is an inherent synergy between Mormonism and feminism:

> A feminist is a person who believes in equality between the sexes, who recognises discrimination against women and who is willing to work to overcome it. A Mormon feminist believes that these principles are compatible not only with the gospel of Jesus Christ but also with the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Mormon feminism, like secular feminism, has come in waves (Ulrich, 2010). The first-wave of feminist consciousness emerged during Mormon women in Utah's involvement in suffrage during the 19th and early 20th century (Williams, 2013). The desire for female Mormon suffrage saw devout Utah Mormon women being prominent advocates and in some cases, radical activists to gain female emancipation in public spaces. For example, after Mormon women in Utah over the age of 21 gained the vote in 1870, when the feudal government rescinded that right in 1887, in protest they embarked on a 'dirty campaign' throwing urine-filled bottles at the Utah State Attorney General's home (Creswell, 2003).[79] In response, Mormon women were seen in the American public space as 'tainted by what later generations would call feminism' (Ulrich, 2017:337).

Female emancipation in Utah, to some degree, arose from the practice of polygamy. Although polygamy was oppressive for many women, for some Utah Mormon women being in a polygamous marriage could also be an escape from traditional roles of marriage and motherhood.[80] In getting sister wives to care for their children, a number of pioneering Mormon

[79] When Utah became a US territory in 1850 all men over the age of 21 had the right to vote if they were US citizens. Although Wyoming Territory was first to extend voting rights to women in December 1869, Utah did so some weeks later and held elections. Seraph Young was the first woman to vote under a women's equal suffrage law in the United States on February 14th 1870 (Clarke and Kitterman, 2019).

[80] Polygamy was only practiced in the United States during the 1840s to the 1880s and as the practice was limited to members that resided in the United States of America, I feel that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss polygamy in detail.

women freed from domesticity could pursue employment and education and became prominent activists and suffragettes (Dushku, 1976; Ulrich, 2017).

Early Church congregations appeared to tolerate activism to increase opportunities for women as long as it advocated individual liberation of women from secular patriarchal structures and reinforced Mormon gender roles (Williams, 2013). This first-wave of Mormon feminist sensibility saw female suffrage as part of a commitment to strengthen the Latter-day Saint Church through political engagement and an avenue to develop women's capabilities (Bushman, 1974). The religious imperative to be politically enfranchised, therefore, saw Utah in 1900 with a far higher proportion of its population affiliated with the national women suffrage movement than any another state or territory in America (Ulrich, 2017). Mormon feminist scholars contend this legacy of early Mormon women in Utah engaging on political activism is instrumental in fostering contemporary feminist ideals in congregations (Anderson, 1994; Brooks, 2016; Bushman, 1974; Derr, 1987; Johnson, 1978; Ulrich, 1994, 2017; Wilcox, 1987).

Over time, the Mormon acceptability of women engaging in civic activism in secular spaces and embracing alternative roles for women was eroded. For example, during the 1800s, less than half of Church literature produced for women were on domestic responsibilities. By the early 1970s, over three-quarters of material focused on that role and the centralised importance of women remaining in the domestic sphere (Vance, 2002). As previously argued in Chapter Four, the societal shifts in post-Second World War America saw the institutional Church engage with idealised performances of womanhood, which shifted Church teachings by the 1970s towards greater emphasis to the 'separate-but-equal' rhetoric (Wilcox, 1987).

Alongside Church teaching's promoting discrete gender roles, this decade saw Church leaders mobilise American member support to oppose the Equal Rights Amendments and remove from Relief Society the right to control their curriculum and finances. As a reaction to what some Mormon women saw as moving away from early Mormon principles of autonomy and self-determination for women, a second-wave of Mormon feminism emerged from several small collectives of Boston and Utah-based Mormon women. Unlike early aims of Mormon women who had sought to mobilise against disenfranchisement from secular structures, the focus of second-wave feminism was towards Church inequality (Stromberg, 2004; Ulrich, 1981).

Mormon feminism, during this second-wave, was a period where American Mormon feminists fought to be seen as advocates for feminist concepts of gender within their faith congregations rather than in the wider community (Bushman, 1974; Ulrich, 1981). During this period, Mormon feminist theologians and historians raised awareness of earlier Church practices of blessing the sick and re-claimed Heavenly Mother to offer resources that counter-acted Church teachings that reinforced divine male rites for leadership (Brooks, 2016). By the late 1990s the work by several prominent American feminists' theologians, Janice Allred, Lavinia Anderson, Maxine Hanks, and Margaret Toscano, came to the attention of priesthood leaders resulting in their ex-communication for behaviour unbecoming to the Church (Stromberg, 2015). Consequentially, the severity of the act saw Mormon women distancing themselves from Mormon feminist movements to the point that some Mormon feminist felt the movement would not survive beyond the millennium (Bushman, 2008; Stack, 1991).

According to several Mormon feminists, what redeemed Mormon feminist movements was the Internet, inspiring a new wave (third-wave) of Mormon feminist ideals and participants on a global platform (Brooks, 2016; Finnegan and Ross, 2015; Haglund, 2016; Stack, 2013). The increasing number of on-line Mormon feminist groups and blogs reflect the resurgence in Mormon feminist mobilisation (Evans, 2004). This third-wave of Mormon feminists or 'Mo-fem' are Mormon women and men that 'see no reason to maintain rhetoric of an ideal', which positions them outside of the main body of Mormon congregations (Beaman, 2001: 74). Millennial Mormon feminist movements consider that participation in Mormon feminism is not restricted to practising Mormons, but anyone who identifies with the Mormon movement and feminism (Brooks, 2016). Thus, several prominent excommunicated Mormon feminist activists, such as Margaret Toscano, Janice Allred and Kate Kelly, can still be political actors within the movement. It permits those who identify as Mormon feminists to have a nebulous allegiance to Mormonism as it references a cultural affiliation, a former association as well as an active participant in Mormonism.

As this nascent broader form of Mormon feminism includes voices from outside the community, studies suggest post-millennial Mormon feminism is increasingly unrepresentative of orthopraxis women (Johnson-Bell, 2013; Nzojibwami, 2009). Thus, Jill believes 'this is just a

very small proportion [Mormon feminism] tiny percentage, but they are not listening to what women are saying, they are not listening to all women' (38 years old, 2nd generation). Due to the prevalence of Mormon feminist online forums that are driven by American Mormon feminists, a number of participants that are aware of Mormon feminist movements, when asked to explain how they understood Mormon feminism, most participants associate or equate Mormon feminism with Ordain Women.

The Case of Ordain Women: Mormon Feminists as Agents of Disharmony?

Ordain Women is a Utah-based Mormon feminist group that advocates for the ordination of women as they consider the lack of access to priesthood office means 'many Mormon women are not happy with their present status' (Toscano, 2016b: 154). Through their direct action and high-profile social media presence, for some participants, Ordain Women has become symbolic and synonymous with the aims of all forms of Mormon feminism. Nyhagen's (2019: 8) suggests there is a spectrum of feminist forms of secularism: "hard' secular (rejects religion in both public and private spaces); a 'mixed hard and soft' approach accepts religion in private but not public spheres and 'soft' that accommodates religion in both private and public spheres'. Based on Nyhagen's definition, Ordain Women is a 'soft' feminist movement as it is a strategic alliance that works with religious women towards improving the rights of women.

When I asked participants about their understanding of the aims and their level of engagement with Mormon feminism, 13 of the 30 women claimed to have no knowledge of Mormon feminism. However, the remaining interviewees either referenced Mormon feminism in relationship to or understood it as 'Ordain Women', a Mormon feminist movement. So, Mary, when asked about Mormon feminist groups she is aware of, says: 'the only one I can think of is that woman feminist group that organised the protests at general conference, you know about women in the priesthood, the one where the woman was excommunicated' (Mary, 71 years old, convert).[81] While Celia commented; 'I know Mormon feminists want the priesthood, but I don't really take notice of what they had to say' (41 years old, 2nd generation). Interestingly, most

[81] Kelly was excommunicated from the Church on June 23, 2014 'for conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church'. In particular, the court cited the protests during general conference of the Church (Deseret News, June 22, 2013).

younger participants also felt that Mormon feminist activism alienated Mormon women by being consumed with the campaign for the priesthood for all.

Nyhagen and Halsaa (2016:189) consider that as feminist movements are a distinctive sub-movement within women's movements, the foci of feminist movements will be on challenging 'gender hierarchies, patriarchy and women's subordination to men'. This suggests that Ordain Women promoting priesthood for all as the overarching principle of their movement is cognitive with feminist ideals. However, Angela Pears (2005: 9) maintains that when feminist religious groups are seen as reductionist in their presentation of ideas, what emerges can 'lead to the end of potentially liberating discourse or transformative social action'. Therefore, Ordain Women in communicating a singular feminist discourse could limit engagement or connections with Mormon women who may be sympathetic to their overarching aim for equality but wish to campaign on a broader platform. For example, Polly was one of only two women participants who stated that she was a feminist yet, distanced herself from Mormon feminism. She felt that feminism had more to offer than Mormon feminism as it not only looked for structural equality but sought to improve the lives of women more holistically.

> In some respects, Mormon feminism and feminism shouldn't differ, it should be all about equality and having rights and having access, but obviously, it does differ because, in the Latter-day Saint community, Mormon feminism is extremely specific, because it focuses on the priesthood and what are traditional priesthood roles.
>
> (Polly, 47 years old, 2nd generation)

Tilly, the only other participant to identify as feminist but not a Mormon feminist, felt that Mormon feminist aims were self-serving in comparison to 'other feminists who think in a bigger way, you know, about all women and how to improve their lives (Tilly, 36 years old, 2nd generation).

In the same way that some participants view secular feminism as a monolithic discourse, Ellen believes that Mormon feminist ideals are not representative of her understanding about inequality in political, socio-economic and religious structures.

> I mean, I recognise patriarchy in the Mormon Church. I just think that maybe the Church is still sort of in a time lag and still sort of looking at things as they were in the 50s. It needs to catch up as people culturally have moved forward. But patriarchy is so apparent in every structure. I work in a low status, low paid industry. Within the organisation, I am working in, I have very little power, and although I'm a manager of a department, they (other department heads) think I just sit around playing with the children all day, so it's no difference, that model is everywhere. So, I'm not sure what Mormon feminists want to achieve is the best way to achieve it.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation)

Ellen is not against feminist activism to combat pernicious gender stereotypes but is troubled by how Mormon feminist movements are combating discrimination in Mormon structures. Her comments suggest that she considers activism equates to overt resistance, which she feels is not always the best expression or tool to generate change in a Mormon context. Ordain Women protests to challenge priesthood authority are not representative of all feminist debates on how to approach oppressive gender practices and Ordain Women is just one of many narratives. Indeed, Nancy Ross and Jessica Finnegan's (2015) study of on-line feminist groups identified eleven Facebook groups devoted to Mormon feminism, and multiple blogs and podcasts, twenty of which contained a slightly different take or standpoint on Mormon feminism.

Of the participants who were aware of the aims of Ordain women, one of the main criticisms of the movement is they see it as in direct opposition to leaders of the Church. Patrick Mason (2013) believes that members will see Ordain Women as divisive because it critiques Latter-day Saint Leaders, which disrupts Mormon notions of unity and 'oneness'. Bryony, a former stake and ward Relief Society president, therefore, accepts feminism as a permissible stance in Mormonism but not Mormon feminism. She contends that Mormon feminist movements damage attempts to gain greater gender equality through their visible adversarial tactics towards the institutional structure and male authority.

Jane Pilcher's study (1998) on attitudes to feminism found that younger cohorts were more invested in gender equality and feminism than older women, due to diverse generational worldviews. While Ross and Finnigan's (2015) work on Mormon feminist Blogs found that a disproportionate of users were those under forty. However, I found that age was not a factor in

how British Mormon women encountered feminism nor was generational membership status. There is a similarity of expression regarding feminist agendas irrespective of different generations and life experiences. For example, Olivia, one of the youngest interviewees, when talking about Ordain Women (which she saw as synonymous as Mormon feminism) said:

> I've been very wary of going on any Mormon feminist sites, while I was on my mission the whole protest outside Temple Square was going on, and stuff like that.[82] I mean this whole 'women should get the priesthood' just seems to perpetuate the whole men's idea of angry feminist women protesting, you know like they hate all men, and I don't want to get involved in that.
>
> (Olivia, 21 years old, 4th generation)

Nyhagen and Halsaa (2016: 211) found that some of the religious women they interviewed described feminism as 'wanting to put down the men' or 'to be like men'. Correspondingly, Karen notes that 'I'm very sceptical about women [Mormon feminists], who would want to do that kind of thing [ask for the priesthood] as anything that discourages or belittles men I don't agree with' (51 years old, convert).

One reason Olivia and Karen may be a reluctance to associate with Ordain Women, or with the wider Mormon feminist community, I suggest, is a need to continue to receive benefits that Mormon men have permitted women to have. To remain in alliance with male members, rejecting Mormon feminism demonstrates their adherence to Mormon gender structures (Toscano, 2016b). This contention could also explain why participants feel able to express an appreciation for secular feminism as those acts are outside of the sacred space so is not seen as a direct attack on the institutional Church.

Ordain Women's dissent is highly visible as the group is a prolific user of social media, which has allowed them to create a global platform to critique the existing Mormon gender hierarchy (Stromberg, 2015; Toscano, 2016b). Feminist groups often use social media as it can provide an egalitarian form of dissemination of information, liberating space from androcentric control (Messina-Dysert, 2015; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2017). Mormon feminist communities are

[82] Ordain Women, a Mormon feminist social movement, organised on 6th April 2013 during general conference (see Glossary) a protest near Temple Square, Salt Lake City to raise awareness for priesthood for all.

mobilising cybercommunications as a supportive space to formulate neoteric forms of activism and have a global reach (Finnigan, Ross and Waters, 2015).

Yet, irrespective of age, no participants said they were active in Mormon feminist on-line communities. Critically, those who were aware of Ordain Women avoided any related sites or online discussion as they connected them with conflict with Church leadership. In comparison, all but three participants are active in their ward and stake Facebook pages. The most commonly cited reason to engage with local and regional congregational pages was they could share experiences of faith, keep up-to-date with changes in administration or Church policy and make connections within their religious community. These authorised channels are subject to male approved official moderation, which suggests this is unlikely to be a space where challenges to Church structures will be tolerated. [83]

Conclusion.

The British Mormon women I interviewed are not committed to Mormon feminist actions that support a radical dismantling of the Latter-day Saint patriarchal structure through female ordination. For some participants, Mormon feminist movements are referenced in relationship to women having the priesthood, reflecting liberal feminist notions of an equal playing field. Even though participants consider priesthood ordination for women is the only aim of Mormon feminism, Mormon feminist ideology is not monolithic (Ross et al., 2015). The lack of support for Mormon feminist movements could be symptomatic of how British Mormon women interpret activism as visible opposition to patriarchal privilege and power in the Mormon Church, rather than understand that agency is expressed in diverse forms (Burke, 2012; Mahmood, 2005). This means to gain support from committed British Mormon women, Mormon feminists could widen their forms of activism, such as showing how personal revelation is leading them to challenge the Latter-day Saint Church (Himonas, 2015).

British Mormon women understand that at times feminism is a positive force in their lives and can associate the improvements in their lives with feminist activism when it is located in a

[83] British ward and stake Facebook administrates are usually under the direction of the ward council and posting has to receive approval before it can see by members.

secular narrative. Conversely, they are reluctant to acknowledge Mormon feminism as beneficial and are unable to articulate how or why Mormon feminist discourses can function within the Church. This means some British Mormon women are conflicted in their perceptions of feminism. They recognise how secular feminist movements have improved opportunities and greater equality in the public space but see Mormon feminist movements that try to achieve the same aims in the Church as detrimental. Moreover, a small but significant number of participants saw Mormon feminism within the church, not as a movement to dismantle the Church patriarchal structure to foster personal empowerment, but an Americanised attack on religious rituals and doctrine that binds communities.

Chapter Nine: Mormonism, Gender, and Regional Practices

For some western scholars, as nations become increasingly modernised the decline and irrelevance of religion will eventually become a universal global phenomenon (Bruce, 2011). Whilst Europe is arguably shifting towards greater secularity in public spheres, the USA, despite being a modern democratic civic society, still remains a deeply religious place (Martin, 2004; Pew Research, 2015). The United States was not subjected to European papist absolutist control, which negated a secular liberation from religious structures and saw the emergence of greater freedom to worship (Woodhead, 2008). The religious emancipation of the country's earliest citizens led to the cultivation of uniquely American-centric new religions movements, such as Mormonism, creating interdependence between the United States and Mormonism that projects a decidedly American identity (Shipps, 1987). To be seen as an international religion, Mormonism will not only have to decouple itself from its American loci but adapt in nations that are encountering secularism and religion in a different form.

In Europe, where a state (Christian) religion often dominates the religious marketplace and religion's visibility in the public sphere varies, the Mormon Church will need to address mainstream cultural and religious norms that are decidedly non -North American (Mason, 2016; Rutherford, 2016). If Britain is navigating secularism and religion at a greater rate than America, tension may arise between British Mormon women and the wider community when negotiating the construction of gender. This chapter will discuss to what extent have social constructions of gender in a Mormon context been shaped by North American exceptionalism and the resulting impact on regional practices in global religion. This will add to the discussion on the degree gender in global religions is shaped by historiography, context and mainstream culture of their host nation.

Gospel Culture, British Identity, and Regional Practices

As Church teachings promote the uniformity of gender constructs (Sumerau and Cragun, 2015), most participants felt that while lived practices could differ, their gender and faith identities were more stable. Therefore, when asked to put 'British, Mormon and Woman' in order of importance, 27 participants choose Mormon or gender first. The most commonly cited explanation for placing gender and Mormonism before their national identity was some participants feel that Mormonism is the moral authority on defining their actions and lived practices rather than mainstream culture.

> Well I see myself as a woman first, and I put Mormon before British because that's more of my culture than being British is and I think it's more of my culture as we have got laws of the country living in England, but to me, the laws of the Church are more important in Britain.
>
> (Debbie, 43 years old, 2nd generation)

That Debbie values her 'Mormon culture' over her national identity is according to David Knowlton (1996), symptomatic of a Mormon 'supranational' identity that sees some members leave behind their own mainstream cultures for a more focused gospel culture. Gospel culture, as defined by Elder Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve (2012: para 6), is: 'a set of values and expectations and practices common to all members'. To achieve this 'supranational' gospel identity means that British Mormon women will seek processes of organising knowledge, practices and socialisation so that gospel culture becomes 'structures of expectation' (Paasi, 1991: 248).

The concept of structures of expectation is drawn from Bourdieu's (1977) 'habitus', but Anssi Paasi (1991) sees these expectations as scaffolding for practices that create spatial structuring of social norms to reinforce group identity. For Jill, who grew up in a ward in an inner southern multi-cultural city, structures of expectation are Mormon women are united through adhering to gospel principles rather than adopting dominant cultural traditions. She sees negotiations of gender as a multi-faceted way of interpreting being a Mormon woman and that Mormon women are cohesive when informed by their religiosity:

> I think there are cultural differences, but I see that Church women are members, not just women that come from different places and they have different cultural ways…In my experience, the gospel is for everybody, that it is something that resonates with everybody, which is the love of the Saviour. It doesn't matter whether you are a single woman, whether you are a woman who has children, everybody has that same focus.
>
> (Jill, 38 years old, 2nd generation)

Similarly, Jane, when asked what the differences between herself and other Mormon women are, she considers there is more likely a commonality rather than difference as women in the Church: 'the Church is worldwide, so I'm sure that many things that we have in common'.

As the institutional structure of Mormonism is a rigid, centralised, universally correlated system (Decoo, 2013; Phillips, 2006), this may account for why so many participants saw Mormon women as being untied through a gospel culture that transcends location. Debbie's comments are a casing point as she translates standardisation of teachings as a mechanism that develops 'Zion' like conditions, where Mormon communities are of 'one heart, one mind' (D&C, 7:11):

> The teachings of the Church on the whole unify, so ideally we should all be pretty similar in what we do, and our beliefs should be the same; therefore, the way we act upon this belief should all be in line with one another
>
> (Debbie, 43 years old, 2nd generation)

While Ellen considers that gospel values reduce difference between women and seems to suggest a universal Mormon gender paradigm that is centring female embodiment on Christian values, with Christ as the paradigm of behaviour is what creates a fixed identity :

> There shouldn't be a difference [between women] should there? Because if we are talking about Mormonism as a set of beliefs and values, which is based on a true belief in Jesus Christ and those key principles and contained within religion, then we would think throughout the world there wouldn't be that difference.
>
> (Ellen, 56 years, 2nd generation)

It seems that most participants felt the difference between themselves and other Mormon women are put aside if a commitment to gospel ideals was setting normative boundaries.

However, when considering generational membership and how they ascribe value to the key identity markers, 'British', 'Mormon' and 'Woman', we can see a marked difference between converts and later generations in how they value their national identity in comparison to their religious or gender. Converts to the Church, of which there were ten, were more fluid in their ordering of the identity markers and half the group placed British first or second as a key marker of personhood. In comparison, all ten second-generation women chose British last and seven put a woman as first in importance then Mormon. They appear to view their host nation as a much less defining category of identity in comparison with religious affiliation and gender. For example, Ellen suggests societal boundaries are to be seen as cultural rather than fundamental values: 'because when we talk about British, I mean people keep talking about these British values, but I'm not sure what that means. I think culture would be a better word; I think it's important to know your culture' (Ellen, 56 years old, 2nd generation).

There was not a clear causal factor to suggest why the majority of second-generation British Mormon women put a woman as the most important identity marker. Despite my probing, those participants who had put woman first argued that being a woman was something they had no control over, so saw their gender as fixed, making it highly relevant. My supposition over why second-generation Mormon women prioritise their gender is this generation is transitioning from converted parents but not yet mature membership. The state of flux that arises from these negotiations could mean that they construct gender as a stable identity. In hindsight, if I had scheduled the interviews in waves according to generation, I might have identified the pattern earlier and pressed for more insights. But in the absence of a substantive body of data, it is difficult to presume a singular factor or a meaningful thesis on why a woman was a key identity and national identity was the less valued for second-generation British Mormons.

In contrast, with third and fourth-generation Mormons, over eight out of the ten chose Mormon as the most important identity, then women and British as last. For example, Tasmin, whose grandparents joined the Church in the early 1960s, feels her religious affiliation is a more important marker of identity than gender:

> Being a Mormon is just such a huge part of my life; it's all of who I am and woman that's my identity, and British is my environment. I don't feel very loyal to my country, you know I'm, what's that word, not a patriot.
>
> (Tasmin, 24 years old, 3rd generation)

These generational shifts on the value placed on British identity in relation to gender and Mormonism reflect the generational attitudes of Muslim migrants in Britain (Modood, 2005). Tariq Modood (2005) found that Muslim migrants are developing a 'new way of living, gradually becoming a part of British society, which had to be ultimately justified in terms of compatibility with the Muslim faith' (p.31). Modood's contention may account for why third-generation Mormon women are becoming more aware of their religious identity as they are adept at negotiating between multiple identities and values, including secular principles. Yet, this fails to explain why several second-generation interviewees value gender above religious identity gender and rather ambivalent about an allegiance to a state.

If the way that Christianity is found in a nation influences Mormon lived religion, secular ideals would also shape how Mormon women attempt gender negotiations. This can be seen in the comments by Olivia, the only fourth-generation woman I interviewed, whose great grandparents joined in the late 1950s and whose mother is Swedish convert. Olivia's impressions of Swedish Latter-day Saint communities when staying with relatives in Sweden is a more rigid fundamental Mormon culture replaces the mainstream culture:

> When I lived in Sweden, I felt much more liberal. It seems that Swedish Mormons live in such a bubble, it seems as it is such a socially liberal society, they have almost completely rejected that to stay close to their faith. So almost all Swedish Mormons, that I knew, were hard-right political believers, that mothers stayed home and had as many children as possible, yeah you know because the commandment is to populate and replenish (pulls a face and shakes head in disbelief). It seems like there was a complete rejection of their culture in order to live their faith.
>
> (Olivia, 21 years old, 4th generation)

Olivia's perceptions could be interpreted that there is a level of secular ideals in mainstream culture that is accepted before Mormon congregations' rebel or resist, which will affect gender

negotiations. As Britain is still navigating the reach of secularism in religious congregations, this suggests that Olivia feels she is afforded a greater latitude to embody secular concepts of gender than maybe America, a still predominately religious country, or Sweden, a more secular nation.

However, Kim Östman (2010) argues that as the institutional Church has failed to acknowledge the need for diversification of Mormon experience, this is the factor in Mormon congregations outside of Utah becoming isolated from their host region. Van Beek (2005) believes that European Mormons will place a higher value on their own mainstream norms and local communal connections before those of an Americanised Church, something I have reported in earlier chapters on 'Molly Mormon'. And as Polly notes, Mormon women, irrespective of their location, are having to negotiate religion and mainstream culture in their own way:

> Thinking about it, you know there, it seems to me that there is more in common between Mormon Ghanaians and Catholic Ghanaians and Muslim Ghanaians than there is between Mormon Ghanaians and British Mormons because the way that they see Christianity and faith is different.
>
> (Polly, 47 years old, 2nd generation)

There is a need for further to explore sites of difference between Mormon communities and secularism on a global platform to gain meaningful data. This research is merely an entry point to understanding how Mormon women's negotiations of gender responds to societal expectations of secularisation and regional practices in a Global religion.

Regional Gender Practices in a Global religion

Location influences worldview. Paasi (1991: 248), a human geographer, believes that places and regions are both historically and geographically constituted, that whilst place is 'situated episodes of life history', regions are 'a social and cultural category with an explicit collective dimension'. Similarly, Benedict Anderson (2006) suggests communities become imagined when members of the community may not know each another individually but feel a collective connection because of what they see as a shared identity. Mormon communities are imagined through Paasi's idea of place by developing shared narratives that centre on religious

experiences, while regional practices in Mormon congregations are where mainstream societal and Mormon practices shape identity.

Ethan Yorgason (2003) claims Mormon regional culture can be thought of as conduits for structural shifts by the way that cultural adaption occurs within the Mormon structure. British Mormon women can act as agents of change if they are engaging in strategies to erode Utahan exceptionalism, which can cultivate autonomy from Mormon North American-centric concepts of gender. These local changes permit regional practices of Mormonism to take shape and positions gender constructs in Latter-day Saints communities as relational. In the case of Mary, who had served a mission with her husband in the United Saints, she understands place as a sorority emerging from the accepting of unilateral gospel values and region as the difference between mainstream Mormonism (North America) and local interpretation of Mormon structures and systems:

> Well, our mission was based in the State, and I've been to many different countries, I'd like to think that in many ways we are the same. But culturally things can be very different. I was just talking to a couple, who have just come back from their mission in Tahiti and the organisation the Church is very different there. I think faith, testimony, are in common with all women, and courage, and sacrifice, great sacrifice, but culturally these things can be linked differently, even though we feel the same.
>
> (Mary, 71 years old, convert)

I suggest that Mary is engaging in what Michael Curry (1999: 102) calls 'that's what we do here', meaning they are creating a model where region and place co-join to produce contextual social and cultural practices.

For some British Mormon women, 'that's what we do here' is how they justify deviating from what they see as Church culture expectations of homogenous gender construction. To illustrate, I will draw upon the case of Chloe and how she negotiates Mormon expectations of gender into regional practices. At the age of twenty-one, Chloe was sent to Africa to serve for 18-months as a missionary for the Church.[84] There she found Mormon women in the southern

[84] I have named the continent but not the country to maintain confidentiality.

hemisphere are in productive tension with Mormonism due to cultural divisions, which informed what she saw as lived practices rather than shaping doctrine:

> There's really not a lot of difference, apart from cultural I would say, which is a big thing and it does impact on many areas, as far as our values and what we feel about what's important that's all the same, but is a cultural thing that has an impact, that does impact standards.
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

Chloe considers the dominant values and norms of our geographical surroundings can be a barrier to the Church idea of universal gospel culture. Still, it is in her observation on the difference in modesty between western Mormon women and African Mormon women that shows how she processes regional practices.

Mormonism has prescribed world-wide dress standards for women and institutionally reinforced through Church policies and congregational boundary maintenance. For example, adult Mormon women who have been to the temple are expected to keep their shoulders covered and clothing to be knee-length.[85] However, Chloe can extend flexibility in accommodating southern hemisphere members approach to modest clothing as she contextualises the way they dress as 'that's what we do here' making it a relative standpoint:

> When I was on a mission, people didn't care about modesty that much, because I was in a hot place in Africa, that sort of thing I suppose means they are a bit blasé about other things because that's island cultural and island attitudes. It doesn't make them bad members; it just means that they live it within their culture of the gospel.
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

[85] Youth in the Church have far greater restrictions as the official Church prescribed guidelines for clothing is: 'Immodest clothing is any clothing that is tight, sheer, or revealing in any other manner. Young women should avoid short shorts and short skirts, shirts that do not cover the stomach, and clothing that does not cover the shoulders or is low-cut in the front or the back. Young men should also maintain modesty in their appearance. Young men and young women should be neat and clean and avoid being extreme or inappropriately casual in clothing, hairstyle, and behaviour' (LDS.org, 2010: n/a).

Chloe accepts these women had autonomy over their bodies relational to cultural context despite conflicting with mainstream Mormon culture. What Chloe does consider non-negotiable is when the women show religious pluralism as shifts too far from a sense of place:

> You always have to adapt it to the culture. There is a big cultural difference on the island, everyone lived two religions, that was really normal to see, but we had to say why was important to only live one in that aspect. But apart from that, it is all personal and adapting it to that person.
>
> (Chloe, 30 years old, 3rd generation)

Chloe's comments show while she was able to understand and accept a certain latitude in Church teachings, such as dress standards, as she sees that as cultural and contextually constructed, she resists alteration in forms of worship.

Since the beginning of the organisation of the Church, leaders have emphasised Mormons are '"a peculiar people" apart from the world', to produce a distinct identity (Decoo, 2013: 3). Church leaders, arguably, are constantly balancing 'centripetal' (drawing things toward the centre) and centrifugal (pushing outward from a centre to multiple)' to produce a collective consciousness in a proselyting religion (Francaviglia, 2015: 428). One example of how those two forces work in practice is the universal correlation of Church materials, where members are taught from standardised lessons, receive one worldwide magazine, and sing hymns with little allowance for local adaption (Kerr, 1995).[86] Church leaders claim that simplified uniform teachings develop a common gospel culture, which promotes the idea that a Mormon identity is universally constructed (Oaks, 2012). Yet as most American leaders oversee the correlation programme, some scholars contend this continues an American-centric production of knowledge that fails to recognise the globalisation of the Church (Decoo, 2013; Knowlton, 1994). After 50 years of correlating Church programmes and doctrine, Decoo concludes that in emphasising a generic, fixed and homogenous Mormon identity, Church leaders have made it difficult for members to express diverse forms of Mormonism in congregational spaces.

[86] The Church magazine Ensign is translated into Spanish and called the Liahona but content remains the same.

Like all religious identities, the Mormon identity is socially constructed by interactions shaped by historical and cultural context. But the lack of a substantive body of work on lived religion outside of the United States or comparative studies limits understanding on the extent that Mormon practices differ between countries (Decoo, 2013, Rutherford, 2016). However, some studies in North and South America show that in reproducing a dualism; innately American but prospectively world-wide, American exceptionalism is embedded into Mormon discourse (Knowolton, 1994; Phillips, 2008). Similarly, some participants query the extent the Church has decoupled Mormon norms from American culture by engaging in a distinctive strategy of resistance that I have named: 'it's a Utah thing'.

'It's a Utah Thing'

Carine Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen (2016), in her study of attitudes of European Mormon women, argues that gender norms were more reflective of the women's own countries mainstream culture rather than American Church traditions. To offset the framing of themselves as not adhering to Church teachings, some participants are challenging Utah as the paradigm of Mormonism by claiming, 'this is what we do here' but maintaining that they are still guided by Mormon (gospel) principles. At the same time, they see Utah members living what they see as Mormon culture: 'it's a Utah thing'.

When referencing Utah British Mormon women are alluding not only to the State of Utah but as a 'Mormon culture region' that reflects not only 'meaningful life space' but positions Mormons within a 'situation of power' (Yorgason, 2003: 18). Douglas Davies (2005: 256) commenting about American members understanding of the difference between mainstream culture and Church culture says: 'broadly speaking, Mormons in the United States consider culture as something that foreigners have, while what they have here in 'Zion' are simply gospel truths'. By that, Davies suggests that Latter-day Saint members in American see no disconnection between their cultural norms and their religious values as the Church is seen as symbiotic with mainstream American culture.

In asking about the difference between Mormon women, several women I interviewed emphasised how Utah's concept of gender is counter-intuitive to British values and norms and is not transferable outside of the inter-mountain range:

> there is a difference, definitely a difference between us, we are more reserved in this country, whereas Americans, especially the women, are so over the top as well. I think we are reserved as a family, but I think we are also reserved in a country about religion, but when I think about it, it is more Utah than Americans.
>
> (Sarah, 73 years old, convert)

While Bryony, who has a daughter living in Utah, believes that British Mormon women have an expansive view of internalisation, which is absent in the lived practices of Mormon women in Utah:

> I think they think [Utah Mormons] the world is in America, but we are much more an international community. I have been exposed to interracial and inter- global stuff far more than the Utah folk have. It's a strange thing; it is like an inversion as Utah exists because people came from Scandinavia and Scotland, France and Britain and they have kind of morphed into what we think of being a Utah Latter-day Saint woman who's become very insular.
>
> (Bryony, 68 years old, convert)

In perceiving Utah as parochial and isolationist, British Mormon women are counter-attacking American Mormon colonisation as they are reconfiguring Utah as the anomaly and Mormon communities outside of North America as models for global gospel living.

Re-conceptualising Utah women as the anomaly permit dissonance between British Mormon women's ideals of gender and Utah practices of gender. In the case of Tasmin, she suggests that British Latter-day Saint women are more closely connected in comparison to what she sees as Utah Latter-day Saint women's excessive competition:

> Here, obviously, it's a small community. We know each other so much more, and I guess for example, in Utah it is a big culture thing and that almost I think they have a competition

> over there, who is serving the most, like the most perfect Mormon woman and that's not what happens here.
>
> (Tasmin, 24 years old, 3rd generation)

Tasmin comments are reinforced by Tilly, who gained an insight into the hyper-vigilance of Utah American women through friends who had relocated to a suburb of Salt Lake City, where they struggled to construct an idealised Mormon gender script. In doing so, she sees these women not as aspirational but as deficit models of gender:

> So, we've got friends who have emigrated over there, and they found it quite difficult to integrate into the whole Mormon woman expectations role of going to these potluck dinners and bringing the most amazing food all the time. It seemed you had to be putting on the best; there were these themed parties where they cook the meals, it is almost keeping up with the Joneses experiences, trying to outdo one another.
>
> (Tilly, 36 years old, 2nd generation)

Tilly goes on to say that she believes, compared to British Mormon women, Utah women are living Mormon culture, which she attributes to American culture rather than religious norms.

As well as some participants perceiving Utah women living religion as a Mormon culture, rather than what they see as gospel principles, Sarah, considers British Mormon women are more likely to be devout. This belief could be interpreted as a defensive measure to address the historical belief that members in Utah are in a more religious place:

> you know I've never been [to Utah]. Still, when you see these missionaries and hear about their lives, I think the fact that everybody is in the Church in Utah does matter, as you will find something difficult in the Church, but it feels like they're not allowed to struggle and nor do they kind of feel those struggles. It seems in Utah they are very insular, and you can't think differently from everybody, and I think it would be like the Jewish people, you know where they say you were dead to me and you feel if you do something wrong in Utah, they will judge you harshly. I think it helps to live in a country where living the gospel is not easy because you kind of learn to accept one another, and you realise just how hard it is for other people to live the lives, whereas if you live in a cocoon, you would just feel so alone if you are struggling'.
>
> (Sarah, 73 years old, convert)

Sarah sees negotiating gender includes strengthening allegiance to Mormonism (gospel principles) while diminishing the influence of American norms (Mormon culture). This indicates that as a member of the Church outside of the United States, Sarah is trying to construct religious orthopraxis that is conceptualised within her own nation.

Norris and Inglehart (2006) argue that when people feel insecure as an individual, part of a family or in a community, they will seek greater religiosity to address this anxiety. Therefore, as Mormonism is the dominant religion in Utah State, Utah Mormons may be more vigilant about orthopraxis to be seen to fit into mainstream culture and avoid being stigmatised (Decoo, 2013). Erving Goffman (1990 [1968]) considers that stigma refers not only to an attribute that justifies exclusion from the main body but is a context-specific and societal construct. Erin's experience of being in Utah is one example of how responses to Mormon women who do not conform to Church teachings differ in the British and Utah Mormon context. Despite strict Church counsel against tattoos and multiple piercings for members (LDS.org., 2018), Erin acquired several tattoos during her teenage years. However, Erin did not feel she was any different from Mormon women until she went to Utah, where she felt like a 'spoiled identity' :

> I'm didn't really know until I was older I expressed myself different till the time when I went to Utah, it seems to me from what I understand it's definitely in the culture, it felt very different. I was walking down the street in Salt Lake with kids; maybe it is my perception. I found odd walking down the street with my tattoos….it is just so strange, it just felt very different.
>
> (Erin, 32 years old, 2nd generation)

Goffman (1990 [1968]: 17) suggests in response to being seen as a 'spoiled identity' by the dominant community, sometimes the individual will embrace the designated role as an identity marker to re-frame themselves as the norm and the dominant as the deviant. Likewise, if some British Mormon women see residing in a partially secularised state, not as a barrier but an opportunity to demonstrate loyalty to their religion, it could be a strategy that reclaims power from Mormons in Utah by re-imagining American Mormonism, not British Mormonism as stigmatised. This can be seen in how Polly describes Utah:

> Yes, I think when you look at Utah Mormons, I think a lot of the problems people have with Mormonism is to do with Utah Mormons and the way that they live their faith. I think that what's happened is this sort of Midwest American culture has infiltrated the faith, and so the problem isn't with Mormonism itself, but the way it's corrupted our religion'.
>
> (Polly, 47 years old, 2nd generation)

I suggest Polly is reclaiming hidden power through embracing her outsider status by claiming Utah hegemony is the issue and engages in resistance to the idea that members outside of America are less devout.

Michael Quinn (2001) identifies four factors that ensure Utah has privilege status in the Latter-day Saint Church: opportunities to associate with the highest Mormon authority; close familial networks with Church leadership; the legacy of Pioneers creating generational membership; and access to all the full extent of Church programs and information. Despite or maybe because of it, some British Mormon women see women in Utah not taking advantage of living in a Mormon community to improve their lived religious practices. For example, Lois parents and her siblings emigrated to Utah during the 1980s. She feels during that time they have moved away from what she sees as gospel practices, such as caring for the vulnerable, to Utah cultural norms that emphasise the appearance of service :

> I remember going to visit them [her sisters] in Utah at Christmas time, and they felt they had to give a gift to everybody, to every neighbour in the street, so stressed as they were baking mounds of cookies. I remember thinking that there is no need and then they were so busy doing that rather than feeding the homeless, but they're keeping up an appearance of what families do to serve others.
>
> (Lois, 62 years old, 2nd generation)

The 'othering' of Utah Mormon women as privileged culturally but not necessarily more devout is reflected in Jennifer Basquiat's (2004) work amongst Haitian Mormon males. In conversations with Haitian Mormon males, Basquiat found that they would joke about Haitians who migrated to America as intelligently inferior, simultaneously disparaging America as a preferential culture,

while reinforcing that 'every (Latter-day Saint) member belongs to a stable community that seeks not to leave Haiti but to stay and share kinship' (2004: 43).

To elevate their regional location as equivalent to Utah, Leah claims being a member in Britain gives her greater freedom of expression in Mormon congregations than Utah Mormons. She thinks a member in Utah finds it is easier to adhere to Church expectations, but it also means to 'live in a certain way'. For example, Leah suggests being gay in a dominant Mormon community would mean far greater social exclusion than found in British Mormon communities:

> Leah: "I don't think it's Mormon women who are different, I don't think it's the Church, but I think women all over the world would be different because of the way they are raised and how they live their lives. So, I think its culture that makes the difference you know as much as religion. I mean living in Utah as far as the Church is concerned it would be easier, it would be like a big cushion, but I probably wouldn't like as much as it would be easier, but it wouldn't be the way I would like to live".
>
> **Alison**: "Why is that?"
>
> Leah: "My view is, I think they would judge more, that they would, they wouldn't be as supportive because you've all got to live a certain way. I just think if you took them out of that Utah bubble, how would they survive? Live the gospel as we do? I mean can you imagine what it would be like for a child to grow up in Utah being gay, when I was on Tumblr I used to see a lot of them and just felt that it was so much harder for them than if they lived here".

Leah's comments imply that she sees British Mormon congregations as a broader negotiated framework of Church teachings, which encourage diverse forms of identity. For many participants, like Leah, essential to negotiating gender in lived practices is findings way to address the tension between religious beliefs and societal norms in a way that Utah Mormons do not have to encounter (Decoo, 2013). Another reason why British Mormon women feel that they have more latitude not only in their gender roles but in community expectations of religious behaviour could be that as North America is a more religious country. That Utah Mormon women strive to maintain religious legitimacy by being ultra-conservative whilst British Mormon women in a partially secularised society feel less constrained. Leah's reflections raise questions about the mutual benefits and interplay of being part of a Christian religious minority in a partially

secularised society, an area of research that is underdeveloped and would benefit for further inquiry.

Conclusion

Regions, like nations, exist as an imagined community possessed of practices, ideologies and consciousness that create inclusion (Anderson, 2006; Decoo, 2013; Yorgason, 2003). To create a 'region,' some participants are mobilising against what they see as American Mormon norms of gender and are negotiating gender in ways that reflect regional gospel practices that they feel better represents them as British Mormons. The institutional Church maintains that 'gospel culture' dismantles American exceptionalism to create an imagined global place where diverse Mormon communities unite through doctrinal practices (Oaks, 2012). Discussing the extent to which Mormon women in Britain are accommodating, reproducing, or resisting Mormon gender roles formed by American culture brings into perspective those oppressive gender inequalities that may be common to most congregations.

As Mormonism is always 'historically constituted' (Yorgason, 2003), the continual promotion of a global gender role within Mormon communities fails to recognise cultural relativism and the extent to which Utah exceptionalism has shaped Mormon gospel culture. Understanding how British Mormon women create strategies of resistance, such as 'it's a Utah thing', recognises the power imbalance between Mormon women in Utah and Mormon women in the rest of the world (Colvin, 2014; Graham-Russell, 2013; Kwok, 2012). A regional analysis of Mormon gender practices can explain how global religions police gender scripts because understanding where things occur is vital to understanding what is occurring, as in 'how we do things here' (Curry 1999: 100). In so doing, British Mormon women are challenging the existing Americanised Mormon gender script as they believe a global gospel gender role emulates sacred values that accept regional variations.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion

Mormonism invests heavily in producing and reproducing a homogenous structure with one appointed Prophet, one official doctrine and one global community. The Mormon Church encourages congregations to seek to become a 'Zion'-like people, where individualism is secondary to being unified through 'gospel values': 'And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them' (Doctrine and Covenants, 7: 11). According to Mormon doctrine, Zion is a utopia with uniformity of lived religious practices in harmony with Mormon soteriology that transcends location and socio-political differences. This thesis is an attempt to understand what 'Zion' looks like for Mormon women, in particular British Mormon women, by exploring the way they negotiate gender in the UK context. I contend that some British Mormon women are negotiating multiple forms of suppression, including an institutional Church that seems to be shaped by a Utah worldview and an all-male priesthood.

In examining the intersection between gender, Mormonism and regional practices, I dispute the notion that Mormon women construct gender in the same way and suggest instead, that their lived religion shows the diverse approaches, values and practices that make up their negotiations of gender. One critical way to understand how individuals construct a religious (gendered) identity is by exploring 'what people say is important to their lives and what they actually do' (Norris and Inglehart, 2011: 23). Thus, this study has drawn upon historical, religious, and societal ideas as they are practiced by British Mormon women experientially to see how gender is negotiated as religion-as-lived. The contribution that I make to knowledge is three-fold. First, I have addressed a gap in the literature on gender, Mormonism and lived religion by recording British Mormon women's (sometimes intimate) narratives, which show how embodied practices link the material reality with constructions of gender and faith. Second, by looking at five key themes (personhood; feminism; Church roles; work and home; and religion in public

spaces), this research offers insight on how some British Mormon women view women, priesthood and women's public position. Third, by looking at how some British Mormon women negotiate gender in a Church with American origins opens up insights on how a New Religious Movement operates on a global scale.

'How do Mormon Women in Britain Negotiate Gender?'

Until now, the body of literature on British Mormons has concentrated on nineteenth-century migration patterns or oral histories of Latter-day Saint members in Britain and Ireland (Bloxham et al., 1987; Bartholomew, 1995; Cuthbert, 1987; Doxey et al., 2007; Garr, 2007; Grant, 1992; Heaton et al., 1987; Jensen, 1987; Perkins, 2007; Rasmussen, 2016, 2010). It is not surprising that the majority of studies have focused on past events as the influx of British converts in the nineteenth century were instrumental in the creation of the Utah State, which means the British Mormon discourse is often historically constituted (Bloxham et al., 1987; Cuthbert, 1987). As Chapter Two notes, Mormonism appears as the quintessential American religion, but the oldest continuous Mormon congregations are in Britain. Missionary efforts in the nineteenth century were so successful in converting British people that by the 1890s over 1000,000 were baptised. Yet, cultural relativism in official Church history has seen early Church demands for British Latter-day converts to emigrate to Utah as the building of 'Zion' (Bloxham et al., 1987), rather than see these actions as systematic congregational asset stripping.[87]

The dismantling of Mormon congregations through migration and the Mormon practice of polygamy in America during the 1800s left many female members who remained in Britain vulnerable to persecution (Bartholomew, 1995). This thesis captures some of these narratives. Like Bryony's grandmother-in-law, who suffered for her religion by staying in Britain but unlike British Mormon women that emigrated, her story is untold in Church history. Similarly, over a hundred years later, Jill's recollection on why her father opposed her baptism shows the continuing fear that women converting to the Church would leave their families and emigrate to the USA. This study contributes to Mormon literature by recording how some contemporary

[87] By 1892 the Church membership in the British Isles had fallen to only 2,604, despite around 111,330 baptisms occurring between 1837 and 1900.

British Mormon women's lived experiences are informed by the historical, as well as cultural and theological narratives of Mormonism.

There is a lacuna of research on how Mormon women construct gender outside of the North American context. As one of the first sociological studies on gender and Mormonism in a contemporary British context, this thesis is not only about regional practices but also the way that British Mormon women negotiate gender constructions in secular and Mormon spaces. Embarking on research that has not been conducted before in Britain meant drawing upon other studies of American Mormon women to see how their understanding of Mormon doctrine drives gender constructions (Denagh II, 2014; Hoyt, 2007; Leamaster and Bautista, 2018; Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015). However, most studies only show the power disparities between American Mormon men and women and fail to interrogate the intersections of gender, Mormonism, and cultural identity. The lack of a substantive international body of work reinforces the perception of American exceptionalism in Mormonism and promotes universal homogenous portrayals of Mormon women (Inouye, 2014).

In addressing the gap in the literature on Mormonism and gender outside the USA, I am also responding to the Mormon Gender Issues Survey (2015). The survey was the first international study to attempt to understand member attitudes about gender and Mormonism. The Mormon Gender Issues Survey took a quantitative approach to the topic, which gave generalisable data. In contrast, as I discuss in Chapter Three, I chose a qualitative framework informed by feminist epistemology. I did this for two reasons; one reason was I felt qualitative methodological and methods are well suited to research on lived religion. The other reason as a new field of study I wanted to record rich, descriptive narratives and explore in granular detail lived religious practices of some Mormon women.

Feminist researchers attempting studies that reflect their own experiences, in my case as a white Mormon British woman, have been accused of being flawed as they are failing to establish critical distance and objectivity, rendering their analysis biased (Smith, 1987). Like other feminist researchers, I argue a feminist standpoint allows me to be transparent about my faith, gender and cultural location. I also contend that recognising how 'from the start, your project will incorporate your own values' (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002: 149) can be beneficial. For

example, in acknowledging my autobiography, I not only demonstrate reflexivity, but I also have a framework of reference when conceptualising the research aims and secondary questions.

In asking 30 British Mormon women 'How do Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender?' I drew upon semi-structured interviews that centred on questions based on the research aims:

1) What are the lived religious practices and expressions of British Mormon Women?
2) How do British Mormon women negotiate between their faith, British mainstream culture, and gender norms?
3) How do they negotiate the five key themes of i) personhood; ii) feminism; iii) church roles; iv) home and work; and v) religion in public spaces?
4) In their approaches to gender, how do British Mormon women navigate between national and global contexts and differences?

In arguing that the construction of gender is a series of negotiations (Ross et al., 2015), I challenge the notion that a Mormon gendered identity is fixed or uncontested. I also clarify that in this thesis (Chapter Four), I understand gender as specific societal expectations that bring 'reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes' (Connell and Pearse, 2015: 11).

Contributions to Knowledge

This thesis makes significant contributions to the sociological body of knowledge on gender and religion in three ways. 1) the first sociological study of Mormon women, gender and lived religion in Britain; 2) offers additional insights on women and the priesthood in a gender-traditional religion; 3) contributes to the literature on regional practices in a New Religious Movement.

First, by exploring how some British Mormon women negotiate gender, I am not only addressing a gap in the literature by locating the discussion outside of America, but I also go beyond official accounts of religious practices by looking at lived religion. Studies of religious organisations do have a place in the literature but in overemphasising formal versions of religion may be the cause of why some scholars struggle to go beyond whether religion is 'bad' and secularisation is 'good' for women (Jeffreys, 2012; Trzebiatowska and Bruce, 2012). In comparison, I consider that lived religion captures the material reality of how individuals experience religion in everyday practices that embodies a range of cultural as well as religious

sources (Ammerman, 2015, 2007; McGuire, 2008). By showing the negotiations of gender that occur through daily religious practices, I contend that much can be learnt about how Mormon women are agential in diverse ways, not just in resisting Church teachings but in the ways that their actions can be seen as empowered, instrumental and compliant (Burke, 2012).

In appearing to conform to Church teachings, some feminists would argue that unless religious women are resisting religious gender ideals, their submission is symptomatic of the way that religion reproduces norms that ensure continuing oppression (Dworkin, 1983; Zia, 2018). Yet, when talking about their everyday lives, most participants felt their actions, which appear androcentric (for example, praying to a male God), also draw upon a range of practices where they also claimed autonomy. Hence, answers to prayers allowed them to disregard male authority. Thus, this thesis sits within feminist scholarship that challenges the historical representation of religious women as passive victims of androcentric practices while offering a more nuanced understanding of agency in religious contexts (Aune, 2015a; 2015b; Aune, Sharma, and Vincett, 2008; Avishai, 2008; Burke, 2012; Himonas, 2015; Llewellyn, 2015; Llewellyn and Trzebiatowska, 2013; Mahmood, 2005; Nyhagen, 2019; Nyhagen and Halsaa, 2016).

By documenting religion-as-lived, I explore some of the contradictions that are inherent in negotiations of gender. Nowhere is that more apparent than in the case of Molly Mormon, where the narratives that some participants use to make sense of their lives are at times in conflict with their actions (Chapter Five). Molly Mormon is an exaggerated ideal of femininity emphasising biological essentialism and upholding patriarchal hierarchy to defend the idealised family structure (Allred, 2015; Beck, 2007; Farnsworth, 1991; Johnson, 1979; Kimball, 1979; Packer, 1998). Most participants say that they reject Molly Mormon as they consider it promotes a hyper-feminine, rigid performance that emulates peculiar Utah norms. Still, in everyday expressions, they appear to have internalised aspects of Molly Mormon by prioritising motherhood as they see it as fundamental to a female embodiment. Indeed, in lived practices, some participants approximate what Beaman (2001) calls the ideal Molly Mormon, a Mormon woman whose practices complies with the counsel of her Church leaders. It seems that participants are resisting the idea of Molly Mormon as they see it as a product of Utah

exceptionalism, rather than, as I would suggest, as a gender construct that introduces division and competition between women to isolate them from collective action.

Focusing on religion-as-lived allowed me to examine in-depth how some British Mormon women approach motherhood and the domestic space. Unlike some feminist depictions of motherhood as a form of drudgery or entrapment (O'Reilly, 2016), for most participants, mothering is understood as a religious imperative and a form of spiritual empowerment. In believing in a Heavenly Mother who is a co-partner with God, for some women, this translates into lived practices that adopt a more nuanced gender approach: the *guardian of the family* (Chapter Five). This finding is significant as the guardian of the family is a more fluid gender construction than Molly Mormon. I suggest that this is a way for some participants to reconcile Church teachings and secular expectations by defining their role as one that provides *and* nurtures families. But I also show how the guardian of the family is akin to patriarchy bargains (Kandiyoti, 1988), as most participants' negotiations of gender avoid violating too many Mormon leaders' expectations of gender rather than destabilising the institutional structure by introducing contested identities. Notwithstanding, as McGuire (2008) notes, religion-as-lived often develops practices that will inevitably place the individual at some point in conflict with their community (religious or otherwise). Therein lies the usefulness of a study of lived religion; it captures everyday interactions, that far from being religiously deterministic, are continually evolving religious and cultural norms into interpretative practices.

The *second c*ontribution to knowledge this study makes is that it shows how some British Mormon women approach five key themes: personhood; feminism; Church roles; work and home; and religion in public spaces. This adds a British Mormon perspective to the literature on women and the priesthood. In Chapters Six and Seven, I show how some interviewees, in line with other studies of American Mormon women (Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015; Pew Research, 2014), accept Church teachings on an all-male priesthood. Similarly, like most American Mormon women, they reject the aims of Mormon feminist movements, like Ordain women, that campaign for women to have the priesthood (Mormon Gender Issues Survey, 2015; Toscano, 2016b). Yet, in line with Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen's (2016) work on European Mormon women and Nyhagen and Halsaa's (2016) study of Christian and Muslim women in Europe, most

participants tended to express a 'contingent recognition' of feminist achievements. This means the majority of participants acknowledge the value and gains made by historic feminist activism, such as improved employment and maternity rights, but consider feminism, particularly Mormon feminism, is not compatible with faith.

Interestingly, when talking about equal opportunities (Chapter Six), most participants referred to liberal feminist ideals of 'sameness', which suggests that narratives on women and the priesthood centre around discourses that equate equality with the removal of difference. In other words, some participants may be rejecting feminist movements as they conceive of feminism as a monolithic discourse rather than a range of positions that engage with the centuries-old struggle for equality, well-being and full participation for all. In response to the descriptions of some Mormon women about Mormon feminism, I suggest that more needs to be done by Mormon feminists on reclaiming theology that advocates for equality (Brekus, 2016; Brooks, 2016; Bushman, 2016; Kline, 2014; Morrill, 2016; Toscano, 2012b).

In recording how participants view feminism, Mormon or otherwise, I have shown gaps in knowledge that could be barriers to furthering efforts to combat practices that limit equal opportunities. For example, for the most part, participants are aware that the Church structure is unequal and does deny women access to administrative control but are reluctant to call the Church sexist. What I add to feminist analyses that bemoan women's lack of interest in being ordained is the insight that most participants tend to see sexism and gender discrimination as an individual rather than a structural problem. I evidence the way some participants internalise benevolent sexism by accepting Church teachings that reinforce discrete gender roles to justify women's exclusion from power in public spaces. In addition, my findings on the way that some participants see resistance to the priesthood as the ability to claim spiritual authority through personal revelation coincide with other studies of American Mormon women (Bushman, 2016; Campbell, 2016; Hickman, 2016).

Lastly, the *third* contribution to the sociological knowledge on religion and gender is to explore regional practices in a religion founded in America. In particular, how British Mormon women recognise and respond to how Utah informs and influences Mormonism (Chapter Nine). The finding that some British Mormon women, like most members in Europe (Decoo, 2013), are

having to find ways of 'strengthening' allegiance to Mormonism whilst 'loosening' the influence of American norms is not new. There is a significant body of work on the tension created between a religion that embraces its American origins and mainstream cultural, and religious norms that are decidedly non-North American (Chen, 2008; Colvin, 2015; Davies, 2005; Decoo 2013; Hawkins, 1988; Inouye, 2014; Kwok, 2012; Mason, 2016; Mauss, 2013). What is less known is how members outside of Utah are conceptualising a 'gospel culture' that accepts regional variation when constructing everyday lived practices.

The Church may claim ‘gospel culture’ transcends American exceptionalism (Oaks, 2012: n/a), but the literature shows policies, practices and Church administration are still informed by American values (Colvin, 2015; Decoo, 2013). This includes the Church discourse on gender, where arguably it has much in common with complementarianism found in other American gender-traditional religions such as evangelical Christianity (Beck, 2007; Benson, 1987; Farnsworth, 1991; Sumerau and Cragun, 2015). The finding that some participants are acutely aware that most Church programs and administration reflect a culture centred on an American operational model aligns with the Basquiat (2004), Colvin (2015), and García (2015) studies of non-American members. I also contend this situates my work within research on European members that discusses attitudes to Utah and its privileged access to Mormon leadership, cultural capital and institutional power (Decoo, 2013; Decoo-Van Welkenhuysen, 2016; Van Beek, 2006).

The research brings to attention how in response to perceived institutional American exceptionalism some British Mormon women, who are among the most active in their communities and are often in leadership roles, are adopting what they term: ‘*It’s a Utah thing’*. Perhaps due to the legacy of early mass migration by British converts to Utah, there is a perception by some participants that British Mormon lived religious practices are more in line with gospel culture than those of Mormons in the United States. Similar to the way interviewees demarcate between the ‘priesthood’ as divine power from God and ‘priesthood’ as the authority of men, for some women, 'this is what we do here' is reproducing Mormon doctrine, while Utah lived religious practices reproduce Mormon culture or ‘it's a Utah thing’. One example of how participants make distinctions between Utah Mormonism and the gospel of the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints is the reconfiguring of Molly Mormon. Defining Molly Mormon as 'it's a Utah thing' they appear to be diminishing the authority of Utah to dictate gender roles but are still willing to accept the underlying constructs of Molly Mormon because being a wife and mother is the ultimate Mormon female embodiment.

Drawing upon 'it's a Utah thing' as a strategy of resistance, however, may disappear from usage in the next few years. The Church has recently announced that under prophetic guidance 'the term "Mormonism" is inaccurate and should not be used. When describing the combination of doctrine, culture, and lifestyle unique to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the term "the restored gospel of Jesus Christ" is accurate and preferred' (Mormon Newsroom, 2018: n/a). Moving forward, this removal of Mormon from Church usage might see future efforts by British Mormon women to diminish the authority of Utah limited as they will be mobilising against 'the restored gospel of Jesus Christ' rather than Mormonism. Either way, in practice, for most British Mormon women I interviewed, everyday interactions are rarely in discrete categories: gospel principles or Utah Mormon culture. The material reality is for the most part negotiations of gender are much more complex, fluid, and untidy than official Church teachings would have us believe.

Themes for Further Discussion

As the Latter-day Saint institutional structure reproduces patriarchal power that operates on a structural level, inevitably it will have 'interlocking systems of oppression based on gender, race class, culture and religion' (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1992: 6). The experiences of Karen raises questions about what it means to be a black woman in a white church. For her, to remain within boundaries of acceptable Mormonism, gender negotiations become secondary to her navigating being black in a white space.

The ongoing discussion about race and the Church is still informed by the historical discriminatory policies that limited participation for black membership, making the Church sensitive towards accusations of continuing racial insensitivity and exclusion in high-level leadership (England, 1998). There is also evidence that the Church is becoming more visibly vocal about distancing itself from accusations of continuing racial discrimination (Mormon Newsroom,

2017).[88] However, 40 years on from the ordination of black men to the priesthood, as of 2019, there are still only two apostles of African descent and another general authority of Melanesian (Fijian) heritage. Recent publications on race, ethnicity and Mormonism are encouraging as it signals there is more academic engagement with race and Mormonism in an international context (Aikau, 2013; Colvin and Brooks, 2018; García, 2015; Harris and Bringhurst, 2015; Mueller, 2017; Reeve; 2015; Stevenson, 2014). However, more can be done to identify the extent the Church leaders and members are addressing hidden and visible racial hierarchies and practices outside of the USA.

Recently, the Church is becoming more visible in addressing racism. Within a day of the protest at Charlottesville, USA, 2017, the Church had posted a response online before local leaders read out the statement to their congregation condemning the actions of far-right groups. Increasingly, the institutional Church is bypassing traditional forms of instructions for members, such as through letters to leaders and printed materials, and communicating directly with members through online forums, social media and the Church website (Brooks, 2016; Haglund, 2016). There is an emerging body of work on the role new technology offers in facilitating critical discussion of Mormon structures, policies, and history (Ross, Finnegan, and Waters, 2015; Toscano, 2016b), but this area is relatively under-researched. Although I do reference how some participants are engaging with social media, the body of literature would benefit from more research on how social media generates new forms of lived religion.

The Internet has facilitated online forums to debate more openly Mormon teachings that are in opposition to mainstream societal norms, such as the Church stance on LGBTQ+ and women and the priesthood (Ross, Finnegan, and Waters, 2015). When I asked what change they would like to see in the next ten years in the Church, a small but significant number of women I

[88] The Church released a statement on Sunday, August 13, 2017: 'It is with great sadness and deep concern that we view the violence, conflict and tragedy of recent days in Charlottesville, Virginia. People of any faith, or of no faith at all, should be troubled by the increase of intolerance in both words and actions that we see everywhere. More than a decade ago, the late Church President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2008) addressed the topic of racism when speaking to members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He powerfully and clearly taught this principle: "No man who makes disparaging remarks concerning those of another race can consider himself a true disciple of Christ. Nor can he consider himself to be in harmony with the teachings of the Church of Christ." For members of the Church, we reaffirm that teaching today and the Saviour's admonition to love our neighbour. Our prayers are with those who are suffering because of this intolerance and hatred. We pray for peace and for understanding. Above all, we pray that we may treat one another with greater kindness, compassion and goodness' (Mormon newsroom, August 13, 2017).

interviewed wanted LGBTQ+ members to feel as accepted into congregations as heterosexual members in the Church. [89] I suggest further studies on European Mormon congregations and attitudes to homosexuality exploring how members negotiate between official doctrine and religion-as-lived could add a critical body of work on lived religion.

Entitling my thesis 'As Sisters in Zion?' I am questioning established notions of Mormon sorority. According to some American feminists, the Latter-day Saint Church's maintenance of a male-dominated hierarchy is causing congregations to polarise into women defending existing orthopraxis and those who critique unequal leadership (Haglund, 2016). In a religion with seemingly standardised theology, programmes and cultural practices – which have instilled into the membership an expectation of unification and utilitarianism – it seems schisms are becoming greater between women rather than between men and women. By offering a more nuanced understanding of how some British Mormon women negotiate gender, this thesis challenges the bifurcation of Mormon women as it documents the complexity and diversity of Mormon women's lived religion.

By expanding the frames of analysis, I am contributing a study that in asking how religious and secular norms shape gender, shows that rarely are religious teachings translated into rigid uniformity in women's lived practices. I explore the everyday social interactions that capture how some devout Mormon women make sense of their faith in ordinary places and through mundane acts and embodied practices. The doctrine and the teachings of Mormonism are but one aspect of religiosity. This research emphasises that for the British Mormon women I interviewed, religion-as-lived is a series of contested, unstable and creative practices that allow new forms of religion to emerge, including negotiations of gender. As such, this thesis becomes part of a larger body of feminist scholarship that no longer asks whether or not women in a patriarchal church are agential but, instead, explores the complicated nature of agency found in women's lived religion.

[89] Five women out of thirty asked for the Church to re-evaluate approaches to the LGBTQ+ community.

Appendices

Research Questions and Semi-Structured Interview Questions

As Sisters in Zion: How do Mormon women in Britain negotiate Gender?

Overarching Research Aim
To understand how Mormon women in Britain negotiate gender.

Secondary Research Questions
What are the lived religious practices and expressions of British Mormon Women?
How do British Mormon women negotiate between religious, mainstream cultural and gender norms?
How do they negotiate the five key themes of: i)personhood; ii) feminism; iii) church roles, home, and work; iv) religion in public spaces?
In their approaches to gender, how do British Mormon women navigate between national and global contexts and differences?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Can you please put these three words into order, British, Mormon and Woman? Why?
2. In what way do you practice your faith? What does being a Mormon mean to you?
3. To what degree is there a difference between you and Mormon women in other countries?
4. Do public institutions, such health care providers, schools and nurseries, allow for you and your families religious practices?
5. Do you feel able to express your faith in public, for example, in the workplace, school gates, and civic spaces?
6. How do you feel about your role and responsibilities in the Home/Work/ Church? Do you feel you are fulfilling your potential?
7. To what extent do you think your role and responsibilities differ from a man's role?
8. Reproduction, for example, having children and being a mother, is important for many Mormon women. What are your feelings about abortion? What influences your thinking about contraception?
9. Have you heard of the Church expression of motherhood being equal to the priesthood? What do you think it means?
10. How do you respond to the representation of women in the media? And in regard to religious women?
11. Social Media is used a lot in Church and by Church members. Are you part of any Facebook groups just for Mormons? Have you seen or heard about any Mormon Feminist Groups on Social Media?

12. What do you think are the aims of Mormon Feminists? How do they differ from feminists who aren't members of the Church?
13. If women were to serve in more administrative and leadership roles in the Latter-day Saint Church, how would that affect your religious/spiritual life?[90]
14. As a Mormon woman, what, if anything, would you like to see changed in the Church over the next ten years?

[90] Taken from the Mormon Gender Issues Survey. http://mormongendersurvey.org Accessed May 2016

Demographics

Name	Age	Membership	Ethnicity	Temple	Mission	Relationship Status	Children	Education Employment
Abigail	26	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Single	No	Teacher
Beatrice	94	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Widow	3	Designer
Bryony	68	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	4	Teacher
Celia	41	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	3	Cook
Chloe	30	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	2	Teacher
Debbie	43	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	5	Carer
Elaine	54	Convert	White British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	0	Office Admin
Ellen	56	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	6	Early years Teacher
Emily	57	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Temple Divorced	4	Teaching Assistant
Erin	32	2nd Gen	White British	No	No	Married	3	Bank Cashier
Evie	32	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	3	Care Worker
Grace	27	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	2	Nurse
Helena	57	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Divorced	6	Teaching Assistant
Hope	28	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	2	Teacher
Jane	57	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	5	Teaching Assistant
Jean	59	Convert	White British	Yes	Yes	Single	0	Teaching Assistant
Jill	38	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	2	Teacher
Karen	51	Convert	Black British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	0	Office Admin
Keziah	25	3rd Gen	White British	No	No	Single	0	Team Leader
Leah	18	3rd Gen	White British	No	No	Single	0	Student
Lois	62	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	6	Teacher
Mary	71	Convert	White British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	4	Bank Cashier
Meredith	32	3rd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	3	Teacher
Olivia	21	4th Gen	White British	Yes	Yes	Single	0	Student
Polly	47	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Divorced	6	Teacher
Sarah	73	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	3	Artist
Sonia	61	Convert	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	7	Nurse
Susie	57	Convert	White British	Yes	Yes	Temple Married	3	Archivist
Tasmin	24	3rd Gen	White British	No	No	Single	0	Early years Teacher
Tilly	36	2nd Gen	White British	Yes	No	Temple Married	2	Company Director

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Alison Halford. I am a PhD candidate at the Centre of Trust, Pace and Social Relations at the University of Coventry. I would like to invite you to take part in my research study on how Mormon women in Britain negotiate Gender.

Why have I been chosen to participate?

As a someone who attends the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at least three times a month, and resides in the United Kingdom, you can offer an insight into how it feels to be a Mormon woman in Britain. The thoughts and feelings you express are valuable as it will help us understand how women in religious communities are making sense of their lives.

What do I have to do if I agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in my research, I will interview you at the time and location of your choice. The interview will involve questions about how you feel about your role as a woman in the Home and Workplace, what does being a Mormon in Britain mean and your views on equal practice and the Church. It should last about 45- 90 mins.
With your permission, I will audiotape and take notes during the interview. The recording is to accurately record the information you provide and will be used for transcription purposes only. If you choose not to be audiotaped, I will take notes instead. If you agree to be audiotaped but feel uncomfortable at any time during the interview, I can turn off the recorder at your request. Or if you don't wish to continue, you can stop the interview at any time.
I expect to conduct only one interview; however, follow-ups may be needed for added clarification. If so, I will contact you by email/phone to request this, but you can decline to be re-interviewed at any time.

How will this data be used?

The findings from this data will form my thesis, which will be submitted 2018/2019, and if accepted, it will be published in book form. The data may also be used in academic journal articles, book chapters and other forms of publishing to increase our understanding of the lives of Mormon women in Britain.

Will the data be protected, and my confidentiality ensured?

Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible. If the results of this study are published or presented, individual names and other personally identifiable information will not be used.
The data will use pseudonyms, and it will not name the congregation that you attend but will use the region rather than towns/cities when mentioning the location. All data will be stored securely and will not be used to damage or likely to cause distress to you. As I will be transcribing my own research, access to the data will be limited to myself and my Director of Studies Dr Kristin Aune, which will assist in retaining the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviews. When the research is completed, I will save the notes for use in future research, so I may retain these records for up to 10 years after the study is over. The same measures described above will be taken to protect the confidentiality of this study data.
Until September 30th, 2017, you can request to have your interview removed from the data collection, destroyed or returned. After this period and until 30th September 2026, it may not be possible to remove your interview notes from the data set but you can ask and will have the notes from your interview

destroyed or have the notes returned to you. After the 30th of September 2026, all records of the interviews will be erased permanently.

What are the risks associated with this project?

As with all research, there is a very small chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, we are taking precautions to minimize this risk. To minimize the risks to the confidentiality, we will collect only personal information that is relevant to the research and will only be used for the purposes of this research, which will be stored separately from the data.
Some of the research questions may make you uncomfortable or upset, so you are free to decline to answer any questions you don't wish to or to stop the interview at any time.

What are the benefits of participating?

You will not be paid for taking part in this study, but by talking about your experiences, it will offer a greater understanding of Mormon woman and their lives and contribute to our knowledge in how religious women encounter gender

What happens if I don't want to take part?

You can decline to answer any questions and are free to stop taking part in the project at any time. Whether or not you choose to participate in the research and whether or not you choose to answer a question or continue participating in the project, you will not need to give reasons or expected to explain as I will always respect your decisions in this matter.

How can I get in contact with the researchers?

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Content removed on data protection grounds

RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct:

Consent Form

I voluntarily agree to participate in this research project. I understand that this research is being conducted by Alison Halford from the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University in the UK to gain an understanding of how Mormon women negotiate gender.

I understand and confirm the following by initialling each that applies:

I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	
I voluntarily agree to participate in the project and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me, and I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	
I understand that interviews will be recorded by audio and an explanation of how that data is stored has been explained to me.	
The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me, and I can request, if I wish, to see a copy of any written reports and articles before publication.	

Name of Participant Date Signature

_____ _____

_____

Name of Researcher Date Signature

_____ _____

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De-Briefing Form

As Sisters in Zion: How do Mormon women in Britain negotiate Gender?

During this study, you were asked to participate in an interview to discuss your thoughts and feelings concerning your role as a woman in the home, workplace and Church.

The purpose of the study was to discover the relationship between religion, mainstream cultural and gender. If you have any concerns about your participation or the data you provided in light of this disclosure, please discuss this with me, and I will be happy to provide any information I can to answer questions you have about this study. If your concerns are such that you would now like to have your data withdrawn, and the data is identifiable, I can do so.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Council UK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct: http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUKprod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf

Please again accept our appreciation for your participation in this study.

Alison Halford

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Glossary

This glossary includes key terms in Mormon religious and cultural life and the biographies of Church Mormon Leaders and significant Mormon individuals referenced in the Thesis.

Aaronic Priesthood: The lesser order of the lay priesthood, named after the Old Testament High Priest and brother of the Prophet Moses, Aaron. The Aaronic priesthood is available to all young men aged 12 and over and has four offices: Bishop, Deacon, Teacher and Priest.

Abortion: The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Members are prohibited from performing, arranging, paying, consenting to or encouraging an abortion, except for pregnancy due to rape or incest, the life or health of a mother is in jeopardy, or the foetus has severe defects that will not allow survival beyond birth.

Active: Term to denote members who are observing a Mormon lifestyle by Church attendance, pious devotion, and charitable service. An active member will be attending sacrament services and religious education classes on Sunday; donating tithing and other financial contributions; serving in a variety of Church callings; have taken out their endowments and are performing temple ordinances on behalf of the deceased; personal and family prayer; scripture study; hold family home evening (see Family Home evening); keep high standards of personal honesty and integrity; genealogical research; service in the community; and cultivate habits of thrift and self-sufficiency.

Agency (often called free agency): the rights to choose, along with taking responsibility for the choices made.

Apostle: Reflecting the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles is the second-highest authority in the Church. Unlike other appointments in the church, the calling as an apostle is lifelong.

***Apostates*:** Members or former members who seriously oppose or actively dispute teachings of the Church, publicly or privately.

Archives*:* A record-keeping in Salt Lake City that facilities that hold Church membership information, historical accounts, and the largest collection of genealogical data in the world.

Area Authority: **A** priesthood leader who serves in a teaching and training capacity for stake leaders and reports to the Quorum of the Twelve.

Articles of Faith: The articles of faith are 13 simplified tenets of belief. Originally written by Joseph Smith in response to questions from the Chicago newspaper editor Mr Wentworth in 1842 and now regarded as scripture.

***Auxiliary organizations*:** Church organisations, which work with Primary (children), Relief Society (adult women), Sunday School, and Young Men and Young Women.

Baptism: Baptism in the Church has two purposes: to be recorded as a member of the Church and for salvation. Baptism is required for everyone over the age of eight to become a member of the Church and be recorded on the Church records. A priest holder, who has the office of Priest or above, performs the ordinance of Baptism by immersion.

Baptism for the dead: Baptism for the dead is the proxy performance of the ordinance of baptism in the Temple for someone who is deceased by members over the age of 12.

Bear testimony: To express the personal belief of the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Beck, Julie (1954-): 15th general president of Relief Society (2007-2012).

Benson, Ezra Taft (1899-1994): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1943-1985) and the 13th President (1985-1994).

Bible: The Church authorises the use of the Latter-day Saint edition of the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. The edition has KJV text with the addition of footnotes that cross-reference to the other passages in the Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Spanish speaking members use the Church edition of the Reina-Valera Bible.

Birth control: The current official Church policy is couples should decide between themselves and God how and when and how many children. The Church strongly discourages sterilisation as an elective birth control unless medical conditions seriously jeopardise life or health.

Bishop: A male lay leader who oversees a congregation known as a ward. The term of office is variable, but the average is between 5-7 years. Bishops are chosen by the stake presidency and must have approval from Salt Lake City. The person is 'called', not appointed and is usually a married member who holds a current temple recommend. The bishop will hold the Melchizedek priesthood office of the high priest and the Aaronic priesthood and is given the 'keys' to minister over a ward.

Bishopric: Two male lay leaders who serve with the bishop. The bishopric is chosen by the bishop and approved by the stake presidency. The term of office is variable and can be single or married but must hold a temple recommend and be a high priest.

Black Priesthood and the Temple Ban: During the time of the Prophet Joseph Smith, some Mormon men of African descent were ordained to the priesthood. His successor, Brigham Young, discouraged the practice, resulting in a century of racial discrimination as black African men and women were denied the priesthood and temple rites. President Spencer W. Kimball rescinded the policy in June 1978.

Bloggeranacle: The body of Mormon focused blogs on the internet. The term is derived from the word tabernacle, referencing the historical and symbolic building located in Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Book of Mormon: The Book of Mormon is the record of God's dealings with people who lived in ancient America and engraved onto gold plates and translated by Joseph Smith.

Born in the covenant: Children born to a couple after they have been married (sealed) in a temple.

Branch: A congregation that has limited priesthood and membership. To form a branch, there must be at least two families and one member a worthy Melchizedek priesthood holder or Priest in the Aaronic priesthood.

Brethren: Reference to all male members of the Church; is also used to refer to the general Authorities of the Church.

Brigham Young University: Brigham Young University (BYU) is a four-year private institution located in Provo, Utah, owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The majority of students at BYU are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Still, members of other faiths are accepted if they observe standards of conduct, i.e. no sexual activity before marriage, no alcohol.

Brother and Sister: A form of address used between members to signify their spiritual sibling relationship as children of God.

Callings: The Church has no paid ministry in local wards or stakes and draws upon volunteer service by the members, who are 'called' by priesthood leaders in various roles for indefinite periods. A call will be the result of Church leadership praying about an individual to serve in a responsibility, then interviewed to see if worthy to accept a calling. Once accepted, the name is put before the congregation for a sustaining vote. The sustaining vote is not an election but allows the congregation to show support and cooperation. Members do not canvas or offer themselves for callings, and the calling can be refused but committed Latter-day Saints are expected to accept and fulfil one or more callings at any given time.

Chapel: The room or hall in a Church meetinghouse used for worship services.

Child of God: A revered primary song and the Latter-day Saint belief that in they are spirit children of a Heavenly Father and Mother and relationship is eternity.

Church Discipline Councils: Serious transgressions, such as abuse, adultery, fornication, and homosexuality require Church discipline, which may result in restriction of Church membership privileges (disfellowship) or loss of Church membership (ex-communication).

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: The official Church policy is for members to refer to the Church by its full title. It discourages the use of the term Mormon, the Latter-day Saints Church or the LDS Church when talking about the institution but members can reference themselves as Latter-day Saints or Mormons.

Celestial Kingdom: The highest level of exaltation in Mormon doctrine. Those who achieve this state will be married for all eternity and will become Gods.

Companion, (missionary): A missionary's partner.

Compassionate service: Aid or comfort rendered to others. Also denotes a Relief Society calling (see callings).

Confirmation of the Holy Ghost: Confirmation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is an ordinance that follows baptism by immersion for the remission of sins. It is administered by the laying-on of hands by men holding the priesthood. The confirmation is usually performed at a baptismal service or fast and testimony meeting.

Consolidated Programme: Before 1980, the members would attend meetings during the week, in addition to morning and afternoon meetings on a Sunday. To increase time members spent with their families and reduced unnecessary financial burden, the First Presidency simplified the schedule into a three-hour block of meetings on a Sunday, known as the consolidated programme.

Convert: Term to demarcate members who have chosen to join Church, sometimes known as first-generation, from those who are born into the Church.

Deacon: The lowest priesthood office in the Aaronic priesthood and allows the holder to pass the sacrament.

Discussion (missionary term): A lesson based on fundamental gospel principles presented to interested non-members.

Divorce: Official Church policy is both civil and temple divorce is permitted.

Doctrine and Covenants: The Doctrine and Covenants is a collection of revelations given to prophets since Joseph Smith.

Elder: The term Elder references three distinct roles: priesthood office, missionary, Apostle.

Elder (Apostle): Title for the highest-ranking members of the Church Leadership. i.e. Apostles are referred to as Elder Jeffery R. Holland or Elder Holland.

Elder (Missionary): Title and form of address for males during their two-year voluntary service as missionaries.

Elder (Priesthood Office): A rank in the Melchizedek priesthood for all observant males over the age of eighteen.

Endowment: A religious rite performed in Mormon temples for members over the age of eighteen, who hold a temple recommend. Its purpose is the making of covenants and receiving new knowledge that indicates a higher level of commitment.

Enduring to the end: The doctrine that committed Church members must continue to show their faith through good works until the end of mortal life.

Enrichment evening: A meeting for all women over the age of eighteen organised by Relief Society.

Ensign: The official Church magazine.

Eternal life: Exaltation in the highest degree of the celestial kingdom (see exaltation).

Eve: The first woman. Latter-day Saints view her as one of the greatest and noblest of all women, along with Mary, mother of Christ.

Exaltation: Attainment of the highest degree of glory in the celestial kingdom.

Ex-communication: A disciplinary action against a Church member in which membership is withdrawn.

Family history**:** Members are expected to trace family lineage to at least four generations and compose ancestral histories.

'The Family: A Proclamation to the World': Official Church statement on September 23, 1995, on gender and the reaffirmation of the centrality of heterosexual marriage.

Family Home Evening (FHE): Since 1915, the Church has encouraged families to reserve one night a week (Mondays) for study, discussion and other activities to improve family relations and teach religious principles that are family directed. No Church meetings are scheduled for a Monday evening.

Fast offering: The donation of the cost of the two meals into fast offering to be used in worldwide humanitarian projects.

Fast Sunday: The first Sunday of every month where members abstain from food and drink for two consecutive meals for twenty-four hours and attend fast and testimony meeting.

Fast and Testimony meeting: The sacrament meeting on each fast Sunday, which is devoted to the voluntary bearing of testimony by members

Fellowshipping members: The practice of established Church members helping new or inactive members to assimilate into Church culture.

Firesides: Informal gatherings of Church members and friends, often in homes and usually on Sundays with a spiritual message.

First Presidency: The President of the Church and his counsellors; the highest-ranking quorum in the Church.

First Vision: According to Mormon belief, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in 1820 in his response to his prayers about which Church to join in a forested area, known as the Sacred Grove, near Palmyra, New York State.

Follow the brethren: Ubiquitous Church phrase that means obedience to the counsel of local and general leaders of the Church.

Food storage: Church leaders encourage members, where possible, to store food, clothing, fuel, and other items to last three months in preparation for emergencies.

For Strength of Youth (FSY): Bi-annual year residential conference for youth in Europe, under the direction of the Area Authority and delivered by Young Single Adults to facilitate spiritual connections and friend opportunities for youth aged 12 -18.

General Authority: A leadership position of authority that includes area authorities, apostles and the First Presidency.

General Conference**:** Semi-annual meeting that is held in Salt Lake City, Utah on the first weekend of April and the first weekend of October broadcast to congregations and homes globally. It consists of five two-hour sessions that are overseen and delivered by General Authorities. All new policy, statistics, and sustaining of General authorities is conducted at General Conference.

General Relief Society Presidency: The general Relief Society presidency are not considered general authorities, but these three women are based in Salt Lake City and are among the highest-ranking women in the Church's hierarchy, responsible for the overseeing of Relief Society worldwide. The general Relief Society presidency is under the direction of the Prophet and the Quorum of the Twelve and is assisted and advised by a Relief Society general board.

The General Women Conference: A semi-annual meeting for females over the age of eight held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on the weekend before general conference.

Gospel Doctrine: Adult Sunday school class

Gospel Principles: Adult Sunday school class for new members and investigators.

Heavenly Father: Another name for God.

Heavenly Mother: Female counterpart to God. Also known as Mother in heaven.

High Council: A group of 12 high priests who help direct the affairs of a stake.

High Priest: A rank in the Melchizedek priesthood available to all observant male members of over the age of eighteen.

Hinckley, Gordon B. (1910-2008): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1961-1981), First Presidency (1981-1995), and 15th president (1995-2008).

Holland, Jeffrey R. (1940-): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve.

Homemaking: One of three areas of emphasis in the Relief Society of the Church.

Home Teaching: Monthly visits conducted by men to families in their own homes to provide spiritual messages and offer practical support. The message given will be taken from the Ensign (see Ensign).

Hunter, Howard, W: (1907- 1995): 14th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1994-1995).

Inactive: A term that refers to a member who is on the records of the Latter-day Saints Church but does not attend meetings (see also less active).

Institute: In Britain references an education program for Latter-day Saints students and young single adults held at a stake centre. In the United States, it encompasses both a building that is located on the University campus and the program.

Investigator (missionary term): A person who is interested in the Church and is receiving missionary instruction

Kate Kelly: The founder of Ordain Women, an organization advocating for the ordination of women to the priesthood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Kelly, a human rights lawyer and a returned missionary, was excommunicated from the Church in 2014.

Kimball, Spencer, W (1895-1985): 12th president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1973-1985). President Kimball rescinded the Church policy of racial segregation in the lay priesthood and temple rites.

Laying on of hands: The laying on of hands by those holding priesthood authority on the head of a member to confer authority, office, calling, or blessing.

Less active: The term used by leadership to denote members who discontinue active participation in congregations. About 75 per cent of lifelong Latter-day Saints experience a period of inactivity lasting a year or more.

Magnifying one's calling: A Latter-day Saint platitude that alludes to a measuring up to or exceeding the duties of a calling.

Melchizedek Priesthood: A higher order of lay priesthood, including the offices of elder, seventy, high priest, patriarch, and apostle.

***Membership records*:** The official certificate of membership in the Church kept at Church headquarters

Mid Singles: Church social programme for single people from the ages of 26 to 45.

Missionary discussions: Simplified gospel lessons missionaries use to teach interested people about the Church and its doctrines.

Missionary Training Centres (MTC): Centres where missionaries are instructed and trained before departure to assigned missions. In the United Kingdom, there are two MTC's: Chorley, Lancashire and East Grinstead, Hampshire.

Missionary work: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has actively proselytized from its beginnings. Members are expected to follow the counsel of President Spencer W Kimball that every member is a missionary and seek out opportunities to share the Mormon faith. Since 1860, the Church growth rate has been in the region of 30 per cent for any ten years.

Missionaries: Observant men are expected to serve a two-year mission during the ages of eighteen until the age of twenty-five. Observant women from the age of nineteen are assigned for eighteen months. Church Leadership chooses the area that missionaries will serve in; during this time, they are not permitted visits from family or friends but are allowed weekly emails. Missions are paid from funds donated by themselves, families or local ward members.

Molly Mormon: A moniker was given to women who adhere and promote American-centric orthopraxis of Church practices. Recently, it has shifted from satire to become a critic of the Mormon corridor perceptions of women.

Monson, Thomas, S (1927-): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1963-1985), First Presidency (1985-2008), and 16th president (2008- 2017).

Mormon Corridor: Reference to a high geographical density of Mormons in Idaho, Utah and Arizona (sometimes known as the Wasatch front reflecting the mountain range around Utah).

Mormonism, Mormons: Unofficial terms for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members; members prefer to use the official name of the Church and to be referred to as Latter-day Saints.

Oaks, Dallin, H (1932-): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve and 1st counsellor to the Prophet, Russell M. Nelson (2017-)

Ordain Women: a Mormon feminist organization that supports the ordination of women to the priesthood in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Office*:* Refers to a position of authority in the Church organization and/or in the priesthood.

Ordinances**:** A performance or prescribed ceremony such as baptism, confirmation, endowment, marriage, etc., performed by one who has been ordained to the priesthood.

Packer, Boyd, K (1924-2016): Member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1970-2016).

Patriarch: An office in the Melchizedek priesthood who gives patriarchal blessings. Also, a common term for the father of a family.

Patriarchal Blessing: A formal blessing given by an ordained patriarch to observant members that contain the person's lineage from one of the tribes of Israel, guidance, and insight into life-missions.

Pearl of Great Price: The Pearl of Great Price contains the book of Moses, the book of Abraham, the Articles of Faith and Joseph Smith History.

Plan of salvation: Also, known as the plan of happiness, the plan of salvation addresses the premortal existence providing for the creation, fall, probation, death, resurrection, judgment, salvation, and exaltation of humankind**.**

Polygamy: The revelation to Joseph Smith regarding plural marriage was recorded in 1841, but some evidence suggests that Joseph Smith had entered into a second marriage with Fanny Alger in the mid-1830s. The official public announcement of the practice of plural marriage was by Church Apostle Orson Pratt in 1852 in Utah and officially discontinued new plural marriages in 1890. However, 'eternal' polygamous marriages are conducted in the Temple, where one man can be sealed to more than one woman in the afterlife as the Church has not renounced the doctrine of eternal polygamy, that in the celestial kingdom, a man may be married to more than one woman.

Prayer Policy: From 1967, women were not permitted to offer prayers in sacrament meetings, a restriction that contradicted prior practice. Although the restriction was lifted in 1978, women did not offer prayers in General Conference again till Jean Stevens gave an opening prayer at the Saturday session of general conference on the 6th April 2013. The first woman of colour to give a prayer in Conference was Dorah Mkhabela at the general women's conference in October 2014.

Priesthood: The Church has a lay priesthood that is available to all observant men over the age of 12. The authority to perform religious rites is conferred by ordination to the office of one of two priesthoods; Aaronic or Melchizedek. Priesthood offices have specific rituals, responsibilities and powers related to rank (see Aaronic priesthood and Melchizedek priesthood).

Priesthood Correlation: A Church bureaucratic program, under the direction by the apostles and later Prophet Harold B Lee that systematised and unified operations, administration and teachings. Before 1960, local wards and stakes had greater autonomy, but in response to global expansion, priesthood correlation standardised the operations, structure, practice and doctrine of the Church.

Priesthood Meeting: A male-only meeting during the last hour of the Sunday meeting, where they are divided into quorums: high priests, elders and young men (consist of deacons, teachers and elders) and discuss gospel principles and application using the same instruction manual as the Relief Society.

Priesthood Session: A session of the Church's once-yearly general conference reserved for men only. The exclusion of women from attending the meeting has been the focus of highly visible activism by Ordain Women.

Priest: An office in the Aaronic priesthood that allows the holder to bless the sacrament and baptist.

Priesthood: The Church has a lay male priesthood. The priesthood can refer to power, responsibility or institutional.

Priesthood (power): The power of God and/or to have the authority to act in God's name.

Priesthood (responsibility)*:* The right and responsibility to preside within the Church organization

Priesthood blessings (comfort)**:** Blessings of counsel and divine influence conferred by the authority of the priesthood.

Priesthood blessings (sickness): A priesthood healing ritual given to those who are sick by anointing the head with a small amount of consecrated oil and prayers said over them.

Priesthood offices**:** Specific appointments to positions of authority or responsibility in the priesthood.

Priesthood quorum: Male members who hold the same priesthood office.

Primary: Auxiliary organization for children from ages eighteen months through eleven years. It is the only gender-integrated programme overseen by a female presidency.

***Prophet, seer, and revelator*:** The keys of prophecy held by members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

***Proselyte*:** Missionary efforts to invite others to convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Quorum of the Twelve: See Apostle.

Quorums of the Seventy: A rank in the lay priesthood, under the direction of the Quorum of the Twelve, called to serve worldwide. The first and second quorum are designated General Authorities. The third, fourth and fifth quorums are called area authorities and serve for a maximum of five years.

Relief Society: The Church official women's auxiliary organisation founded on March 17th, 1842 in Nauvoo, Illinois. Originally it was a self-governing organisation within the Church, with its own programs, finances and publications, but during the 1960s became subsumed under priesthood control due to the bureaucratic initiative known as correlation. (See priesthood correlation).

Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: A Church that arose in response to the schism that followed the death of Joseph Smith on June 27, 1844. It has since renamed itself the Community of Christ.

Road Show: A amateur dramatic production that was an important social function during the 1970s and 1980s.

Sacrament: The water and bread blessed and passed to the congregation as emblems of the body and blood of Jesus Christ to Church members, the Latter-day Saint form of Christian communion.

***Sacrament meeting*:** The key Sunday meeting of the Church, during which the sacrament is blessed and distributed to members of the Church and members will pray, sing, and hear a gospel message.

***Sacred Grove*:** a grove of trees near Palmyra/ Manchester, New York, in which in 1820 Joseph Smith received his First Vision of God the Father and Jesus Christ (see first vision).

Saints: Faithful members of the Church.

Salvation: Resurrection to a kingdom of glory; sometimes used to signify exaltation in the celestial kingdom.

Sealing: A sacred ordinance performed in the temple for the living or dead in which a couple or family is sealed as a unit for eternity. (See also temple marriage).

Self-reliance: A fundamental principle that individual Church members and families should aim to provide and plan for their own necessities spiritually, emotionally and physically.

Seminary: Daily religious education program for young people aged between 14 –18 years old. In Utah, it is conducted during school hours, for the majority classes are in the early morning before school or online.

Setting apart: The authorization of an individual, by the laying on of hands, by the priesthood to serve in a calling in the Church.

Single Adults (previously known as special interests): Church social programme for single people over the age of 45.

Smith, Emma (1804-1879): First wife of Joseph Smith, founding president of Relief Society and scribe for the Book of Mormon.

Smith, Joseph (1805-1844): Founder and first president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1830-1844).

Smith, Joseph F (1838-1918): 6th President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. (1901-1918). Nephew of Joseph Smith.

Smith, Joseph Fielding (1876-1972). 10th President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1970-1972). Great nephew of Joseph Smith and son of Joseph F. Smith.

Stake: A geographical area that includes wards and branches (similar to a diocese). The term stake comes from the prophecy of Isaiah, who said that the latter-day church would be like a tent, secured by stakes (Isaiah 54:2). Each stake will comprise of between 5 to 12 wards and branches.

Stake Centre: A meetinghouse that designated as the central point of the stake, where stake meetings and conferences are held.

Stake Leadership: The stake president is supported by two councillors and 12 high councilmen and will call stake Relief Society presidency, stake Young Men and Young Women presidencies, Primary presidency and Sunday school presidency to assist ward leadership. Other stake appointments include public affairs director, family history consultants and employment specialists.

Stake President: A male lay leader who oversees a stake. The stake president reports back to the Area authorities assigned to his area.

***Standard works*:** The canonized Latter-day Saint scriptures: Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. Often called the 'Triple Combination'.

Sunday meetings: Worship on a Sunday comprises of an hour-long Sacrament meeting and every first and third week is Sunday school and every second and fourth week is Relief Society and priesthood. Young men and Young women meet in their own respective classes during Relief Society and priesthood. Primary is held every week (see consolidated programme).

Sunday School: Gender integrated classes teaching gospel principles from the age of 12.

Teacher: An office in the Aaronic priesthood, that allows the holder to pass the sacrament.

Temple: A sacred building where ordinances are conducted for Latter-day saints and the dead. The Temple is restricted to those members who have a temple recommend, and it is not used for Sunday worship. Ordinances conducted in the temple are baptism for the dead, the endowment and sealings.

Temple Endowment: A religious ritual that is conducted in temples that requires a temple recommend. The endowment involves the making of covenants and receiving knowledge that signifies a greater devotion to the faith. The temple endowment ritual includes ceremonial washing and anointing, the dressing in white clothing and instruction. New members must wait a year to after their baptism and confirmation before they can attend the temple.

Temple Garments: Modest underwear that members who have received their endowment wear to remind them of their temple covenants. The wearing of the garment is considered an outward expression of an inward commitment and is seen as sacred.

Temple Marriage: For observant members, in addition to civil marriage, marriage is conducted within Mormon temples. The religious rites performed are also called a sealing, which reflects the Latter-day Saint belief that the Old Testament Prophet Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in April 1836 in the temple in Kirtland, Ohio to restore additional priesthood authority that permitted the sealing of family relationships to survive after death. Temple marriages contain promises that seal spouse to spouse for the eternities, also known as celestial marriage or 'the new and everlasting covenant'. Only families and friends who have a temple recommend attend the ceremony.

Temple Recommend: All members who wish to participate in temple worship must be interviewed by local and stake clergy to give an account of their commitment and adherence to living the principles and practices of the Church, including word of wisdom, paying a full tithe and sexual morality.

Uchtdorf, Dieter F. (1940-): Born in the Czech Republic. Member of the Quorum of the twelve (1994-2008) and second counsellor in the First Presidency (2008- 2017).

Visiting Teaching: Monthly visits to every woman over the age of eighteen by pairs of women to give a spiritual message and offer support. The message comes from the General Relief Society Presidency and is published in the Ensign (See Ensign).

Ward: A local congregation, organised geographical, similar to a parish.

Ward Council: The ward council meets once a month and is overseen by the bishop to discuss the needs of the congregation, plan activities and set goals. It will comprise of the bishopric, elder quorums president, Sunday school president, Relief Society president, Young Mens and Young Womens presidencies, Primary president, and the ward mission leader.

Welfare: a program in the Church administered by priesthood officers and the Relief Society which attends to the temporal well-being of needy members and promotes strategies for all members to become self-reliant.

Widstoe, John A (1872-1952): Scientist and Theologian and member of the Quorum of the Twelve (1921-1952).

Word of Wisdom: The Latter-day saint dietary code, found in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelation was received by Joseph Smith in response to concerns over the use of tobacco by brethren in the early Church. First, intended as counsel, it was codified as commandment during the twentieth century and forbids tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Young, Brigham (1801-1877)***:*** 2nd president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1847-1877) and first governor of Utah territory (1850-1857). Brigham Young led the Mormon migration from Nauvoo and was instrumental in the building of the political, economic and religious institutional infrastructure in the Mormon corridor.

Young Single Adult: Church social program for single adults between the ages of 18-25.

Young men: The instruction and activity program for young men ages 12-18.

Young women: The instruction and activity program for young women ages 12 to 18.

Zion**:** A word meaning the "pure in heart"; also, a geographic location, historically Utah, but increasing interpreted as anywhere the righteous are gathered.

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