Being Mormon in Ireland:

An Exploration of Religion in Modernity through a Lens of Tradition and Change

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Abstract

This thesis is based on ethnographic data collected across two Mormon congregations in the Republic of Ireland. I explore the experiences of a religious minority who are part of a wider society experiencing rapid religious and social change. Engaging with concepts of tradition, continuity, and change, this research explores how members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints experience their status as a minority religion in modern Ireland.

As part of a growing number of new religious movements in Ireland, Mormonism represents a simultaneous continuation and rupture of Ireland’s previous religious traditions. This research suggests that a continuing influence of Catholicism in Irish society shapes Irish Mormon perceptions of self, of others, and of faith. Yet, by identifying with a religion which is viewed in Ireland as a ‘foreign’ faith, Irish Mormons represent a clear break with previous religious tradition.

Irish Mormons’ relationship with Mormonism as a global religion also demonstrates the complexity of continuity and change within modern religion. This research shows that Irish Mormons reject what they perceive as an Americanisation of Mormonism and often emphasise the uniquely Irish nature of Mormonism in Ireland. Thus, Irish Mormons are adapting Mormon tradition into new forms far from the Mormon heartland of Utah. This research concludes that Mormons in Ireland utilise complex and interconnected understandings of tradition, community, and Irishness to create and maintain a minority religious identity in modern Ireland.

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‘Whatever is given can always be reimagined, however four-square…it happens to be’

The Settle Bed, Seamus Heaney

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Rationale and Contribution of the Research

This research set out to explore how Mormons in Ireland experience their position as a minority religion within Irish society. By establishing how Mormon identity is transmitted and sustained in an Irish context, I hoped to understand what it means to be Mormon in a contemporary European country which is undergoing interesting transformations in its religious experiences. My research describes a complex picture of life as a Mormon in Ireland. They are immersed within a society informed by a strong collective understanding of Irishness as white and Catholic. Yet, they are simultaneously part of a global, diverse faith with a continuing strong United States (US) influence.

These dual stimuli work with, and against each other together to build a Mormon experience which is layered with intricacy. My research highlights through this case study of Mormons in Ireland that there is a continuing need for religion in modern Ireland, which is often said to be secularising rapidly. I argue that through their dual experiences as a minority in Ireland and as a member of a global faith, Mormons in Ireland are maintaining and disrupting collective understandings of religious tradition.

As an ethnography, my research has utilised traditional ethnographic methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews to conduct one year's fieldwork across two field sites. I spent six months engaged in participant observation and conducting interviews in one Mormon congregation, before moving to another for the same period. Both congregations have between fifty to seventy members. Using pseudonyms, I have named these congregations 'Appleby' and 'Sweetwater'. In conducting participant observation, I attended church services weekly for the duration of the fieldwork, and participated in other church events such as parties and other meetings.

In spending time with two Mormon congregations, I came to understand the layers of experience which underpin Mormonism in Ireland. My research finds that understandings of tradition, community, and Irishness are central to the Mormon experience in Ireland. These three themes are connected to each other, and support and challenge each other, in complex ways. The original contribution to knowledge which my research provides is through an examination of these themes. By conducting an ethnography of Mormonism in modern Ireland, this research provides a detailed account of a religious minority in a modern European country which is undergoing significant social and religious change. I build upon previous scholarship in the sociology of religion which has engaged with the secularisation debate, to show that modernity causes adaptions in the religious experience which is evident through this case study of Mormons in Ireland (Davie, 2000; Hervieu-Léger, 2000).

Reflecting upon religion across Europe, Danièle Hervieu-Legér (2000) and Grace Davie (2000) suggest that modernity causes a fragmentation of collective memory and of the transmission of tradition. This, they argue, has hindered the position of historically dominant religions in Europe which have depended upon a strong collective understanding of tradition for their continuance. Yet, Hervieu-Legér (2000) and Grace Davie (2000) also argue that this same process of fragmentation has brought about an acceleration in the growth of new religious movements (NRMs) and alternative spiritualties, as collective understandings of religious tradition begin to break down.

I have incorporated the arguments of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) within this research as a theoretical lens through which I can better understand the complex position of religion in modern Ireland. Through this lens, the simultaneous decline of the Catholic Church in Ireland and the rise of religious diversity, briefly outlined below, are part of the same modernising process in which collective understandings of religious traditions become fragmented. I build upon the work of Hervieu-Legér (2000) and Grace Davie (2000) in this thesis to suggest that the experience of Mormonism in Ireland demonstrates that even in countries of rapid modernisation such as Ireland, religion continues to exert a powerful influence and is primary in shaping the worldviews of many.

Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie's (2000) perspective on the nature of religion in modernity also assists in understanding the development of global Mormonism. As a now global faith, Mormonism has much changed from its beginnings as a small sect centred within the Utah region of the U.S. To maintain a collective Mormon identity in this context, the Church has attempted to standardise the Mormon experience and emphasise a common Mormon history. This has led to a strong sense of tradition within Mormonism, which itself is influenced by its American origins. Understanding how this tradition is experienced in regions far from the Mormon heartland of Utah such as Ireland, provides important insights into the nature of religious tradition and change in a modern, global era.

My research identifies that what I refer to in this thesis as ‘Irish Mormonism’ is an example of the adaptions of religion in modernity which Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) articulate. Through their understandings of life as a minority faith in Ireland, and their understandings of life as part of a global faith with a US base, Mormons in Ireland confront and maintain collective understandings of faith. They challenge the dominant narrative that to be Irish is to be Catholic, and confront the American influence within Mormonism to create a form of Mormonism which works for them in the context of the broader Irish religious landscape in which they exist.

My interest in this research emerged from my broader awareness of the changes that have occurred in Irish society in the last forty to fifty years, and the nature of religion in Ireland due of those changes. Economic and social change have occurred rapidly in Ireland as the country has quickly modernised. Particularly, the Irish ‘Celtic Tiger’ of the late 1990s and early 2000s brought unparalleled economic growth which transformed the country, accelerated social change, and increased religious and ethnic diversity (Quinn and Ruhs, 2009). A liberalisation of attitudes to social issues has seen Ireland’s families grow smaller, and marriage and childbirth became increasingly delayed (Central Statistics Office, 2016c). Mass immigration brought the emergence of ethnic and religious diversity which challenged homogenous understandings of ‘Irishness’ (Kmec, 2017). Yet, these recent changes cannot be fully understood unless there is firstly a comprehension of the complete power of the Catholic Church within Irish society for much of the preceding period from 1922 to recently. Here, I offer a condensed summary of the dominance of the Catholic

Church over the political, economic, social, and personal aspects of Irish lives during the twentieth century.

Following independence from the British in 1922, Ireland deliberately pursued an intermingling of Irish national identity with Catholic religious identity to create a clear and distinct form of ‘Irishness’ for the Irish people in the early years of the new nation state (Kearney, 1997). In the years following independence, Ireland asserted its sovereignty by focusing upon Irish language, culture, and adherence to Catholicism (Whyte, 1976). This resulted in a devout and adherent Catholic population for most of the twentieth century. In the 1960s, 95% of the population identified as Catholic (Central Statistics Office, 2017a). The ubiquity of Catholicism as Ireland’s dominant religion resulted in a society in which Catholicism was central in shaping the moral and ethical framework which underpinned Irish society.

Tom Inglis, discussing the ‘moral monopoly’ (1998, p. 2) of the Catholic Church in Ireland’s recent past, argues that this was achieved in complex ways. Primarily, the social structures of Irish society were built around Catholicism. This included the welfare state, which was minimally developed resulting in Catholic religious orders delivering many welfare functions for decades. The educational system was essentially controlled by the Catholic Church who owned and managed most of Ireland’s schools with support from the State. Likewise, the health service was mainly delivered by Catholic charities for many years. This entanglement of the Catholic Church and the Irish state led to Catholicism occupying ‘the hearts and minds of Irish people’ (Inglis, 1998, p. 2) in a way which ensured the primacy of Catholic thinking in most ordinary Irish peoples' understandings of themselves, the nation, and their perspectives on the world (Inglis, 1998, p. 2).

However, by the turn of the century Ireland was changing. Ireland had been on a path to modernisation fuelled by membership of the EU in 1973 and by the late 1990s, it was becoming a wealthy country. Additionally, several high-profile sex abuse cases perpetrated by Irish Catholic priests emerged in the 1990s which inflicted significant damage on the reputation of the Catholic Church in Ireland and its legitimacy to speak on matters of morality.

My MA research in 2003 explored this position of the Catholic Church in Ireland at the turn of the twenty-first century through interviews with parishioners of the Catholic Church in the Dublin Diocese. That research identified that although the institutional Catholic Church was suffering (in terms of attendance at church, baptisms, and vocations), many church members were committed and engaged. Specifically, I found that Catholic parishioners felt constrained by the structures of the Catholic Church which prevented them from having a *more* active role in the management and administration of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Participants told me that they knew many disengaged Catholics who might become more committed to their faith if it were made possible for them to take a more active role. The participants of that research demonstrated to me that there is a continuity of a need for religious belief in contemporary Ireland, and that a desire to maintain the religious traditions of the past does not evaporate as society modernises. Thus, they showed me that a secularisation narrative which implies that as a society modernises it becomes increasingly non-religious, might be too simplistic to truly understand the nature of religion in modern Ireland.

Since my MA in 2003, the decline of the Catholic Church by the usual indicators has continued. Attendance at religious services has decreased sharply (Ganiel, 2009) and vocations for the priesthood have been declining for many years (Irish Catholic Bishops Conference, 2014). The latest census shows that 78.3% of the country now identifies as Catholic (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Whilst this is still a very high figure, It has also been noted that a significant number of those self-identified Catholics are likely to be what Inglis (2007) influenced by Demerath (2001) calls ‘cultural Catholics’ (Inglis, 2007, p. 12). They identify as Catholic to assert a shared cultural heritage of Irishness, rather than for religious reasons.

Recent statistics show that a rapid increase in the numbers of atheists and agnostics has occurred parallel to a rapid increase in numbers identifying with religions other than Catholicism. The numbers of those identifying with the census category of ‘No Religion’ has increased by 74% between the census of 2011 and 2016, whilst the numbers identifying as Muslim have increased by 29% and the numbers identifying as Orthodox Christian have increased by 36% over the same period (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Much of Ireland’s increasing religious diversity is explained by increases in immigration (Kmec, 2014; Ritter and Kmec, 2017), however the trend still exemplifies interesting processes underway in Ireland. Catholicism is declining, whilst those of ‘no religion’ and other religions are growing. It was this specific context of Ireland’s changing relationship with religion that intrigued me before I began this research.

Much recent research in the sociology of religion in Ireland has engaged with what has become known as ‘the secularisation debate’ (Corish, 1996; White, 2006; Halikiopoulou, 2008; Malesevic, 2010; Breen and Reynolds, 2011; Anderson, 2012; Erbe Healy and Breen, 2014). Strong arguments have been made on all sides. Those suggesting that secularisation is underway point to evidence of the kind I have presented above, which shows that the dominant religion in Ireland is declining rapidly and that those of no religion are increasing even more quickly (Corish, 1996; White, 2006; Anderson, 2012). Those who see Ireland as a still strongly religious country cite the growth in numbers who are adhering to small and new religions in Ireland, Ireland’s continuing strong identification with Catholicism, and Ireland’s strongly religious position when compared to other European countries (Malesevic, 2010; Breen and Reynolds, 2011; Erbe Healy and Breen, 2014).

However, given that it appears that Ireland is simultaneously becoming more *and* less religious, no clear consensus has emerged. As I considered this complex religious landscape in relation to my research, I began to consider that perhaps the nature of religion and peoples’ relationship with religion, was *changing* in Ireland rather than simply declining. To understand these changes, I felt it made sense to study religion in Ireland not from the perspective of the majority Irish Catholic population as I had done before in my MA research, but from the perspective of the minority. For this, I needed to know about religious minorities in Ireland.

I knew that much religious research in Ireland had until recently been focused upon the Catholic Church (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011b). As a result, there has been a distinct lack of sociological research on religious minorities in Ireland until recently. This gap in knowledge has begun to be rectified through important studies which highlight the breadth of religious and spiritual diversity which exists in modern Ireland (Ugba, 2009; Brownlee, 2011; Butler, 2011; Shanneik, 2011, 2015a; Butler, 2015; Cox and Griffin, 2011; Jackson Noble, 2011; Kuhling, 2011; Murphy, 2011; Maguire and Murphy, 2012; Sakaranaho, 2015b; Scharbrodt, 2015; Colfer, 2015; Ganiel, 2016b). Additionally, I noted that much of this recent research has focused upon what might be termed 'migrant religions'; those faiths who have increased their presence in Ireland due to rapid immigration, and who are often associated with migrants from non-white backgrounds. Ireland is a majority white country, with little ethnic and racial diversity until recently.

Whiteness forms a key part of the Irish national identity, alongside Catholicism (Lentin, 2001, 2007; Fanning, Howard and O' Boyle, 2010; Fanning, 2014). Within this context, research of this kind demonstrates the complex ways in which a minority *religious* identity interacts with a minority *ethnic* identity as the individual navigates their way through their engagements with the majority society. For example, Abel Ugba's (2006, 2008, 2009) research with African Pentecostals in Ireland and Mark Maguire and Fiona Murphy's (2012, 2015) ethnographic research with African asylum seekers and refugees, demonstrate that stigmatisation and racism on the basis of ethnic and religious status are part of the migrant minority religious experience in Ireland. Their research establishes that these experiences are shaping the ways in which religious minorities are developing in Ireland. Ugba (2006, 2008, 2009) identified that racism from the majority white Irish population towards black African Pentecostals, caused those Pentecostals to prefer to join African-led Pentecostal congregations rather than Irish-led congregations which are majority white.

I was interested to see what research had been completed exploring these kinds of issues from the perspective of a religious minority, who like Irish society more generally, was majority white. Irish research with majority white religious minorities is less common than that which has examined religious minorities who are also ethnic minorities. Studies examining Ireland's majority white Protestant communities are the notable exception (Ruane, 2010; Nuttall, 2015; Walsh, 2015). These studies identify that there is much concealment of the Protestant religious identity in Ireland, something made much easier by their white skin colour which allows them to 'pass' in everyday life in a majority white society. This is referred to by Tony Walsh as 'silence and withdrawal' (2015, p. 89) and by Deirdre Nuttall as 'an atmosphere of not putting ourselves forward' (2015, p. 64).

Research with Irish Protestants confirms how the dominance of Catholicism in all aspects of Irish social life results in religious minorities feeling a sense of exclusion and non-belonging. However, aside from studies exploring Ireland's white Protestant communities, there are few studies which explore Ireland's changing religious landscape from the perspective of a majority white religious minority. Yet, understandings of Irishness rest upon the complex intersection of whiteness, Catholicism, and nationality (Lentin, 2001, 2012; Fanning, Howard and O’ Boyle, 2010; Fanning, 2014; Inglis, 2014). By being Irish and white, but not Catholic, majority-white religious minorities in Ireland are challenging dominant assumptions regarding who is ‘Irish’ in Ireland. There was therefore, a need to address the gap in knowledge of majority white religious minorities in Ireland to better understand the variety of expressions of Irishness in modernity, and to highlight how such traditional constructions of ‘Irish’ are increasingly challenged.

In researching majority white religious minorities in Ireland, I noted the small presence of Mormons in the country, at just 0.03% of the population (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). They are scattered throughout the country in just thirteen congregations centred in cities and large towns. 1209 people reported as ‘Mormon’ in the 2016 Census (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Recent Church figures claim 3,400 members (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date b) with the disparity between the two figures due to the Church not removing inactive church members from their records. It is clear then, that Mormonism in Ireland constitutes a very small religious minority.

Census figures show that 57% of Mormons in Ireland are white Irish and another 19% identify with the census category of ‘any other white’ ethnicity; used to refer to those who are living in Ireland and identify as white, but who are not Irish born (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Despite the Mormon population being mainly white, they do represent a more ethnically diverse population than the national population as a whole, where 92% reported as white in 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Ethnic minorities are significantly represented in the Mormon population in Ireland. For example 8.1% identify with the census categories of ‘black Irish’ or ‘any other black’ ethnic background, and a further 7.1% identify as’ Asian Irish’ or ‘any other Asian’ background (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Thus, when I describe Mormonism in Ireland as a ‘white’ religion, I do not mean to infer that there is not a sizeable minority of ethnic and racial minorities within Mormonism in Ireland. In fact, Mormonism in Ireland is more diverse than the majority society. However, Mormonism, like Ireland more generally is majority white. Furthermore, this research will demonstrate that Mormonism, like Ireland, contains within it a culture of whiteness which has been created and sustained by its historical legacies.

To summarise, in researching the presence of Mormonism in Ireland, I found intriguing complexity. Adherents to Mormonism are very small in number, but it has established itself well geographically; being spread across the country and focusing upon towns and cities of large population. The membership is majority white, yet it is also more diverse than the general population.

This research is the first project conducted solely with members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Republic of Ireland. Previous research has incorporated Mormons into a wider research design examining eight religious minorities in Ireland and their experiences of stigma (Cosgrove, 2011, 2013), but that research provided only one interview participant who identified as Mormon. It was also mainly based upon quantitative survey methods, with just eight interviewees solicited overall. Other previous publications addressing Mormonism in Ireland have focused on Northern Ireland rather than the Republic of Ireland (Harris, 1990).

There has therefore, been little examination of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ireland. The work which has been previously published is now outdated and examines the Church in terms of the history of its development rather than using a sociological perspective (Barlow, 1968; Card, 1978). This lack of Irish sociological research centred upon the Church in Ireland provides an opportunity for my research to establish how Mormonism engages with concepts of Irishness, community, and religious tradition and so provide a contribution to our wider sociological understanding of the nature of religion, and religious minorities, in a modern European country. By exploring the case of Mormons in Ireland, this research will aid our understanding of religion in modernity and provide an alternative explanation to the secularisation debate in Ireland by demonstrating the continuance and adaptability of religion in the modern era.

The scarcity of research examining Mormonism in Ireland occurs despite growing concern regarding the position of the Church in Europe where the retention of converts to Mormonism is seen to be a significant challenge which is affecting Church growth (Decoo, 1996, 2013b, van Beek, 1996, 2005; Mauss, 2008). Similarly, there is an emerging focus on what we might call ‘Global Mormon Studies’. It seeks to examine how Mormonism is experienced as a ‘global’ church which is increasingly moving away from its white, US origins (Neilson, 2008; van Beek, 2009; Decoo, 2013b; Wei-tsing Inouye, 2014; Rutherford, 2016). This research is emerging from a variety of perspectives including sociological, historical, and theological standpoints. Evidence that this recent scholarship trend is advancing can be seen in the 2018 creation of Global Mormon Studies research network (www.globalmormonstudies.org), and the recent publication of Gina Colvin and Joanna Brooks (2018) *Decolonizing Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion*.

These emerging developments are welcome, and will help to develop a more inclusive representation of Mormonism that better reflects its new diversity. My research intends to add to our understanding of such developments within Mormonism by illustrating how the local and the global are understood and enacted within Mormonism in Ireland. Ireland is a small, and religiously and ethnically homogenous country. Yet Mormonism in Ireland contributes to, and is part of, a wider global church which has a presence around the world and a membership which is consequently increasingly diverse. My research illustrates how this local context of Ireland informs the global church, and vice versa. Below, I discuss the use of terminology throughout the thesis to provide clarity regarding language used.

1.2 Reflections on Terminology

There are important points to note regarding the use of analytical terms used throughout the research. I make use of the term ‘culture’ throughout the thesis, primarily to refer to both ‘Irish culture’ and ‘Mormon culture’- which is often referred to within Mormonism by the phrase ‘church culture’. Used frequently by the participants, I illustrate throughout this thesis that both terms have been constructed by Irish people and by Mormons respectively, as mostly self-contained and easily identifiable. Indeed, as I described above, the Irish State made active efforts to support such a well-defined understanding of ‘Irish culture’ in the years following independence from the British.

However, my research will demonstrate that culture can never be so self-contained and is much less easily defined and universally understood. My understandings of this are influenced by Paul Gilroy's (1993) *The Black Atlantic.* Discussing the interconnections of nationality, ethnic belonging, and the language of 'race', he advocates for understandings of culture that are 'lodged between the local and the global, which have a wider applicability… because they offer an alternative to the nationalist focus which dominates cultural criticism' (Gilroy, 1993, p. 6). Gilroy's (1993) emphasis on the 'mutation, hybridity, and intermixture' of culture (1993, p. 223) has been useful to understand the complex experiences of Mormons in Ireland, who incorporate 'Irish culture' and 'Mormon culture' into their lived experiences in such a way that demonstrates that clearly defined delineations of culture are inappropriate to articulate their realities.

There is also a need here to distinguish between the terms 'religious diversity' and 'religious pluralism'. James Beckford (2003) notes that the use of the two terms is not always clearly emphasised, where it would be useful do so. Grace Davie (2014, p.164) argues that religious diversity should be used to denote 'the variety of religious communities that now cohabit' alongside one another in modern Europe. She suggests using the term 'religious pluralism' to discuss 'the ideological or normative commitments associated with the acceptance or otherwise of this situation' (Davie, 2014, p. 614). I have followed these definitions in this thesis.

Mormonism has been described as a new world religion (Stark, 1984) and has a global membership of more than 15 million (The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints, no date d). On this basis, it may seem unusual that within the thesis I have described Mormonism in Ireland as a NRM, whose numbers and influence are often much smaller than this. However, there is a precedence for Mormonism being referred to in such a way. Edited collections on NRMs by Barker (2013) and Chryssides and Zeller (2016) include chapters on Mormonism by Massimo Introvigne (2013) and Douglas Davies (2016). Additionally, Barker defines a NRM as ‘a religion with a predominantly first generation membership’ (Barker, 2013, p. 2), and this research identifies that in the congregations of this study a majority of members are first generation converts.

If Mormonism can be included as a NRM despite its not being particularly ‘new’ nor small in number, then there must be something else about Mormonism which supports the NRM title. Hervieu-Léger (2000) says of the term NRM that it ‘is an umbrella for a wide range of phenomena’ including ‘cults and sects that have recently come into competition with traditional churches (dominant or historic minorities)’ (2000, p. 32). From Ireland, Cosgrove et al (2011a) argue that what defines a NRM is ‘its lack of relative power, rather than any inherent characteristic’ (2011b, p. 11). They argue that the ‘key feature in the rise of NRMs in twenty first century Ireland has undoubtedly been the collapsing power of established religion’ (2011b, p. 11). Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Cosgrove et al (2011a) underline that experiences of NRMs are inextricably tied to the experiences of the majority religion. I demonstrate in this research that Mormonism in Ireland must be understood in terms of its relationship to Catholicism as Ireland’s dominant religion. Thus, I deploy the term NRM to describe Mormonism in Ireland.

Throughout this thesis, I use ‘Ireland’ to mean the Republic of Ireland, formed after achieving 1922 independence from the British. When discussing that same geographical area in a time period prior to independence from the British and the creation of the Republic, I use the term ‘Southern Ireland’. I refer to ‘Northern Ireland’ in all instances to mean the six counties on the island of Ireland which have remained under British jurisdiction following the independence of the Republic.

The Church advises that when writing about Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that the full name of the Church be used in the first instance, to be followed by ‘the Church’ as a simpler way to refer to the faith (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date e). This advice has been followed. Where I refer to the Church as an organisation, I have capitalised the word Church. Where I am using the word to refer to church buildings and services, I have kept the word in lower case, for example, ‘I attended church for one year’.

The Church advises using ‘Latter-day Saints’ (LDS) to refer to its members. However, during my research I have found that very few participants of this research refer to themselves in this way. They regularly use the term ‘Mormon’ to identify themselves and others, and for this reason, I have chosen to follow the terminology of the research participants. Likewise, the use particular words and phrases which mean something specific in relation to Mormonism. This necessitated on my part a learning of the ‘language of Mormonism’ during fieldwork. As a result, this thesis has endeavoured to use the words and phrases of the research participants themselves to better reflect their own use of language, in keeping with the ethnographic approach.

This research explores the experiences of a nationally diverse group of participants. Sixteen of the thirty interviewees are Irish. Eight are from the US, four are from South America, one is from Africa, and one is from elsewhere in Europe. All were living in Ireland at the time of the fieldwork. For clarity about whom I am referring to, I mainly refer to 'Mormons in Ireland' as a general term when discussing the experiences of those who are both Irish and living in Ireland, and those who are not Irish but for whom Ireland is their home.

There are occasions when it is necessary to discuss the experiences of Irish-born Mormons specifically, and in these instances, I refer to them as 'Irish Mormons'. This is not to infer that their experiences of Mormonism in Ireland are any more Irish than that of other nationalities. In fact, this research will show that the diversity of experience of Mormonism in Ireland is its greatest strength, and that all these experiences reflect the reality of what I call 'Irish Mormonism' today. Rather, I occasionally distinguish 'Irish Mormons' from others to make an analytical point important to the research.

In the section below, I provide a summary of the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The development of Mormonism is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Three. However, it is useful to outline here a little about the history of the Church; which will emphasise the significance of its US origins, and to briefly describe the Mormon 'worldview'; which highlights the centrality of tradition and continuity in the Mormon perspective. Both points are integral to the research, and so are addressed below.

1.3 A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was founded in 1830 in the US by a young man named Joseph Smith. For the 20 or 30 years prior to that, the US had been experiencing an intense religious revivalism (Anderson 1996). The area of New York State where the Smith family lived became known as the "burned-over district", because of the intensity and frequency of the conversion programmes there (Bowman 2012, pg 10). Bowman (2012, p.12) recounts Smith's 'fascination' with the religious revival, and his disappointment that he was unable to experience the feelings of religious fervour which many others at that time were experiencing,

Smith's descriptions of this time in which he was a young teenager portray a time of great emotion. He describes the 'darkness' he felt in his search for religious truth. Yet, Smith could not decide which of the new religions he should join, and in 1820 the then fourteen year old boy sought guidance through prayer, after reading the Epistle of James which reads: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him' (Pearl of Great Price Ch 1, 11). Smith describes how powerfully this scripture affected him and decided to go to the woods to pray, to seek wisdom.

The result of his prayer, he maintained, was a vision of the Father and Son, through which he was instructed to join none of the existing churches. Smith describes the emotions he felt throughout this spiritual experience. He says:

> I kneeled down and began to offer up the desires of my heart to God. I had scarcely done so, when immediately I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction—not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being—just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me. I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him! (Pearl of Great Price Ch 1 15-17)

Church members place enormous importance on this account as it forms the cornerstone of their theology. They refer to this encounter as the ‘First Vision’ and it along with other visitations Smith is said to have experienced, form the basis for their beliefs (Anderson 1996). The First Vision, and Smith’s re-telling of it in the sacred text The Pearl of Great Price, continues to shape Mormon spiritual experience, as members will frequently pray to God to find the truth of a question, and aspiring converts are encouraged to ask of God; to pray, to know if the Church is true.

In 1823, Smith was visited by an angel who told him that there had been a book written on gold plates deposited in the hills near his home, which he must access and translate. He also told Smith that the Last Days were at hand, and that he must prepare for the second coming of Christ (Peterson, 1983; Jackson, 1990). Over a period of time, Smith translated the contents of the plates into what would become the Book of Mormon; one of Mormonism's sacred texts, used alongside the Bible (Fielding Smith, 1950; Taylor, 1986; Jackson, 1990; Anderson, 1996; Davies, 2009). In 1830, Smith gathered around him around forty or fifty witnesses and formed the Church of Christ, later renamed as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Smith informed his followers that they must build a New Jerusalem, a city of Zion that would prepare for Christ's Second Coming where all Mormons would gather. Early adherents of the Church from the US and abroad were encouraged to gather in Zion to live out the Second Coming (Underwood, 1996, p. 139).

Joseph Smith's belief that he had a duty from God to restore the Christian church involved a rejection of traditional Christianity which created considerable anger towards the Mormons (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011b; Bowman, 2012). Other disputes between the early Mormons and non-Mormons over land, property, slavery, and politics demonstrates how early Mormonism was viewed as a 'well-organized social force' which was threatening to the majority (Bowman 2012, p. 54). These and other disputes ultimately lead to violence on both sides which culminated in the murder of

Smith in Illinois in 1844. After his death, and under the new leadership of Brigham Young, the Mormon people fled persecution in an arduous migration to the remote Rocky Mountains of Utah which at the time was outside of the United States. The move to Utah has proved to be a foundational event in Mormon history and identity (Shipps, 1994, 2006), and for a time, Utah became the 'Zion' which Smith had desired.

Scholars have noted how the Church's earliest years in Utah united the group and set them apart from others as 'a 'faith tradition', rooted in common faith but encompassing also a shared language, history, culture, and folkways' (Bowman, 2012, p. xix). Jan Shipps likewise observes that these early years allowed the Church to consolidate its identity, which culminated in 'a web of kinship' (Shipps, 1994, p. 71). Shipps (1994) argues that geographical isolation, cultural distinctiveness, and external perceptions of the community as an ethnic group, combined to create a true sense of kinship and a 'Mormon ethnicity' (1994, p. 71) during this time period. This meant that the early Mormons felt, and were perceived to be, different. In the words of Armand Mauss, Mormons were considered by non-Mormons to be 'a subversive anti-American counterculture' (Mauss 2001, p. 24).

At the turn of the twentieth century, there began a period of assimilation into American society with active efforts made to re-construct the Mormon image in the eyes of ordinary Americans. This was achieved by highlighting the Mormon focus on family values, a healthy lifestyle, and values of hard work and perseverance which were attractive to the majority society (Ruthven and Fletcher Stack, 1991; Haws, 2013). Additionally, the abandonment in the early twentieth century of a practice of polygamy and a de-emphasis on End of Days rhetoric, assisted in bringing Mormonism in from the margins of American life (Underwood, 1996; Hoyt and Patterson, 2011). These changes resulted in Mormonism being seen by many as a strongly 'American' religion by the mid-twentieth century (Ruthven and Fletcher Stack, 1991; Haws, 2013).

However, although Mormonism was successful in assimilating itself into American society in the early twentieth century, it has nonetheless maintained close community ties and unique beliefs and practices which ensures that its absorption into the mainstream US is never quite complete (Mauss, 1994b, 2011; Grow, 2015). Central to this distinctiveness are Mormon understandings of family, kinship, and death. Mormon doctrine emphasises a form of kinship which extends from a pre-mortal life, to a human life on earth, to life after death. Douglas Davies (2010, p. 175) refers to this as 'doctrinal kinship', as family is 'central to our Heavenly Father's plan' (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2008). Thus, Mormons see themselves as part of complex web of relations with both spiritual and temporal family as they progress in their salvation.

Davies (2000, 2003, 2010) argues that Mormon conception of self is constructed to be one of progression, and as individuals progress they increasingly become 'engaged in growing numbers of relationships and responsibilities' (Davies, 2010, p. 79). This conception of humanity within the 'total cosmos' (Davies, 2010, p. 79) means that Mormons share a strong sense of the connectivity of a universal human family, believing that all humans lived together in a pre-mortal world and therefore remain family to each other in this world and the next. This is a view of existence which is formalised within the Plan of Salvation, a Church doctrine which outlines the purpose of life and what is necessary for salvation in the afterlife (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 2008). It outlines why we are here, what God's purpose is for us, and what will happen to us when we die.

Specifically, the Plan of Salvation articulates that all of humanity are God's 'spirit children'. He is our 'spirit Father' with whom we all lived with in the 'pre-mortal life' before coming to earth (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2009). In the 'pre-existence', Mormons believe that all humans lived as fully formed adult spirit beings, with all of the personality traits and strengths and weaknesses which they also have here in the temporal world (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2009). This understanding of time demonstrates that Mormons envision their own existence stretching backwards in time to a period they cannot recall but believe did occur, and forward to a time they have not yet experienced but believe will indeed come forth.

According to the Plan of Salvation, our goal on earth is to live our lives according to God's covenants and ordinances so that we can return to be with him once more in the afterlife with our own families, to live together eternally with full salvation. This is often referred to as 'eternal marriage' and 'eternal family' (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 2009). Davies (2010) describes this worldview as a 'soteriological lineage' (2010, p.146); a 'scheme of salvation' (2010, p. 147) which is centred upon the family. 'Soteriological lineage' (2010, p.146) supports group identity and strengthens belonging by emphasising the interconnectivity of the Mormon family. Davies (2010) maintains that such a worldview can be an advantage in a society which is ‘reacting against the post -modern notion of persons as individual isolates (Davies, 2010, p.148). Such conceptions of kinship, temporality, and death also ensure that Mormonism holds within it a strong sense of tradition. Important Mormon rituals ensure that Mormon families are connected to each other from past, to present, to future. This supports an understanding of Mormon kinship as one which rests upon the transmission of tradition from one generation to the next, in a chain of connections.

Likewise, this worldview creates and sustains a unique conception of individual identity, one which is shaped by an understanding of one’s self which stretches back and forward in time, in a chain of personal progress towards full salvation. Douglas Davies (2011, p. 24) argues that the search for meaning making within religion often becomes a ‘process of salvation’. Mormonism’s emphasis on personal progress as laid out in the Plan of Salvation confirms that the quest for salvation forms a key component of the Mormon drive for meaning. These understandings of the Mormon worldview are discussed further in the ethnographic chapters of this thesis and assists us in understanding the central role tradition and identity forms in the Mormon understanding of self. The final section of this chapter explains the structure of this thesis and notes the primary focus of each chapter.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis will demonstrate that experiences of Mormons in Ireland, and the place of religion in Ireland, are intertwined with each other in ways which produce complex experiences of Mormonism in an Irish context. I argue in this thesis that Mormons in Ireland simultaneously challenge and continue religious tradition. Chapter Two begins to demonstrate this point by providing a broad context in which to understand religion in Ireland, and to understand the position of Mormonism within that milieu. In this chapter I utilise the arguments of Hervieu-Legér (2000) and Davie (2000) to argue that the changed nature of Catholicism in Ireland, and the growth of minority religions there, indicates that religious belief in modern Ireland is undergoing a transformation rather than declining. I demonstrate the historical construction of Irishness to mean Catholic, how this was deployed by the State to build a strong 'Irish' community, and how other faiths such as Mormonism are therefore interpreted by the majority as a threat to this religious and national tradition.

Chapter Three continues to explore the continuity and discontinuity of religious tradition by incorporating the work of Mormon Studies scholars to highlight the complexity of the relationship between the local and the global within modern Mormonism. I demonstrate the challenges faced by the Church in maintaining clear Mormon tradition and community as it has embedded itself within diverse cultures across the globe. Thus, this chapter builds upon Chapter Two's exploration of tradition in the Irish context to make sense of the effect of Mormonism's recent transformation towards a global Church on the transmission and continuity of Mormon tradition worldwide.

Chapter Four outlines the methodological choices which have shaped this research and its design. The focus of the chapter is a reflection upon the methodological decisions relating to fieldwork and upon my own role as researcher. I discuss the field-sites and the process of doing ethnography in Appleby and Sweetwater, and explain the steps taken to ensure ethical research.

Chapter Five begins the ethnographic analysis and sets the scene for the subsequent ethnography chapters by providing an insight into Mormon congregational life in Ireland as one structured by both tradition and change. Following Chapters Two and Three which highlight the adaption of religious tradition taking place within Ireland and Mormonism, Chapter Five continues this argument at the level of the local congregation. This chapter demonstrates significant local adaptions of Mormon tradition at a congregational level which reflect the identity of that particular congregation. The chapter also provides an explanatory space in which key terms specific to Mormonism and relevant to the ethnography, are explained. This chapter is therefore designed to provide an understanding of Mormon everyday life in Ireland, to support the following chapters.

Following Chapter Five's focus on adaptions to tradition at congregational level, Chapter Six moves outwards to focus upon the experience of being a minority religious group within the specific context of a majority Catholic Ireland where many religious minorities, and Mormonism particularly, are little understood. Through an examination of key encounters with the majority where Mormon identity is negotiated, I show how Mormons in Ireland are simultaneously continuing and disrupting Irish religious tradition. Converts' narratives highlight the continuing influence of Catholicism post conversion, and emphasises how adherence to Mormonism is often interpreted by the majority a rupture of Irish tradition.

Chapter Seven moves to explore tradition at the level of the family. This chapter outlines the Mormon understanding of family as essential for the continuance of Mormon tradition and establishes how such conceptions of family are understood and enacted within the Irish context. This chapter illustrates that the tradition of an ‘ideal’ Mormon family remains important for Mormons in Ireland, but local circumstances often force participants to adapt Mormon family traditions in an effort to bridge the perceived gap between Irish and Mormon ‘family’. Thus, this chapter will show that Mormon families in Ireland both support and challenge Mormon and Irish understandings of continuity and community, through family.

Having demonstrated simultaneous continuity and change in the experience of tradition in the previous ethnographic chapters, Chapter Eight examines how Mormons in Ireland navigate understandings of religious community and tradition in the context of belonging to a global Church. This chapter demonstrates that Mormons in Ireland create imaginings of global Mormonism which incorporate both connection and disconnection with ‘church culture’ at a local level. I illustrate that the ‘Americanisation’ of the Church is negotiated in complex ways by Mormons in Ireland; becoming something which assists Irish Mormons in their own understandings of what ‘Irish Mormonism’ is. Thus, the final ethnography chapter concludes by demonstrating that ‘Irish Mormonism’ is created in conjunction with global Mormonism in a dialectical fashion;

incorporating both continuity and discontinuity with Mormon tradition in the global era of the Church.

Chapter Nine discusses the findings of this research, framed around the themes of tradition, community, and Irishness which are established in the ethnographic chapters as essential to understanding the Mormon experience of life in Ireland as a minority religion. Chapter Nine also discusses the contribution to knowledge which this research has established. I highlight how this case study of Mormons in Ireland furthers our understanding of the place of, and experience of, religion in modernity. I argue that Mormons in Ireland can be seen to be supporting the continuity of religious tradition in Ireland and within Mormonism. Yet, they are paradoxically also challenging and threatening long standing traditions within both Ireland and Mormonism through their religious experiences. Thus, Mormons in Ireland can be said to be adapting and re-creating religious tradition in the modern era.

Finally, in addition to conventional academic sources I will refer to sources from the Church who offer vast resources through the official Church website. A wide variety of materials are made publicly available by the Church such as scriptures, bi-annual General Conference speeches by leaders, teaching manuals, and its various church magazines available to members, such as *Ensign.* These form an invaluable repository of resources that help to inform the research alongside traditional academic sources. I now turn to discuss the work of Hervieu-Legér (2000) and Davie (2000) and make use of their arguments to explain the transformation of Irish society, and of religion in Ireland.

Chapter Two: Religious Tradition and Change in Modernity

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the theoretical lens which will be used throughout the thesis to make sense of the data. Key theoretical concepts used to understand the experiences of the participants are tradition, change, and continuity. Both Mormonism as a global faith, and the Irish religious landscape which Mormons in Ireland sit within, can be better understood by incorporating Hervieu-Léger's (2000) understanding of these concepts, and Davie's (2000) application of these ideas to the European context.

Hervieu-Léger's *Religion as a Chain of Memory* was first published in the original French in 1993, and published in English in 2000. It marked an attempt to push the sociology of religion in a new direction. Hervieu-Léger (2000) offered an insightful contribution to a key issue concerning scholars since the 1970s; the secularisation debate. Hervieu-Léger (2000) has continued to engage with key ideas from *Religion as a Chain of Memory* in some of her later work (2003, 2006, 2015) but it is within her 1993 text that these ideas are explored most fully. For this reason, the English translation (2000) of that text forms most of the basis of discussion for this chapter. Through this work, Hervieu-Léger has reinvigorated debates regarding the nature of religion in modernity, the ways in which religion is transmitted, and the potential for religion in the modern world.

Hervieu-Léger's (2000) articulation of the nature of tradition and religion in modernity assists in a better understanding of the place of religion in both modern Irish society *and* within modern Mormonism as a global faith. In Chapter Three, I make use of the arguments of Hervieu-Léger (2000) regarding these concepts to demonstrate the difficulties in maintaining collective understandings of Mormonism's American-informed religious tradition in a global era. This assists our understanding of the diverse experiences of Mormons in Ireland, and contributes to understanding how Mormon religious tradition works in an Irish context.

Here, I utilise the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) to illustrate that the simultaneous decline of the Catholic Church and the rise of religious diversity in Ireland are part of the same modernising process in which collective understandings of religious tradition become fragmented. Thus, the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) is useful for understanding these complex adaptions in religious experiences which are underway within Ireland. An understanding of these adaptions is central to appreciate the broader social and religious milieu which Mormons in Ireland navigate, and through which their own religious experiences are shaped.

In both chapters, it will become evident that religion in Ireland *and* global Mormonism have undergone significant transformations in recent generations. These transitions have brought with them a celebration of tradition and continuity, yet have simultaneously forced the emergence of significant change and disruption. By exploring the Irish religious landscape *and* Mormonism through a lens of tradition and change, these chapters set the ethnographic chapters to follow in their proper context, allowing a deeper understanding of the ethnographic data to emerge.

This chapter begins by briefly outlining the key arguments pertaining to the secularisation debate. By emphasising in *Religion as a Chain of Memory* (2000*)* that modernity increases the need for religion, rather than eradicates it, Hervieu-Léger clearly questions the validity of assumptions that modernity leads to secularisation. It is necessary then, to firstly understand the key elements of the secularisation debate, before moving to discuss Hervieu-Léger's (2000) ideas.

2.2 The Secularisation Thesis

'Secularisation' or ' the secularisation thesis ' refers to the process of religion's declining influence in society and in individuals' lives. Connected to the effects of modernisation, it is often associated with aspects of social life which are deemed to be affected by the modernisation of society such as the decline of community and traditional family, and growing urbanisation and individualisation. Bryan Wilson (1982, p. 142) describes secularisation as 'a process by which religious institutions, actions, and consciousness lose their social significance'. Wilson (1982, p. 46) explains how modern society 'functions without religious legitimisation; a large proportion of population seek very occasional support from religion, and some never do so'.

Secularisation has been debated and even rejected by those whose were once proponents of it such as Peter Berger, who broadly agreed that secularisation was underway in his work *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), only to reject that proposition in later publications. In later years Berger maintained that the secularisation thesis 'has been empirically falsified' and 'most observers have come to the same conclusion' (2012, p. 313). However, some theorists have continued to maintain its validity such as Steve Bruce (2011, 2014, 2016) who argues that despite wide variances within and between societies, a decline in religion is still evident as each generation becomes more secular than the last.

Bruce (2016) argues that this is a trend which is unlikely to be reversed, given the isolation of those who remain religious in modernity, and the ‘absence of positive social interaction between the religious and the religiously indifferent’ (Bruce, 2016, p. 619). Bruce asserts that religion is now primarily carried by, and hence associated with, people who are ‘demographically, ethnically and culturally distinctive…it is concentrated in specific minority populations, which reinforces the sense that religion is what other people do’ (Bruce, 2014, p. 17). The construction of religion as ‘alien’ by a religiously indifferent majority may hold true in the UK context to which Bruce (2014, 2016) refers. However, this assertion does not hold true to the same degree in Ireland, where this chapter will demonstrate that a more complex relationship with modern religion is ongoing.

Whilst broadly agreeing with secularisation theorists such as Bruce regarding the difficulties of transmitting religious knowledge in modern societies, Hervieu-Léger (2000) maintains that it is not religion per se which is incompatible with modernity. Rather, it is the collective memory which religious knowledge rests upon which struggles in modernity, with religion affected as a consequence. The following section explores Hervieu-Léger’s (2000) arguments regarding these debates, focusing on the contradictions and complexities of the experience of religious tradition in modernity. Rather than viewing actively religious groups such as Mormons as outliers in otherwise secular societies, Hervieu-Léger (2000) suggests that the need to believe is enhanced in modern societies.

2.3 Religion in Modernity: Hervieu-Léger's *Religion as a Chain of Memory*

In building her theory of religion, Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that religion can be defined as a way of believing, fundamentally based on a chain of belief that stretches from the past to future and which all adherents participate in. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that this chain of belief rests upon a collective memory of tradition; a collective understanding of the past, which continues to be legitimised in the present. Hervieu-Léger (2000) suggests that modernity has broken down the collective memory of tradition, in which beliefs and practices are transmitted and maintained.

Firstly, Hervieu-Léger (2000) explains how modernity has affected the transmission of belief. She notes the difficulties of the French Catholic Church and other established churches in transmitting belief in modernity. In France, she observes:

> The Church's loss of temporal power, its separation from the state, the restriction of religious groups to the voluntary sector, the inability of these same groups to make civil authorities enforce their moral teaching, and more generally, their inability to regulate the lives of individuals, the disaffection felt towards them by the intelligentsia and their failure to produce their own intellectual elite (2000, p.23).

These examples show how modernity eradicates the means through which religious beliefs are transmitted. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that these changes have weakened the ability of religious institutions to control belief.

As this systematic order of belief has declined, the rationality of the individual has accelerated. ‘Individuals, in groups or on their own, hence are free to construct a universe of meaning on the basis of a chosen dimension of their experience’ (2000, p.33). These dual processes of rationalisation and individualisation have therefore undermined the traditional systems of believing, but crucially, ‘they have not forsaken belief’ (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.74). Hervieu-Léger maintains that despite perceptions that the rationalisation of modern societies has reduced the space available for belief, ‘believing plays a major role in modernity’ (2000, p.72).

Hervieu-Léger (2000) has been influenced in this respect by Berger’s (1967) concept of religion as a sacred canopy which protects individuals from the chaotic nature of the world. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that belief provides a way for the individual to alleviate feelings of uncertainty, which she maintains is more common in modern societies. From this perspective, modernity does not eradicate belief, but in fact creates it. Hervieu-Léger (2000) writes, ‘it re-emerges from modernity itself in the form of so many fragmented demands for meaning whose urgency reflects a world that is no longer fixed and stable’ (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.73).

Having established the continuance of a need for religion in modernity, Hervieu-Léger (2000) moves to discuss how best to understand religion in modernity.

Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that religion is a *way* of believing, a particular form of belief. In a modern world where ‘all symbols are interchangeable and capable of being combined and transposed’ (2000, p.75), definitions of religion which have focused on the content of religious beliefs, or the nature of religious practices, become insufficient in a modern era where the individualisation of meaning has made the analysis and understanding of religion more difficult.

Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that clear understandings of religious belief and practice will not be found by using traditional markers of religiosity. She argues however that we should not abandon all attempts at defining religion in modernity, even given these difficulties. Instead, she maintains that the *form* of believing should be the basis of any definition that is fit for purpose in a fluid world where traditional categories have become unstable. This helps us to better understand the nature of Catholicism in Ireland where increasingly people identify as Catholic without adhering to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. For Hervieu-Léger (2000), the form of believing that can be identified as ‘religious’ is centred on reference to tradition. Indeed, Hervieu-Léger argues that ‘there is no religion without the authority of a tradition being invoked (whether explicitly, half-explicitly, or implicitly) in support of the act of believing’ (2000, p.76). Tradition then, is a form of authorised collective memory, legitimised by those in authority to ensure the transmission of religion.

To centre a modern definition of religion on tradition challenges the typical arguments regarding the secularisation of modern societies, which assume that as societies modernise, religion will decline**.** As Hervieu-Léger reminds us, this perspective suggests that ‘religion is wedded to traditional society, which is more often than not identified as being opposed to modernity' (2000, p.83). Here, we see the difficulty in defining 'modernity', and in placing religion somehow in opposition to it. I agree with Hervieu-Léger (2000, p.85) who argues that a definition of 'modernity' is 'elusive' and that is it 'immune to being encompassed in a single definition'. Hervieu-Léger (2000) disputes that 'traditional' and 'modern' societies can be viewed as separate and discrete categories. She reinforces the importance of viewing society as 'fluid system' (2000, p.85). From this perspective, it is impossible to tell where 'traditional society' ends and 'modernity' begins as 'neither is self-enclosed, the opposition between them is not absolute' (Hervieu-Léger (2000, p.85).

Within this fluid system, Hervieu-Léger argues that tradition is:

> The body of representations, images, theoretical and practical intelligence behaviour, attitudes and so on that a group or society accepts in the name of the *necessary* [emphasis from the original] continuity between the past and the present. Thus what comes from the past is only constituted as tradition insofar as anteriority constitutes a title of authority in the present (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.87).

It is this tradition which Hervieu-Léger refers to as the 'chain of belief' (2000, p.81) which adheres a religious group to each other and which legitimises their acts of belief in modernity. From Hervieu-Léger 's (2000) perspective then, the content and meaning of the tradition is less important than what the tradition itself represents- an ongoing continuance of a line of believers.

She observes that references to tradition on the part of religious groups are often variable, or they may shift from person to person. In keeping with the individualisation of modern societies, the individual can imagine the tradition which is being invoked in their own way. Consequently, for Hervieu-Léger (2000) what is significant in defining religion is:

> Not the actual substance of belief but the ingenuity, the imaginative perception of the link which across time establishes the religious adhesion of members to the group they form and the convictions that bind them…It is not the continuity in itself that matters but the fact of its being the visible expression of a lineage which the believer expressly lays claim to and which confers membership of spiritual community that gathers past, present, and future believers (2000, p.81).

For instance, a Mormon who arrives in church on Sunday to partake of the key weekly ritual of the Sacrament, may find the meaning behind the tradition to be the sacred role of the priesthood holder who administers the Sacrament. This is a role given to male Church members and which is reinforced each Sunday in the Sacrament ritual. For another member of the congregation, what is significant in the tradition of the Sacrament might be the opportunity to formally reaffirm their covenants with God, as other members of the Church have also done since its founding. For Hervieu-Léger (2000), the individualised meaning of the tradition being invoked (in this case, the weekly Sacrament) is less important than the ways in which the tradition represents a continuance of a line of believers which both members claim to belong to. This helps us to understand the nature of Catholic conversion to Mormonism in Ireland. The convert ruptures the continuity of Catholicism through the generations, by virtue of their conversion to another faith.

Building upon these arguments, Hervieu-Léger (2000) thus provides us with an explanation of religion which will frame the discussions of this research:

> Religion is an ideological, practical, and symbolic system through which consciousness, both individual and collective, of belonging to a particular chain of belief is constituted, maintained, developed, and controlled (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.82).

The above can be utilised to understand both Catholicism and Mormonism in Ireland, and the relationship between the two. Both faiths rest upon reference to traditions which legitimise the ongoing beliefs of their adherents. Both faiths incorporate ideological standpoints which support the group, such as an association between Catholicism and Irish national identity in the case of Catholicism, or a veneration of history and genealogy in the case of Mormonism. Both faiths reference symbols which support the values of the religion, and allow for individual and collective meanings of the same to be maintained. This is in evidence within Mormonism through the symbol of the beehive, representing Mormon values of hard work, perseverance, and working for the good of the group. Within Catholicism, the Lenten symbol of the cross, marked in ashes on the forehead on Ash Wednesday, symbolises the importance of repentance. Both faiths, therefore, operate a system which maintains and develops a chain of belief amongst its adherents.

With her theory of religion in modernity and its relevance for this research now established, it is important to note how Hervieu-Léger (2000) observes that the continued presence of tradition in modern life ultimately reveals two key paradoxes of modernity. Firstly, rather than cause the decline of religion and tradition, Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that modernity, by creating instability, has in fact increased the need to believe in an order which comes from outside the self, which is rooted in the tradition of those who have come before us. Secondly, the understanding of religion as expressed thus far rests upon a notion of collective memory, as to lay claim to a chain of belief depends at least in part on memories, real or imagined. Hervieu-Léger (2000) tells us:

> The future of religion is immediately associated with the problem of collective memory. The possibility that a group- or an individual- see itself as part of a chain or lineage depends, to some extent at least, on mention of the past and memories that are consciously shared with and passed onto others (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 123).

Yet, 'the chief characteristic of modern societies is that they are no longer societies of memory' (2000, p.123). Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that a crisis of collective memory has occurred due to changes in society such as the spread of industrialisation, urbanisation, globalisation, and mass communications. These changes have weakened the bonds of social groups, and fragmented belonging. She suggests that the very fact of 'being able to differentiate between a family memory, a religious memory, a national memory, a class memory, and so on is already a token of having left behind the pure world of tradition' (2000, p.127).

This fragmentation of memory has occurred because of two seemingly contradictory trends. Firstly, due to industrial economies which place value on mass communication and over-saturation of images, collective memory has become at once expanded and more homogenous. Secondly, there emerges a fragmenting of individual memory and group memory which results in the collective memory of modern society being ‘composed of bits and pieces’ (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.129).

Based upon this fragmentation of collective memory, Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that when scholars survey the position and role of religion in modern Europe and declare a process of secularisation underway, they are mistaken. What is occurring within those societies is a crisis of collective memory through which religion, as a chain of memory, is affected. To demonstrate this argument, Hervieu-Léger (2000) suggests that ‘one should look at the complex redistribution taking place in the sphere of believing’ (2000, p.132). She observes that as the Catholic Church’s influence has declined, NRMs have prospered ‘inside, at the margin of, or quite outside the sphere of the Church’ (2000, p.132). For Hervieu-Léger, rather than a collapse of religious belief ‘the breakdown is in the imaginative grasp of continuity’ (2000, p.132).

These changes occurring in modern religion illustrate the capacity of local cultures to adapt to changing circumstances. More recently, she observes that globalisation in modernity, ‘far from erasing the diversity of local cultures, tends rather to reinforce their need to assert their own singularity’ (Hervieu-Léger 2015, p. 15). Thus, the role of collective memory in modernity is not simply to ‘prolong the legacy of the past’. Hervieu-Léger (2015, p.15) suggests that instead ‘it re-creates and invents new relationships to the present-day world through which it shapes what it has received from the past’.

Recently, scholars have begun to apply the theories of Hervieu-Léger (2000) to their own studies of religion with interesting results. In the next section, I explore in detail the work of Grace Davie (2000) who has used Hervieu-Léger (2000) as it is directly relevant to my research. However, others have also made use of Hervieu-Léger (2000) to understand religion in modernity. Geaves (2009) applies the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) to the case study of Prem Rawat, a teacher of Indian origin who moved to the West in the early 1970s and inspired the establishment of numerous organisations including Divine Light Mission, Elan Vital, and The Prem Rawat Foundation. Geaves (2009, p. 30) concludes that Hervieu-Léger’s (2000) analysis of religion suffers from the problem of ‘Western social scientific discourse on religion’ which he argues, is ‘overwhelming reliant’ on the Christian worldview in its analysis of religion. Accordingly, he argues that ‘her emphasis on linear time, essential to chains of memory, privileges a Judaic/Christian narrative, whereby providence gives way to progress’ (Geaves, 2009, p. 30).

This is an insightful observation on Geave’s (2009) part, one which reminds us that Hervieu-Léger‘s (2000) theories may be useful in understanding some experiences of religion, but not all. For Geaves (2009), Hervieu-Léger (2000) is too Christian and French centred in its analysis of the place of religion in modernity to be truly useful for his purposes, which is exploring a very different faith tradition to Christianity. Given that Mormonism and Irish Catholicism have a heavy Christian influence, her work remains useful in this research for examining these particular faith traditions. Though, it must be noted that whilst discussing the invented nature of religious tradition, Douglas Davies (2007) questions the nature of scholarly examinations of tradition and change. He notes the complex nature of change in religion.

> Was the Protestant ‘‘Reformation’’ revelation-like or something different? And is Mormonism a sect of Christianity, a Reformation, or, as it calls itself, a Restoration? The Mormon option, originating in the doubt and conversion experience of its founding prophet, was clear: all other churches had failed and a new start was needed. But, and this is crucial, many essential facts behind those failed churches were retained at the point of Mormonism’s origin, namely the belief in an essentially Christian deity, in Christian notions of sin, repentance, forgiveness, and in the worth of the Bible, including its ancient Jewish tradition (2007, p. 59|)

A point of importance to be taken from Davies (2007) argument above is the impossibility of identifying the boundaries of a religious tradition. How can we ever define what is ‘new’, what has ‘changed’? Indeed, Davies (2007, p.59) argues that religion will always use the traditions of its ‘parental denomination’ in order to justify itself in the present. The difficulty then, for Hervieu-Léger (2000) and others, is how to analyse such changes, schisms, and adaptations of religion. Following Davies (2007) discussion of Catholicism and the Protestant Reformation in which he notes Protestant reformers explicitly discussed which ceremonies to keep and which to discard, religion may be best seen as a series of continuities, as each ‘new’ religious tradition self-consciously borrows from what has gone before.

Yet, although Hervieu-Léger's (2000) theory could be (as Geaves (2009) has observed) best applied to a Western Christian context, even that constitutes a broad umbrella of varied beliefs and traditions which are interconnected to each other in complex ways. Can what Hervieu-Léger (2000) describes as evident in the modern experience of French Catholicism be discussed in relation to Irish Catholicism? Or to Mormonism? Although all three fall under the classification of Judeo-Christian tradition and share clear commonalities, they are of course each affected by the specific influences of nation, culture and ethnicity in ways which make any widescale application of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) theory more difficult.

However, continuing the application of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) text to specific case studies, James Cox (2015) has applied the theories of Hervieu-Léger (2000) to two varied case studies within his own research with indigenous religions (amongst the Shona of Zimbabwe and Celtic shamans in the US). He concludes that both cases do 'represent Hervieu-Leger's "mutating structures of believing". At the same time he suggests, they refer to the collective memory of the past which in turn affects the present experience of the adherents and in some sense directs their future' (Cox, 2015, p. 21). In other words, Cox (2015) argues that evidence of religious adaption is present in the two very different cases of his study; the Shona of Zimbabwe and Celtic shamans in the US.

He also sees a continuing need within both groups to rely on a collective memory of the past to justify the present. Both groups are simultaneously reinforcing and disrupting their collective understandings of their religious traditions. Cox (2015) proposes that Hervieu-Léger's (2000) ideas further our understanding of these two case studies, as both groups continue to 'appeal to authoritative tradition' in modernity. My research continues Cox (2015) and Greave's (2009) application of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) theories to real case studies, by exploring the validity of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) arguments for the case study of Mormonism in modern Ireland.

Mormons in Ireland experience their everyday religion and their everyday lives within a society influenced by a changing experience of Catholicism, and also adhere to a faith which emphasises the importance of lineage and tradition, and which is also undergoing significant transformation The usefulness of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) arguments for this research lie in their ability to offer insights into the changes which have occurred in religion in Ireland in recent years, as will be discussed in the following sections, *and* the significance of Mormonism for its adherents as discussed in Chapter Three. Hervieu-Léger (2000)'s work helps me to better understand the complexity of these transformations, and so to better understand the experiences of Mormons in Ireland whose lives are lived within this landscape. My application of this theory to the case study of Mormons in Ireland is not intended to be viewed as applicable to all minority religions in Europe, or even in Ireland. Rather, Hervieu-Léger (2000) helps me to understand the very specific experiences of a group of people navigating through two faith traditions in a time of rapid change in Ireland.

The following section continues an analysis of the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) by discussing an application of her ideas to the broad European context by Grace Davie (2000). Davie has argued that Hervieu-Léger's (2000) theory of religion is useful in understanding the complexity of religion in the European case, and has focused upon Hervieu-Léger's (2000) interpretation of tradition and collective memory in modernity, to explain the changes to religion ongoing in European societies. Significantly for this research, Davie explores in more detail the contention of Hervieu-Léger (2000) that a rise of NRMs and other religions indicates a transformation in our experiences of religion in Europe, rather than a decline. Mormonism, as a NRM associated mainly with the US, is an ideal example of the diversity of religious adaptions taking place in Europe recently discussed by Davie (2000).

2.4 Applying *Religion as a Chain of Memory* to Europe

A significant application of Hervieu-Léger's work emerged through Davie's (2000) *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates.* Davie (2000) argues that Europe is undergoing significant changes in how it experiences religion which needs careful examination. Davie (2000) demonstrates how the religious memory of Europe has, and continues, to mutate. In subtitling her book *A Memory Mutates*, Davie (2000) observes that 'mutation in the scientific sense implies a change in genetic form in order that the species in question will be more suitably adapted to its environment' (Davie, 2000, p. 154).

Davie (2000) uses the metaphor of mutation to argue that the collective memories of religion in Europe are responding to the social and cultural changes which have taken place in modernity. Her work assists my research by showing the complexity and diversity present in modern European experiences of religion. She highlights the persistence of religion in modern European nations and raises relevant points of discussion regarding the management of religious minorities in countries where previously homogenous religious experiences have become more diverse.

Davie (2000) has used Hervieu-Léger's (2000) concept of religion as a chain of memory to articulate further the forms, and adaptions of, religious memory which can be discerned across Europe in modernity. Intrigued by the mechanisms through which 'modern European societies overcome their amnesia and stay in touch with the forms of religion that are necessary to sustain their identity' (2000, p. 31), Davie explores the variety of ways in which religion persists in Europe in modernity despite the 'amnesia' (2000, p. 31) caused by the fragmentation of collective memory in modernity.

Davie (1990, 1994) has previously noted that many parts of modern Europe have been characterised by 'believing without belonging' (Davie, 1990, p. 413, 1994), where religious belief persists even as active attendance and practice declines. More recently, Davie has placed these comments within a wider context, noting that membership of many types of communal gatherings such as trade unions, political groups, and leisure groups are additionally in decline, a trend also noted in the US (Putnam, 2000). From this observation, she argues that 'believing without belonging is a pervasive dimension of modern European societies; it is not confined to the religious lives of European people' (Davie, 2005, p. 283). This point confirms the arguments of Hervieu-Léger (2000) who argues that it is not *religion* which is suffering in modernity per se, but notions of communality and solidarity.

Davie (2000) agrees with Hervieu-Léger (2000) who argues that new forms of religion will emerge in Europe even as traditional religions decline. In describing the rise of an ‘alternative memory’ of religion in Europe (2000, p. 36), Davie articulates the ways in which increasing religious diversity in Europe causes alternative collective memories of religion to emerge, which often run counter to the religious memory of the majority faiths. Davie (2000) shows how the rise of NRMs, and the increasing presence of religions such as Islam which have not previously been associated with Europe, create alternatives to Europe’s religious memory (2000, p. 36).

Davie (2000) argues that NRMs and other religions which have never held a strong presence in Europe until recently, challenge the worldview of many Europeans- whether secular or religious. Davie (2000) says ‘for secular Europeans, new religious movements challenge assumptions of rationality; for the traditionally religious, they throw up disconcerting alternatives to Christian teaching’ (Davie, 2000, p. 117). Chapter One has illustrated how Mormonism can be included under the title of ‘NRM’. Thus, it is enough here to note that Mormonism in Europe as a NRM can be viewed as part of the creation of alternative memories of religion which Davie (2000) discusses.

Having acknowledged the increasing presence of NRMs and the growth of other religions such as Islam in Europe, Davie (2000) suggests that these alternatives now bring a persistent question to the fore of discussions about modern religion in Europe. This is ‘who does or does not have access to whatever rights or privileges are involved for entities known as “religious organizations” in modern

European society?' (Davie, 2000, p. 115). Underlying this question, lie ideas of religious tolerance and religious pluralism.

Davie asserts that the rise of NRMs and the introduction of 'new' religions long established elsewhere, can reveal interesting cases which provide insights into the capacity of societies to tolerate difference (Davie, 2000). For instance, in a discussion of the response of Europe to the rise of Islam there, and specifically in a discussion of the Salman Rushdie scandal, Davie observes that 'tolerance was clearly a social construct, to be applied arbitrarily' (Davie, 2000, p. 130). Upon Salman Rushdie's 'embrace' of Islam two years after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, Davie notes that 'the outrage of secular liberals …could hardly be contained, revealing an alarming illogicality at the heart of their campaign: Muslims should be tolerant of offensive books, but liberals cannot tolerate a writer who becomes a Muslim' (Davie, 2000, p. 130).
This example gets to the heart of the problem of collective memory in modernity. Where once in the pre-modern era, society would adhere in almost every respect to one worldview and one memory of the past to inform the present, in modernity multiple and often conflicting collective memories increasingly encounter the other. Long lasting traditions and/or reference to sacred symbols are used to justify positions which the 'other' has no cultural memory of and therefore cannot understand. This leads to what Davie refers to as a 'mutual incomprehension…of the other's difficulties' (Davie, 2000, p. 132).

From this perspective, the rise of alternative memories of religion in Europe through an influx of NRMs such as Mormonism, alternative spiritualties, and the spread of world religions such as Islam, does more than simply prove that

Hervieu-Léger (2000) was right to argue that the decline of the influence of dominant religions does not equal the decline of religious belief. It also reveals how reference to a chain of belief can be used to support a claim for legitimacy on the part of a minority, and the difficulties of the majority in comprehending those claims.

Davie (2000) argues that the gulf between religious minorities and majorities can be large. In this environment, she argues that religious minorities ‘have to find new ways of surviving, always asking themselves whether this or that course of action will be appropriate and how far they should go in adapting to the mainstream culture’ (Davie, 2000, p. 154). Citing work by Arweck and Clarke (1997) on NRMs in Europe, Davie argues that Ireland particularly represents an ‘extreme case’ in these discussions, where high levels of Catholic belief and practice have stifled the emergence and acceptance of NRMs (2000, p. 117). However, as will be shown in following sections, the rate of social change in Ireland has been so rapid that it should be noted that the cultural landscape of the country as well as its demography, has noticeably changed since Davie’s comments in 2000 regarding Ireland.

Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) agree that the breakdown of collective memory in modernity has caused significant social change through which religion is affected. The following section will discuss this proposal in relation to the Irish case, arguing that rapid economic, social, and religious change in Ireland can be explained through this perspective. I highlight that although transformed, Ireland remains a religious and spiritual country and so following Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000), it would be incorrect to assume that rapid change in the religious landscape of Ireland implies that Ireland is secularising. As Mormons in Ireland exist within this wider landscape, and make sense of themselves and their faith within this rapidly changing society, an understanding of these changes for this research is important.

2.5 Modern Ireland: A Society Transformed

The argument expressed thus far rests upon ideas of continued but changed forms of religion in modern Europe. Particularly, Hervieu-Léger (2000) has argued that changes brought about through modernisation such as globalisation, technological transformation, and family change, have caused a breakdown in the continuity of collective memory which religious belief rests upon. At the heart of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) argument is instability. It is the fragmentation and unstable nature of modern society which she suggests is so disrupting to the transmittance of collective belief. This section will outline how Ireland's rapid modernisation has similarly transformed Ireland into a profoundly unstable society in which old certainties have become fragmented, and in some cases, lost completely.

Since the 1990s, Ireland has undergone rapid and significant economic change which has reshaped the cultural landscape of the country. The 'Celtic Tiger' period from the mid 1990s to 2008 saw unemployment and poverty levels plummet (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 1). Ireland became a globalised economy (Riain, 2014), which saw the reversal of generations of emigration, and mass immigration to Ireland for the first time from both inside and outside of the EU (Ruhs, 2005; Quinn and Ruhs, 2009). Following the 'Celtic Tiger's economic collapse in 2008, Ireland's success evaporated (O' Hearn, 2014, p.

40). Unemployment, which had dropped from 18% in the late 1980's to 4.2% in 2005 (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 1), rose again to 15% in 2012 (O' Hearn, 2014, p. 38). Consistent Poverty levels rose to a high of 9.1% of the population in 2013 (CSO 2013). Ireland had gone from being a country of poverty and debt in the 1980's, to a country of extreme wealth in the 1990s and early 2000s, back to poverty and debt, in just 30 years, demonstrating significant economic instability.

Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004; Kuhling and Keohane, 2007) discuss the changing cultural environment in Ireland as a result of these economic shifts. They observe that:

> The 'Celtic Tiger' is a striking example of an image in which are condensed elements of tradition and modernity, the global and the local, community and society, as they are in flux in the liminal contexts of collision culture (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004, pp. 141, 142).

Kehane and Kuhling (2004) echo Hervieu-Léger (2000) and her understanding of the continuation of tradition and lineage within the chaos and fragmentation of modern life.

Whilst these economic changes were underway, Ireland was also undergoing a considerable liberalisation of its social attitudes and behaviours. During the 'Celtic Tiger' era as the influence of the Catholic Church declined, Irish family life transformed as Catholic teaching regarding family and sexuality became less influential in people's decisions. People began to marry later or to abstain from marriage altogether. The average age at which women marry has increased from 24 years in 1980 (Central Statistics Office, 2000), to 33.2 years in 2015 (Central Statistics Office, 2016a). Births outside of marriage increased from just 5% of all births in 1980, to 28% of all births in 1998 (Central Statistics Office, 2000, p. 30). By 2016, 36% of all births in the State were outside of marriage (Central Statistics Office, 2016c). The introduction of divorce was seen to be a symbolic statement of Ireland's increasing liberalisation. Divorce was legalised in Ireland in 1996, passed by a margin of just 1% of the electorate by referendum (James, 1997). However, Ireland maintains the lowest divorce rate in Europe at 0.6% per 100,000 people, significantly lower than the EU average of 2.0% (Central Statistics Office, 2016b).

Other key developments which reflect Ireland's increasingly liberal attitudes towards social and family life include fast-changing attitudes and polices towards homosexuality. Until 1993, homosexual acts were criminalised in Ireland (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, 2013). By 2011, Ireland had introduced Civil Partnership for gay men and women (Gay and Lesbian Equality Network, 2012), and in a high-profile referendum in 2015, Ireland became the first country in the world to legalise same sex civil marriage by popular vote (O' Caollaí and Hilliard, 2015).

These changes have resulted in a society which has been economically and socially transformed since the 1980's. Yet, they also reveal a complex picture of Irish social life. Although liberalising policies have occurred in a short space of time, Ireland is still more conservative than its European neighbours on many issues. This can be seen in the very narrow passing of the divorce referendum, the low divorce rate, higher fertility rates, and a previously restrictive abortion regime in which terminations are only legal in one circumstance, if the life of the mother is at risk. Due to the result of a 2018 referendum on the liberalisation of abortion, Ireland will soon pass legislation allowing for abortion up to 12 weeks, and in exceptional cases thereafter.

In summary, Ireland has rapidly modernised and liberalised, but remains more conservative than many modern European nations. It is important to note that it is within this broad context of rapid change, and simultaneous liberalisation and continued conservatism, that Mormonism in Ireland is experienced. For this reason, it is important to understand how these social and economic changes have affected the Irish experience of religion more generally. In discussing the ‘break in the chain’ (2000, p.124) of the collective memory of Catholic France, Hervieu-Léger (2000) observes that:

> For centuries the parish represented *the* society of memory…it is of little matter that the reality of life in the parish never corresponded to the way it was thus depicted; its representation lent strength to a vision of a religious society (Hervieu-Léger 2000, pp.132–133).

Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that changes to family and the decline of rural life, both fundamental to the sense of community and lineage within the Catholic parish, have contributed to creating a modern religion which is ‘deprived of memory’ (2000, p.123), existing within societies suffering ‘amnesia’ though the ‘obliteration of all recall that is not immediate or functional’ (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.140).

Given the changes to Irish society as outlined above, the parallels with the Irish Catholic experience are clear. The numbers reporting as Catholic in Ireland have been declining since the 1960s, with more significant declines from the 1980’s onwards. The latest census figures from the 2011 census, report the lowest number of Catholics thus far at 78.3% of the population, down from the highest figure of 94.9% of the population in 1961 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Vocations for the priesthood have been declining for many years (Inglis, 1998) and recent data compiled from the Vatican’s Statistical Yearbook by the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference (2014) shows a 13% decline between 2002 and 2012.

Attendance at religious services has similarly dropped precipitously (Ganiel, 2009). The Archbishop of the Dublin Diocese of the Catholic Church has been open about his deep concern about what these declining attendances represent (2011, 2013). He says:

> It would appear that on any normal Sunday about 20% of the Catholic population of the Archdiocese of Dublin is present at Mass…In more than one parish the Sunday practice rate is about 3%... these statistics are to say the least, a cause of great concern. Even more alarming is the fact that these statistics take no account of the age profile of those who attend Mass regularly. The presence of young people is clearly much lower... More and more we encounter people who say that they are Catholic but that going to Mass is not very high on their agenda. (Martin, 2011).

From Martin’s comments above, it is clear that significant change in how the Irish experience Catholicism is underway.

Substantial change in the experience of the dominant religion does not occur in a vacuum. The Irish experience of other religions and no religion is also undergoing a transformation, which is noteworthy for this research which focuses upon a religious minority experience in Ireland. Indeed, as the number of Catholics has declined, the numbers of atheists, agnostics, and those of no religion has increased quickly particularly in urban areas, revealing an increase in non-belief in Ireland. Again, the changes have been dramatic, and swift. The number of atheists has increased by 320%, agnostics by 132% and those with no religion by 45%, between 2006 and 2011 (Central Statistics Office, 2012b). Taken together, they now number 10.2% of the population (Central Statistics Office, 2017b).

As noted by Vladimir Kmec (2014) in his study of immigrant’s religious responses to Ireland’s recent crises; Ireland’s religious change has been accelerated by processes of immigration. Foreign nationals comprised 11% of the population in 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b) compared to just 5.8% in 2002 (Central Statistics Office, 2012a). These migration patterns have brought changes to the religious experience in Ireland outside of Catholicism (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011b). Increases are visible most notably in Pentecostalism (Ugba, 2006, 2008, 2009, Maguire and Murphy, 2012, 2015) and Islam (Flynn, 2006; Lacey, 2009; Ciciora, 2010; Scharbrodt, 2011; 2011; McGarry, 2012), but most small religions are growing.

However, whilst immigration has driven growth in these religions, it must be noted that given Ireland's religious homogeneity, religions other than Catholicism still constitute tiny minorities in Ireland. Pentecostals constituted just 0.03% of the population in the 2011 census whilst Islam makes up 0.1% of the population (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). The above figures indicate that those of other religions *and* no religion are increasing, as Catholicism declines. This, is the context within which Mormons in Ireland must navigate.

Whilst studies on Pentecostalism (Ugba, 2006, 2008, 2009, Maguire and Murphy, 2012, 2015) and Islam (Flynn, 2006; Lacey, 2009; Ciciora, 2010; Scharbrodt, 2011; 2011; McGarry, 2012) are necessary and useful scholarship and are useful to this study, they explore the religious minority experience from the perspective of those who are also often racially marked in a majority white country. Therefore, these groups often have a different experience as a religious minority than white religious minorities in Ireland as they manage minority racial and ethnic minority status alongside their religious status. Although research with other majority white religious minorities in Ireland exists, most notably with Ireland's Protestant community (Ruane and Todd, 2009; Ruane, 2010; Nuttall, 2015; Walsh, 2015), this research is less plentiful. By exploring the experiences of a religious minority in Ireland who are majority white, my research bridges a knowledge gap in Ireland pertaining to those religious minorities who are not marked as different by virtue of their skin colour.

The overview of Catholicism's rapid decline provided thus far, might lead one to believe that Ireland's secularisation is well underway. Certainly, if such a process is to be judged by rapid decline in belief and practice of Irish Catholics, and in the declining influence of the Catholic Church in government affairs and public policy, then we might conclude such is the case. However, as noted above, small religions are growing and other established religions never seen before in Ireland in any significant numbers are emerging, proving that *perhaps* the Irish might be abandoning Catholicism, at least in the traditional sense, but they are not abandoning religion. In fact, the Irish may not even be abandoning Catholicism, but remoulding it, or themselves, into something new, better fit for purpose in twenty-first century Ireland. Likewise, the growth of religions associated with increases in immigration such as Islam also demonstrates that these new arrivals to Ireland are pushing forward Ireland's religious diversity and supporting the continuance of religion in Ireland.

The continued, if changed, Irish relationship with religion is central to our understanding of Mormonism in Ireland. It is within this religious landscape that Mormonism struggles to find a place for itself in modern Ireland. In this context, it is important to understand what Ireland's changed relationship with religion might be. Significantly for Mormonism as a religious minority, it appears that the Irish are still bound to Catholicism as the dominant religion in complex ways. Catholicism remains a significant cultural influence in modern Ireland, wielding a symbolic power even as its institutional power declines.

It has been noted that despite the collapse of institutional Catholicism, a personal spirituality is persisting. In an analysis of the aftermath of the Catholic Church's sex abuse scandals of the 1990s and 2000s which irreparably damaged the reputation and influence of the Catholic Church in Ireland, Donnelly and Inglis (2010) constructed an index of 'personal religiosity' using data from the European Values Study data to find that individuals' personal religiosity has remained relatively stable over this time. This is despite the decline of the institutional church as described above (Donnelly and Inglis, 2010, p. 10).

Similarly, comparative research of Ireland with other European countries in the European Values Study has consistently found that despite transformative changes in the Irish religious landscape, the Irish are still more religious and attend services more frequently than most other European nations, particularly in comparison to traditionally Protestant nations (Halman and Vloet, 1994; Whelan and Fahey, 1996; Halman and Draulans, 2006; Breen and Reynolds, 2011). It has been noted that 91.8% of the Irish believe in God (Breen and Reynolds, 2011), and Breen and Reynolds (2011) say:

> The overall picture seems to be one of a pronounced church-oriented decline, but a relatively persistent religious sentiment, either in terms of a more nominal denominational affiliation that is unsubstantiated by regular practice, or in terms of persisting religious beliefs that are unsubstantiated by regular practice (2011, p. 4).

Breen and Reynolds (2011) show a continuation of Catholic influence on the religious outlook of Irish people, which might be characterised as a more privatised and individualised form of Catholicism than what has gone before.

Regarding the relationship between church and State institutions, it has been noted that the separation of church and State is not yet complete, and its progress has been slow. In analysing secularisation and neo-secularisation theories in relation to Ireland, Vesna Malesevic (2010) argues that significant power of the Catholic Church in State affairs is still evident in their control of the educational system, where 90% of schools are run by the Catholic Church, with the ability to control school admissions and ethos (Department of Education, 2013). In a similar demonstration of continuing ideological influence, the Catholic call to prayer- the Angelus, continues to be broadcast on the main public service television channel twice a day prior to the lunchtime and evening news.

Based on the evidence presented above, it is overly simplistic to argue that Ireland is following a classic secularisation process. For Mormons in Ireland, Catholicism as Ireland's dominant religion, continues to shape Irish people's understandings of religion. Their own experiences of religion more generally, and Mormonism specifically, must be understood as ongoing within a religious landscape of rapid religious change *and* continued Catholic influence. Set in a wider context of profound economic and social instability, I argue that Ireland's religious change can be better understood as a change in the collective identity of the Irish people as a response to modernity.

To develop this argument, the following section will show how collective understandings of Irish national identity have adapted in recent years. Specifically, I show how Catholicism remains a fundamental component of the Irish national identity, albeit in changed form. This raises important questions regarding the compatibility of Mormonism and Irishness, which will be explored through the ethnographic chapters of this thesis.

2.6 Fragmentation and Adaption of Irish Collective Memory of Religion

A 15-year sociological book series entitled *Sociological Chronicles,* has discussed aspects of social change in Ireland through tumultuous times. The editors have discussed the transformations from the late 1990s to the current era, and observe that Irish society is ‘within a landscape of rapid internal flux’ (Share and Corcoran, 2010, p. 5). This instability has also been noted by Kmec, who observes that ‘Ireland can be said to be in a transitional period, experiencing multiple crises associated with modernity’ (2014, p. 2).

As Ireland struggles to make sense of its present, its relationship to its own past is also in a process of flux. I acknowledge that the collective memory of history is always in the process of being re-imagined (Poole, 2008, Berger 1963, Halbwachs 1980, Zerubavel 1996). Nonetheless it appears that Ireland’s reinvention of itself for the modern era as a ‘liberal, progressive and multicultural’ nation (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 66) has involved a ‘repression of historical memory and a denial of many aspects of Irish history, in particular the Irish experience of trauma, diaspora, and colonialisation’ (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 66).

Kuhling and Keohane (2007) are not suggesting that Ireland has *forgotten* its colonial past. By the *repression* of memory, they refer to the ways in which the Irish have not fully processed or come to terms with their own history which might allow a more open attitude to outsiders to emerge. In other words, Kuhling and Keohane (2007) and others who have applied a post-colonial analysis to Ireland such as Geraldine Moane (2002, 2014), argue that this repression of memory (Kirby, Gibbons and Cronin, 2002) affects the present. This causes Irish society to marginalise many experiences which do not fit the mould of white, Irish-born and Catholic.

The work of Ronit Lentin (2000, 2001, 2007, 2012) illustrates that according to dominant discourse in Ireland, to be Irish is to be white. She also demonstrates that whiteness in Ireland has been constructed as ethnically and racially homogeneous and how it has been normalised and made invisible to scrutiny (Lentin 2012). Lentin argues that 'racialised ethnic groups in Ireland - black-Irish people, Jewish people, members of African and Asian communities…have been largely invisible in the narrative of the Irish 'imagined community' (Lentin 2001, para.1.7). Whilst examining how the Irish State creates racism, Lentin (2007) suggest that modern inter-cultural discourse promoted by the State 'construct cultural difference and ethnic minority 'communities' as static and already there, ignoring intra-ethnic heterogeneities and contestations' (Lentin, 2007, p. 2), thereby failing to understand the complexity of ethnic identifications. Lentin (2007) argues that just as whiteness has been constructed in homogenous terms, so too now, are ethnic minorities.

Lentin (2007) demonstrates that discrimination towards racial and ethnic groups is created not just by individual and societal prejudices but is built into the Irish nation state itself. She argues that the nation-state's boundaries are being redefined 'by controlling not only in-migration, but also existing minority collectives within' (2007, p. 3). Ireland's troubled relationship with outsiders which Lentin (2007) articulates here, is visible in its treatment of asylum seekers; very few of whom are white, or Catholic. They are segregated from society for up to a decade through the asylum system and until 2018 they were not allowed to work until their claim was processed, however many years that may be (Moran, 2013). Ireland also has one of the lowest acceptance rates of asylum seekers in the EU (Irish Refugee Council, 2013).

As Mormons in Ireland are more ethnically diverse than the Irish population, it is important to understand how Ireland responds to ethnic minorities. Additionally, as Kuhling and Keohane (2007) argue below, Ireland's treatment of ethnic minorities is representative of Irish attitudes towards those who are considered 'different' more generally. So, Lentin's work helps us to understand the response of Irish people and the Irish State towards all minorities, including Mormons. Kuhling and Keohane (2007) argue that:

> One of the explanations for why Ireland has retained an overwhelmingly assimilationist view of multiculturalism can be identified within the perceived need to construct a homogenous view of the 'true Irish' people and culture as a form of resistance to colonial repression (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 67).

The treatment of minorities as outlined by Lentin (2007) and Kuhling and Keohane (2007) illustrates how repressed memory lingers unexamined in the modern era. Past colonialisation of Ireland by the British has led to a suspicion of 'outsiders' and the construction of an 'Irish' identity which clearly defines who is 'other'. Kuhling and Keohane (2007) argue there that this suspicion of outsiders has remained in the Irish psyche in the post-colonial era and has remained unexamined. This affects the ways in which current Irish society manages rapid immigration and growing religious and ethnic diversity (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, pp. 66–67). On this basis of this assessment, Mormons in Ireland who do not fit the mould of w and Irish, and who are already not Catholic, find their experience in Ireland to be one of exclusion and non-belonging.

Share and Corcoran (2010) also observe that an adherence to more traditional forms of identification persists. They argue that:

> Much of the structural scaffolding of 'traditional Ireland' remains stubbornly in place despite, and perhaps even because of, recent societal transformations. Community, class, gender, and nationality remain salient to how people define themselves and how they are defined by others (Share and Corcoran, 2010, p. 16).

This observation confirms that despite rapid change in Ireland, traditionalism and conservatism has not disappeared.

It is notable that Share and Corcoran (2010) did not include religion in their list of identifiers that the Irish still cling to. Perhaps this is because Irish nationality and religious identity as Catholic, are deeply intertwined in Irish consciousness and difficult to separate (Inglis, 1998, 2004, 2007; White, 2006; Halikiopoulou, 2008; Ruane and Todd, 2009). It has been noted that this is historically maintained by a 'Catholic-driven decolonizing nationalism' (Ruane, 2010, p. 129). In the years following independence, Ireland asserted its independence from the British through Irish language, culture, and strong adherence to

Catholicism (Whyte, 1976).Thus, Catholicism became bound up with the nationalist project, and became an important part of creating a separate and distinct 'Irish' identity from that of the British.

Through an analysis of a qualitative study on the nature of Irish identities in contemporary Ireland which was completed with 120 respondents, Inglis (2007) also argues that tradition is still a part of the Irish social identity. However, he argues that its expression has adapted. He suggests:

> What we are seeing here perhaps is the demise of the influence of grand, ascribed social identities in the way contemporary Irish people see and understand themselves. [Church and nation] are dependent on getting people to think of themselves as Catholic and Irish. This study would suggest that people still do think of themselves in these terms, but it is not part of their everyday image of themselves. It operates within specific contexts such as encountering people from other religions, going to Mass, going abroad or watching the national team in sports. It may well be that it is only when culture becomes unsettled, when the routine and ordinariness of everyday life is threatened, that ascribed social identities come to the fore (Inglis, 2007, pp. 13–14).

Inglis (2007) suggests that tradition is still central in the Irish experience of identity in modernity, though its expression has changed. Furthermore, he suggests that ascribed identities remain 'hidden' in Ireland, only emerging in response to particular contexts. Inglis (2007) suggests it is when confronted with change and the unusual, that the social identity of 'Irish' as 'Catholic' emerges. Numbers of Mormons in Ireland are small, and as discussed further in Chapter Three, Mormons in Ireland are also commonly stigmatised (Cosgrove 2011). My research will demonstrate through the ethnographic chapters that Mormons' existence as a member of an alternative religion in Ireland elicits the response from the majority which Inglis (2007) identifies here.

Inglis has tracked the changing identifications of Irish Catholics in modern Ireland (1998, 2004, 2007, 2010; 2012). He observes that in addition to 'strong Catholics' mainly found in older generations, there are also 'cultural Catholics' who identify as Catholic to assert a shared cultural heritage. He also identifies 'creative Catholics' who collect a bricolage of various beliefs and practices, including Catholicism. Finally, he observes a large increase in numbers of 'alienated Catholics', those born into the Church who now identify as atheist or agnostic (Inglis, 2007, pp. 12–17).

The variety of Catholicism's lingering in modern Ireland identified by Inglis (2007) confirms the argument of Hervieu-Léger (2000), who suggests that the collective memory though fragmented and damaged can linger within modernity, as is evidenced by being able to speak of 'Catholic Europe' or 'Protestant Europe'. She says this is:

> Not because the religious institutions have retained any real power to set standards (we know they have lost that power everywhere), but because the symbolic structures which they shaped, even after official belief has been lost and religious observance has declined, still have a remarkable capacity to influence the local culture (Hervieu-Léger 2003, p.4).

Davie (2000) confirms this process, suggesting that this is why it is still possible to even speak of ‘Catholic atheists’ and ‘Protestant atheists’ (Davie, 2000, p. 135).

As the previous section has identified, belief in the supernatural is still high amongst the Irish, and significantly higher than many other European countries. However, a significant minority of Irish Catholics do not believe in the specific doctrines of the faith to which they self-identify. O’ Mahony (2010, pp. 11–12), using data from the 2008 European Values Study, shows that 10% of Catholics in the Republic of Ireland do not believe in God, 23% do not believe in heaven, almost half of Irish Catholics do not believe in hell, and almost one quarter do not believe in sin. Though the inverse of these figures indicate that a majority of Irish Catholics *do* believe in the basic doctrine of their faith, they also show that a significant minority of modern Irish Catholics do *not* believe in aspects of Catholicism which many would consider fundamental to the faith. The widespread use of contraception, the rise of births outside of marriage, and the strong endorsement of same sex marriage, are just some other examples of the ways in which some Irish Catholics are continuing an affiliation with a faith whose teachings they nonetheless reject. For many, Catholicism has become a cultural habitus (Inglis, 2004), rather than an active faith.

The continued, yet changed understandings of Irish religion as outlined above, raise important questions regarding the place of Mormonism in Ireland. As a religious minority within such a religiously homogenous country, the religious experiences of Mormons in Ireland are undoubtedly shaped by the religious experiences of the majority society with whom they engage. For example, research with converts from Catholicism to other faiths in Ireland supports the argument that a continuity of Catholic identification persists even as religious belief in Catholicism wanes. Yafa Shanneik (2011, 2015a, 2015b), Tuula Sakaranaho (2003, 2015b) and Gladys Ganiel (2016a, 2016b) highlight a continuity of Catholic identification post-conversion to Islam and Pentecostalism.

Shanneik's (2011) ethnographic research argues that although converts speak of their conversion as being a 'radical rapture between their past and present life' (2011, p. 504), their understandings of Islam are nonetheless 'very much influenced by the Catholic habitus the converts were socialized in' (2011, p. 510). Similarly, Ganiel's interviews with congregants of a Pentecostal church found that the 'congregants overwhelmingly described their own faith in contrast to Catholicism' (2016a, p. 311), leading Ganiel (2016a) to conclude that:

> In Ireland, the present and future of religion is a post-Catholic religious market. But that post Catholic religious market continues to be contrasted to, *and defined by*, the Catholicism of Ireland's past (Ganiel, 2016a, p. 311) [emphasis added].

Sakaranaho (2003) utilises Hervieu-Léger's (2000) conception of memory and religion to analyse the conversion narratives of Irish women from Catholicism to Islam featured in a newspaper piece entitled 'The Irish Daughters of Islam' (Ryan, 2001). Sakaranaho (2003, p. 9) argues that aside from the consumption of alcohol, there are commonalities between Irish Catholicism and Islam pertaining to ‘moral values’ such as the role of women in the family, the position on abortion, prohibition on pre-marital sex, and the significance of the family for the wider community. These commonalities make it easier for women such as Sumiayah to say that growing up in a Catholic home was ‘good preparation for Islamic life’ (Ryan 2001 cited in Sakaranaho 2003, p.2).

Sakaranaho’s (2003, 2015a) work is significant for my research due to her understanding of the role of memory in the experience of religion, and her appreciation for the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) in this regard (Sakaranaho, 2015a). By applying these concepts to the experiences of Muslims in Ireland Sakaranaho (2003, 2015a) confirms the central role of tradition in creating and re-creating modern religion in a specifically Irish context. For Sakaranaho (2015a, p.42), the usefulness of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000)’s work in this regard is twofold. Firstly, she says they articulate how religious memory and tradition is capable of both ‘identification’ and ‘disassociation’.

Secondly, Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) highlight how religious memory and tradition can preserve ‘the status quo’ whilst also innovating and adapting. This helps her to understand the complexity of Muslims’ experiences of their religious identities in Ireland, and that of religious minorities more generally (Sakaranaho, 2015a, p. 42). For example, Sakaranaho (2003, p. 5) suggests that there exists in Ireland a ‘Catholic legacy’, which can be seen as a ‘special kind of religious memory that prevails in Irish society, and that also has a bearing on new religious groups in Ireland’. Noting how Catholicism continues to shape understandings of religious experience post-conversion, Sakaranaho (2003, p. 1) identifies the Irish conversion experience from Catholic to Muslim as being ‘a continuum between two religious traditions’. She notes for example, how converts from Irish Catholicism to Islam speak of Jesus as a sort of ‘middle ground’ (2003, p. 5) between the two faiths, with one convert arguing that her belief in Jesus improved post-conversion. Sakaranaho (2003) therefore proposes that conversion represents a continuity of religious experience.

However, Sakaranaho (2003) argues that the continuity of religious memory has its limits. She suggests that although previous memories of religion can be used to create connections of religious experience, following Hervieu-Léger (2000), she argues that they cannot be used in the legitimisation of that experience.

> The construction of religious memory is not arbitrary in the sense that there are usually religious specialists who are given the legitimation – whether by the office as in the case of the Catholic clergy, or by personal charisma as in the case of Muslim leaders – to produce the authorised version of a particular tradition (Sakaranaho, 2003, p. 12).

Noting the role of the Koran and the Prophet Mohamed as the authoritative sources of Islam, Sakaranaho (2001) thus concludes that despite commonalities and continuities, at this point the continuity of religious tradition between Catholicism and Islam breaks down. Ultimately she concludes, ‘instead of continuities one begins to see differences and hence discontinuities’ (Sakaranaho, 2003, p. 12).

In Ireland, a rejection of Catholicism is interpreted as a rejection of Irishness, as many converts argue that they struggle to be accepted as fully Irish due to their faith. For example, Shanneik (2015a) notes how conversion to another faith is perceived by the Irish as a rejection of Irishness itself, due to the overlap of understandings of Irishness and Catholicism in Irish society.

> One of the women I interviewed says: ‘Look at me and listen to me . . . I look Irish, I speak as an Irish . . . I am Irish.’ These women do not discard their national identity, but question, however, the nationalist project of a homogeneous Irishness by adding a new non-Catholic religious identity to it. In regarding themselves as Irish and Muslim at the same time, these women challenge existing notions of Irishness understood in terms of being white and Catholic (Shanneik, 2015a, p. 196).

Identification with another religion therefore also represents a rupture of the Irish collective memory of Irishness, as well as collective understandings of Irish religion.

Shanneik (2011, 2015a), Sakaranaho (2003) and Ganiel (2016a) demonstrate that conversion from Catholicism in Ireland is experienced as *both* a break with, and a continuation of, their previous religious experiences. They also show that belonging to another faith other than Catholicism is interpreted as a discontinuity of traditional understandings of what it means to be Irish. As a religious minority in Ireland, many of whom are themselves converts from Catholicism, Mormons in Ireland must carefully negotiate this environment.

The only sociological research conducted with Mormons in Ireland prior to this project was that of Olivia Cosgrove's (2013) PhD research on religious stigma and discrimination in Ireland. Her research shows that Irish members of minority religions in Ireland must carefully navigate their status, given the negative perception of religions other than Catholicism on the part of the Irish Catholic majority. Her research incorporated eight in-depth interviews with representatives of eight religious minorities, including Mormons, alongside a much larger survey of those same minority groups. Cosgrove (2013) was conscious of the overlap between whiteness, Catholicism, and Irishness and so she deliberately sought out religious minorities in Ireland who were majority white. This was to better understand how management strategies for religious identity in Ireland are enacted by those who are members of the majority based on race, ethnicity and nationality, yet a minority on the basis of religion.

She identified a variety of identity management strategies employed by the eight religious minorities of her study, including Mormons. She broadly groups these strategies as 'concealing' (Cosgrove, 2013, p. 243), and 'revealing' (Cosgrove, 2013, p. 275) strategies. She identified concealing strategies such as 'passing' as Catholic, and revealing strategies such as challenging those people who discuss their faith in negative stereotypes. Cosgrove found that 49% of her Mormon respondents, who were mainly white Irish, had concealed their religious identity within the previous five years (Cosgrove, 2013, p. 109).

In discussing this process of concealment, Cosgrove's (2013) research highlights the overlap in the national narrative between Irishness and Catholicism, and of Irishness and whiteness. Cosgrove observes that her eight interviewees spoke of passing as Catholic in everyday life but being obliged to do this in a way that they felt to be particularly Irish. Susan, one of the participants in Cosgrove's (2013) research says:

> You have to be of this religion, but not too religious. You can go to mass, but not too often. But most of all you have to keep religion away from everyday life in any serious sense. It's ok to talk about communions and weddings, but not about the religious aspect of it. Like just casual, but in a Catholic sense! (Susan, a Bahai interview participant in Cosgrove 2013, p.243).

Cosgrove (2013) finds that an open and enthusiastic religiosity in Ireland is not socially acceptable, despite the homogeneity of religion in Ireland. There is an expectation that one will be Catholic, but also an expectation that one will experience this identity in a particularly muted way.

Holding a white ethnicity within a majority white society, as most Mormons in Ireland do, makes the concealment process an easier task; certainly all of Cosgrove's interviewees, as white, utilised this strategy to some degree (2013, p. 242). This concept of 'passing' has long been used by minority groups or those under persecution, such as Jews in Europe and elsewhere, as a way to fit in and to avoid the negative consequences of being perceived to be different from the majority (Cutler, 2006; Einwohner, 2006).

Cosgrove (2013) argues that her participants employ both direct and indirect strategies to 'pass' as an Irish Catholic such as mentioning the beauty of a local

Catholic church in a conversation about an event there, or even memorising the full names of Catholic churches so to be able to claim they attended mass at those locations. Cosgrove (2013) concludes that religious minorities, including Mormons, are stigmatised and marginalised within Irish society, an experience which she directly connects to Ireland's specific legacy pertaining to the construction of religious, national, and ethnic identities there.

To place these findings in their broader context, it has been noted that ethno-religious identification often occurs as a way to support national identity (Smith, 1991, 1996, 1999), and this process in Ireland is well acknowledged (Corish, 1996; Murray, 1996; Kearney, 1997; Inglis, 2004, 2007; Kuhling and Keohane, 2007; Halikiopoulou, 2008). As Corish observes:

> Because Irish became synonymous with being Catholic for 95 per cent of the population of the Free State from 1922 onwards, it has proved difficult not [to] be a Catholic in Ireland, for fear of losing one's national identity (Corish, 1996, p. 139).

More recently, Conway (2013, p. 76), has referred to this experience in Ireland as 'ethnic Catholicity', the way in which ethnicity is an 'important component' of religious identity (2013, p. 76) for many Irish Catholics.

In discussing the resilience of similar intermingling's of national and religious identifications in countries such as in Poland and Northern Ireland, Hervieu-Léger suggests that this phenomenon represents a subversion of Davie's well known concept of 'believing without belonging' (1990, 1994), which Hervieu-

Léger (2000, p.162) describes as ‘belonging without believing’. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that ‘belonging without believing’ is ‘believing only in the continuity of the group for which the signs preserved from the traditional religion now serve as emblems’ (2000, p.162). In Ireland for instance, Catholicism can be seen to be an ‘emblem’ of Irishness. The continuing Irish identification with Catholicism despite much lower active participation in the religion, indicates that such continuing identities are now important for maintaining the continuity of the category of ‘Irish’ and are thus an example of Hervieu-Léger’s (2000, p.162) ‘belonging without believing’.

Davie (2005) accepts the existence of such a phenomenon, having acknowledged the religious landscape in the Nordic countries of Europe, where:

> Populations, for the most part, remain members of their Lutheran churches; they use them extensively for the occasional offices and regard membership as part of national just as much as religious identity…This does not, of course, mean that Nordic populations attend their churches with any frequency, nor do they necessarily believe in the tenets of Lutheranism. (Davie, 2005, pp. 285–286).

Jose Casanova (2004) observes that ‘"secular" and "Christian" cultural identities are intertwined in complex and rarely verbalized modes among most Europeans’ (Casanova, 2004, p. 2). This perspective provides us with a way to understand Ireland’s contradictory experiences of Catholicism, and to understand the careful management of religious status by religious minorities in Ireland, of which Mormons are one.

Irish ‘belonging without believing’ (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.162) underlines the ways in which for some, Catholicism serves as a marker of Irish identity; as an ‘emblem’ of who the Irish are, rather than an active belief in the core tenets of Catholicism. These Irish can reconcile their religious distance from the Catholic Church and their concurrent embrace of its cultural connotations, as to do so is to make a statement about what it is to be Irish in the twenty first century. Simultaneously, Irish ‘believing without belonging’ (Davie, 1994, p. 2) is evident in the strong persistence of belief in the supernatural, and that Irish remain a ‘religious’ people. Viewed through this lens, modern Irish religious experience can be understood as reflective of the complex religious and cultural relationship between Irishness and Catholicism in modern society.

Finally, the continuance of complex interminglings of national and religious identification in modern Ireland illustrates that despite the crisis of modernity outlined above, valuing tradition, family, and lineage has not altogether disappeared in modern Ireland. In fact they are increasingly revered as markers of belonging, of being the ‘true Irish’ (Kuhling and Keohane, 2007, p. 67) in a changing country. Similar complex deployments of religious identities have been identified elsewhere, such as in the UK where understandings of Britishness and Christianity show similar entanglements in the modern era (Storm 2011; 2013). Donal Murray, reflecting on Catholicism and its relationship to Irish culture, explains why it is that such forms of belonging matters in modernity specifically:

> It is no coincidence that recent years have seen a great upsurge of interest in tracing one’s roots. In a world which finds it hard to face questions like “who am I? why do I matter? Will it make any difference in a hundred years that I lived at all?” it becomes more pressing to know where one fits in to something greater than oneself. It becomes important to see oneself as belonging, not as a cog in some great impersonal, uncaring machine, but as a living, organic part of the wider human family (Murray, 1996, p. 23).

Here, Murray touches upon the ‘chain of belief’ which Hervieu-Léger (2000, p.81) argues is at the heart of modern experiences of religion. For the Irish in a time of flux, to know to what and to whom one belongs, offers reassurance and connection in fast changing times. This is the complex religious landscape which Mormons in Ireland must navigate. The ethnographic chapters of this research demonstrate that Mormons in Ireland disrupt these dominant understandings of Irishness and are often viewed by the majority as challenging Irish religious tradition and the notion of lineage which this tradition supports.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has incorporated arguments by Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) to suggest that a simple secularisation process is not underway in modern Ireland. Rather, I have shown that a transformation in Irish experiences in religion is ongoing. Although Catholicism remains influential in Irish society, it is often utilised as a cultural marker of Irishness; used in response to social change and the ‘Other’, to identify who belongs and who does not. This allows white Irish Catholics to include themselves as in a long lineage, and to see themselves as maintaining and transmitting tradition in a modern world of change through continued identification with Catholicism. By framing the Mormon minority experience in Ireland within this context, my research will demonstrate that Mormons in Ireland struggle to be accepted as part of this lineage. Their experiences are seen by the majority to be a rupture with Irish traditions.

This chapter has also shown that numbers of other religions in Ireland are growing, which demonstrates increasing diversity in the Irish religious experience, of which Mormonism is just one part. At one level this infers a clear break with previous religious tradition in Ireland. Yet research by Sakaranaho (2003), Shanneik (2011, 2015a), and Ganiel (2016a, 2016b) identifies that even post-conversion to another faith, Irish Catholicism continues to shape that religious experience, and so it is in part a continuation of what has gone before. I will show in this thesis that existing commonalities between Mormonism and Irish Catholicism can enhance these continuities of tradition even as one converts from one faith to another, and that Catholicism shapes converts' experiences of Mormonism in Ireland.

This chapter has outlined in some detail the religious landscape within which Mormons in Ireland live, and has identified the breadth and speed of social change which has influenced this environment. This is essential for our understanding of the experiences of the participants of this research who frequently refer to Irish social change to make sense of their experiences in their own narratives. Additionally, some of those changes such as increased immigration to Ireland, are represented in the lived experiences of the participants who themselves are migrants to Ireland.

However, the Mormon experience of Irish society is but one part of their religious experience. Mormons are also part of a global faith with a presence in all parts of the world. Many Mormons identify with their fellow adherents whom they have never met based on this commonality. Additionally, Mormonism itself, much like Irish society, has undergone significant change in recent generations which have deeply affected how the faith is now experienced across the globe as it has transformed from a small local faith to a global religion.
For these reasons, the following chapter will continue to utilise the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) as discussed above to make sense of Mormonism's own focus upon tradition. Chapter Three focuses upon Mormonism's transition to global faith, particularly noting how the Church has developed in Europe and Ireland. The ideas of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) help us to make sense of how the Mormon faith is received in European countries which perceive Mormonism as a foreign, American religion, and a threat to the European tradition of religion which has gone before. The ethnographic chapters identify that themes of tradition, community, and Irishness are central to the experience of Mormons in Ireland, in complex and interconnecting ways. The arguments of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) discussed in this chapter and in Chapter Three, contribute to our understanding of these themes.

Chapter Three: Local Faith to Global Church - The Challenges of Maintaining Continuity in Modern Mormonism

3.1 Introduction

Following Chapter Two which has illustrated the centrality of tradition and change in understandings religious experience in Ireland, the purpose of this chapter is to understand the challenges associated with maintaining tradition within modern global Mormonism. In this chapter, I utilise studies from scholars of Mormonism[1], to illustrate the relationship between the local and the global within Mormonism. These studies demonstrate a complex and dialectical relationship between the global Church and the local areas where it is lived. The ethnographic chapters of this thesis demonstrate that themes of tradition, community, and Irishness underpin the Mormon experience in Ireland, and are interconnected with each other in complex ways. This chapter provides a global context in which to situate these ideas.

As a global faith, Mormonism has much changed from its beginnings as a small sect centred within the US. The challenges in maintaining the Church's American-informed traditions whilst adapting to local cultures demonstrates that adaptability in modernity is central for the continued success of a religion (Hervieu-Léger, 2000). However, it also raises questions of majority-minority interactions and religious tolerance in a globalised world (Davie 2000). Through understanding the development of the Church from a small Utah faith to a global religion and the challenges associated with that transition, this chapter provides the context necessary to fully engage with the ethnographic chapters to follow.

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[1] I use the description 'scholar of Mormonism' to refer to those working in the broadly defined 'Mormon Studies' sub-field. Mormon Studies often incorporates those working from a variety of backgrounds including sociology, history, religious studies, and theology. Some of these scholars identify as Mormon, others do not.

In this chapter I will firstly examine the key debates regarding the Church's rapid growth outside of the US. I explore the challenges associated with creating and maintaining a presence in societies which are far removed from, and often resistant to, American Mormonism. I then follow the development of the Church to Europe, noting how the Church has struggled to maintain progress in that region, and the structural and cultural reasons for these challenges. Finally, I discuss the emergence of Mormonism in Ireland, outlining the ways in which Mormonism was constructed by the Irish as different, based on Irish understandings of religious and national identities. I engage here with Hervieu-Léger (2000) to argue that Mormonism in Ireland should be interpreted as *both* a break in the 'chain of belief' which Hervieu-Léger (2000, p.81) articulates, and as a continuity of it.

Below, I discuss the effects of the rapid shift in Mormonism from a local faith centred in Utah in the US, to a worldwide religion. I show that that this transition has fragmented the collective identity of Mormonism, and local adaptions to the faith have consequently emerged. Following the arguments of Hervieu-Léger (2000) this can be interpreted as a weakening of the collective memory of faith but also as proof of the resilience of religion in the modern age.

3.2 The Relationship Between the Global and the Local Within Mormonism

Mormonism has transformed rapidly in less than 200 years into a church with a presence in all regions of the globe. Global membership now stands at over 15 million members, with more members now living outside the US than within it, according to Church figures (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date d). Though recent indications show that this growth is slowing (Cragun and Lawson, 2010; Lawson and Cragun, 2012; Anderson, 2017), the Church has nonetheless been transformed by these developments.

A policy introduced in the 1960s known as Correlation supported a standardisation of the Mormon experience and facilitated a common understanding of Mormonism amongst its members (Allen, 1992; Seymour, 2006; Phillips, 2008; Rutherford, 2016). Correlation standardised resources such as lesson plans and Church manuals for lessons. The architecture and internal layout of Church buildings was made uniform. Sunday services were consolidated into one three-hour block (where once they had been spread throughout the day) to facilitate those who lived far away from church, as many living outside of the US do, so they might find it easier to attend. Correlation centralised most decisions regarding when, what and how to teach amongst the Church hierarchy in Utah, and clearly placing Church Headquarters in Utah as the centre of power for the faith. Through this, Utah as a geographical region maintained its essential role as a ‘homeland’ for the religion internationally (Decoo, 2013b; Phillips and Cragun, 2013; Rutherford, 2016).

By creating a sense of familiarity in Church buildings worldwide, supporting belonging to an international faith group undefined by national borders, and continuing an idealisation and mythologising of Utah as a religious homeland for a diverse people, Correlation broadly maintained a common understanding of Mormonism amongst members as the Church expanded. Correlation was therefore, designed to ensure a smooth transition to a global Church and to maintain control as the Church grew (Allen, 1992; Mauss, 2008; Decoo, 2013b; Rutherford, 2016).

The continuing spiritual significance of Utah for Church members serves a similar purpose. Terryl Givens (2016) observes that the association between the US and the Book of Mormon means that unavoidably, the US remains a focus for the global faith. He notes that:

> The Book of Mormon was physically connected as an actual artefact, in the minds and in the tactile experience of early Saints, with America. And the history in the Book of Mormon was explicated in terms of that very physical terrain over which the Saints themselves trekked and camped (Givens, 2016, p. 430).

Later in that same 2016 text, Givens (2016, p. 440) disputes this evidence of the strong connection between the US and Mormonism. He argues that the Church is in fact *not* an American religion, arguing that it is instead a ‘beautiful tapestry of many threads’. This contradiction shows that Mormonism in the global era is *both* an American faith and a global one. Given the focus of this research in exploring these ideas in Ireland, I demonstrate here how this complexity is experienced internationally.

Those who study Mormonism from a variety of disciplines such as sociology, theology, and history, have often maintained that Mormonism has within it a 'church culture'. For example, Givens (2007) refers to 'Mormon culture', going so far as to use the phrase when titling his 2007 book *A People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture.* Douglas Davies refers to 'the Mormon culture of salvation' (2000, p.7) and 'LDS culture' (2003, p. 251), whilst historian Patrick Mason refers to 'LDS church doctrine and culture' (2016, p. 7). As a Belgian scholar of Mormonism, Wilfried Decoo (2013b) has discussed the development of Mormonism within Europe. He summarises the core components of Mormon culture as incorporating:

> Religiosity (faith in the doctrines, daily prayer, scripture study, fasting, church and temple attendance), morality (chastity, modesty, honesty), family (monogamy, focus on marriage and children, togetherness, fidelity, family home evening, food storage), health (no alcohol, tobacco, coffee, and tea), dedication and involvement (serving, tithing, going on a mission, doing genealogy), education (schooling, degrees, and diplomas), work (work ethic, professional advancement, economic success), material objects (book of remembrance, Mormon pictures in the home, recognition medallions), and its own lexicon (Decoo, 2013b, p. 7).

Notably absent from Decoo's (2013b) summary of Mormon culture is any mention of hymns and music, but also, race and ethnicity. Yet, Mormonism has had a troubled relationship with race, maintaining a ban on black men serving the priesthood and on black men and women entering the temple, until 1978.

The legacy of this, coupled with the majority white influence of its Utah origins, is that the Church retains fewer African American coverts than any other ethnicity within the US (Young and Gray, 2015, p. 381). This history has shaped the development of Mormonism, leading many to suggest that whiteness forms part of dominant expressions of Mormon culture (Reeve, 2015; Benally, 2017; García, 2017; Uluave-Hafoka, 2017).

Recently, discussions of race and ethnicity within modern Mormonism in and outside of the US have begun to emerge. Moana Uluave-Hafoka (2017) powerfully describes the complexity of life in the US as a young Mormon from Tonga, an island with a high number of Mormon adherents which has led to a strong Mormon Tongan community in Utah. She says ‘as a child, I learned to be proper, obedient, and submissive to the paintings of the white Jesus that hung in our home’ (Uluave-Hafoka, 2017, p. 102). She maintains that Tongan Mormons, both in Tonga and the US, are pressured in the Church to do as she herself had done:

> I was asked to make the same sacrifice as my foremothers had once done: Forget my familial ties. Forsake my ancestral lands and my ancestral tongue. And I did so. Because all the promises of heaven were tied to this’ (Uluave-Hafoka, 2017, p. 102).

Uluave-Hafoka argues that this forgetting, or perhaps denial, of heritage has consequences. The consequence of this for Mormon Tongans is to ‘live on the margins of Mormondom’ (2017, p. 104) as a result of ‘racial, socio economic, and gender discrimination’ (2017, p. 103) from the Church. It results in a complex interaction of religious, cultural, and national identifications as exemplified by her example of Tongan 'tribal tattoos under a white shirt and tie' (2017, p. 103).

Ignacio García's arguments on Mormonism as a 'white church' (García, 2017, p. 2) support the standpoint of Uluave-Hafoka (2017) above. As a Latino Mormon, he argues that a 'cultural whiteness' remains in the Church in the present day. He says it:

> Remains entrenched in our institutional memory, in our manuals, sometimes in our conference talks, and too often in the deep chambers of our minds and hearts, "whitening" away our institutional history from the reality of people's experiences—particularly those of color and the poor (García, 2017, p. 4).

García's suggestion that whiteness forms part of the 'institutional memory' (2017, p. 4) of Mormonism is reflective of the words of Uluave-Hafoka (2017) who maintains that being Mormon as a Tongan involves a certain 'forgetting' of Tongan heritage. García (2017) and Uluave-Hafoka's (2017) experiences appear to suggest that within Mormonism, collective memory is constructed to be perhaps more simple than it is in reality. Uluave-Hafoka (2017) found forgetting her Tongan heritage difficult to achieve, yet still expected by the Church in order to take on the collective memory of Mormonism in its place.

These observations about the whiteness of Mormonism and its relationship with and minorities are important for my research. They provide a broader context to understand experiences of race and ethnicity of Mormons in Ireland, both white and non-white. In Ireland, as elsewhere, the Church forms a diverse community. In Ireland, a nation of little racial and ethnic diversity, the Mormon community shows greater levels of diversity than the majority society it resides within but nonetheless it remains a majority white faith in a majority white country. The ethnographic chapters of this thesis show that Mormons in Ireland who are not white, like Uluave-Hafoka (2017) and García (2017), experience multiplicity and complexity in the management of their identities. These experiences must be understood as forming part of Mormonism's difficulties in transitioning towards a truly diverse church.

The shift within Mormonism from small sect to global diverse church has caused scholars of Mormonism to reflect on the future of the Church as it continues to transform. Douglas Davies (2000, 2003) has reflected upon the potential for the Church in the future as it continues to develop outside of the US. Davies (2003) proposes that rather than becoming a world religion in the model of Buddhism, Christianity, or Islam, it is more likely that:

> Mormonism will become a 'global' religion. By 'global' I refer to the process of globalization by which an institution makes its presence felt within hundreds of societies yet retains its distinctive identity... It will appeal to and attract people in need of a distinctive identity and who are prepared to be different from their neighbours (Davies, 2003, p. 248).

Davies (2003) therefore argues that the internationalisation of Mormonism will incorporate a strong tension with the majority, as Church members retain distinctiveness from the majority.

To examine this proposal, we can look to various scholars who have explored how ‘church culture’ is experienced in the era of a global Church, and away from the predominantly white American Mormon culture region. These studies provide essential context in understanding the nature of the Church in a global mileau. They identify remarkable adaption of Mormonism, in ways which reaffirm the position of Hervieu-Léger (2000) who maintained that such re-working of traditions is part of the ways in which religious memory mutates. For example, Taunalyn Rutherford (2016) discusses the experience of Indian converts to Mormonism from Hinduism. She notes ‘moments of intercultural adaption’ such as the Mormon convert who no longer cleans her home every Friday in expectation of the goddess Durga, but ‘to create a better atmosphere for her family and because cleanliness is a gospel principle’ (Rutherford, 2016, p. 52).

Furthermore, the Church in the global era must also adapt to existing structural social systems in the country it lives in. In India, the caste system remains a key organising principle of post-colonial Indian society. Rutherford (2016) notes that although most participants said that ‘there is no caste in the church’ (2016, p. 53), she believes this to be a partial truth. She observes:

> Caste is never taught as a principle in Mormonism and is in fact clearly condemned. However, church members come from castes and live in a

> world with castes—for instance, marriage outside of one’s caste is still frowned upon…Caste-like identities develop in Indian Mormonism corresponding to those who are endowed in the temple, BYU-educated [educated in the Mormon Brigham Young University], returned missionaries, fluent English speakers, and so forth (Rutherford, 2016, p. 53).

Rutherford argues then, that the social structures of the majority society feed into life in church, despite the doctrine and culture of the Church rejecting those same systems.

Additionally, Rutherford (2016) accepts that a strong standardisation of Mormonism from the centre of the Church in Utah negatively affects how Mormonism is experienced in ‘peripheral’ (2016, p. 57) areas. However, she also suggests that scholars of Mormonism have hitherto underestimated the capacity of local members to adapt their faith to the environment which surrounds them in ways which may ultimately influence the ‘centre’ of the faith itself. She argues that ‘Mormonism is lived at the local, not general, level…policies are interpreted and applied by local leaders who are products of their own culture… The outcomes of this dynamic translation of the general to the local often surprise everyone’ (Rutherford, 2016, pp. 57–58). From this perspective, Mormon faith and culture is not experienced as a simple one-way system from centre to peripheral regions. Rather, it is a dialectic system of interactions, where each is shaped by the other.

Rutherford's argument that a hybridity of Mormonism with local culture creates significant adaptation of Mormon tradition may seem as though its sits in contrast to the comments of Douglas Davies (2003) who argues that Mormonism is likely to develop in the future by keeping a distinctive identity from the majority society wherever it grows. Yet the empirical chapters of this thesis will demonstrate that *both* Davies (2003) and Rutherford (2016) are correct, and that the two positions can be reconciled in the everyday experiences of Mormons in peripheral regions such as Ireland. Whilst their experiences of stereotyping and stigmatisation leaves no doubt as to their 'Otherness', Mormons in Ireland are also re-creating Mormonism for an Irish milieu, reshaping it in ways which assist in a reconciliation of Irish and Mormon identities. Douglas Davies (2007) acknowledges this re-making of tradition which occurs within Mormonism. He notes that a re-invention of tradition often occurs within religions, including Mormonism, and that 'just how that renegotiation takes place is, itself, of prime importance' (Davies, 2007, p. 59).

The 'hybridization' (Rutherford, 2016, p. 56) of 'church culture' and local culture is also reflected in the work of Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye (2014), in an examination of 'the glocalization of Mormon Studies' (Wei-tsing Inouye, 2014, p. 70). Rather than seeing the global expansion of the Church as an oak tree, with one central root spreading up and out into smaller branches which stem from the centre, she advocates interpreting global Mormonism as similar to a banyan tree, common in Asia. The banyan tree goes up and out, much like the oak, but its branches also reach down to the earth to form new roots. Wei-tsing (2014) says:

> The future of global Mormon studies will describe a Mormon reality that is more like a banyan than an oak: a bit chaotic, growing wherever it can find a foothold, each branch with many of its own sturdy trunks and roots, yet all forming a single living organism (Wei-tsing Inouye, 2014, p. 79).

On this basis Wei-tsing Inouye (2014) suggests that there needs to be a redefinition of the meaning of 'centre' and 'periphery' within Mormonism, arguing for the need to recognise multiple centres and peripheries (Wei-tsing Inouye, 2014, p. 73).

Although Wei-tsing (2014) is right to advocate for a wider interpretation of centre and periphery as it relates to Mormonism, there nonetheless remains a spiritual and administrative centre which most Mormons orientate themselves around. The close association with the Utah mountain region and Mormonism has been well documented (Eliason, 2002; Yorgason, 2002; Upton, 2005; Yorgason and Robertson, 2006; Yorgason and Chen, 2008; Decoo, 2013b; Phillips and Cragun, 2013; Reeve, 2015; Patterson, 2016). This part of the world is referred to by scholars of Mormonism as the 'Mormon culture region' (Menig, 1965, p. 191) due to its history, strong Mormon presence, and key familial ties to the faith in the region. Identifiable cultural indicators from the region such as unique architecture, food, and music are also proof that Mormonism in the wider Utah region has embraced cultural as well as religious components (Yorgason, 2002; Upton, 2005; Starrs, 2010).

Others have questioned how, and with what success, might Mormonism be able to move away from its strong regional origins (Bennion and Young, 1996;

Mauss, 1996a, 1996c, 2001; Gedicks, 2011; Mason and Turner, 2016). Perhaps most famously on this theme, was the pronouncement of Rodney Stark in 1984 that the growth rates of the Church at the end of the twentieth century indicated that we might be witnessing the emergence of a new world religion (Stark, 1984, 1994, 1996; Stark and Reid, 2005). This dramatic prediction was greeted with pleasure by the Church hierarchy (Haight, 1990; Haroldsen, 1995), and has been engaged with by those attempting to make sense of growth within the Church. They question whether these trends can be sustained in the long term and what it might mean for the Church (Bennion and Young, 1996; Mauss, 1996b; Duke, 1998). Others have used a comparative approach to examine the international growth of Mormonism alongside that of other growing religions such as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists (Cragun and Lawson, 2010; Lawson and Cragun, 2012).

Regardless of the accuracy of Stark’s (1984) argument that the Church is becoming a new world religion, there is no doubt that recent growth internationally has been impressive, with 9 million of Mormonism’s 15 million members now outside of the US (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date c). However, it must be borne in mind that real numbers of active adherents are significantly lower than this, given that the Church does not remove inactive members from their rolls; ‘literally millions of people who are claimed to be Mormon by the church do not self-identify as such’ (Cragun and Lawson, 2010, p. 366). This point is of particular significance in Europe, where efforts to retain converts as active members are less successful than other regions (Bennion and Young, 1996; Decoo, 1996, 2015; Mauss, 2008; van Beek, 2009). Both Decoo (1996) and Mauss (2008) have argued that true active membership figures across Europe could be as much as three quarters less than the official figures provided by the Church, as the Church struggles to maintain the European converts that it recruits.

Scholars have examined the emergence of Mormonism in New Zealand and the Pacific (Barber and Gilgen, 1996; Britsch, 2015), Australia (Newton, 1996), Japan (Numano, 1996; Gessel, 2015), China (Heaton, 1980; Vendassi, 2014), Africa (Jacobson *et al.*, 1994; LeBaron, 1996; Jenkins, 2009), and South and Southeast Asia (Keller, 1996; Gessel, 2015; Rutherford, 2016). In recent years, Latin America has been held up as an area of considerable success for the Church (Knowlton, 1994, 1996a, 1996b; Otterstrom, 1994; Grover, 2015). It is interesting in light of this research to note that in explaining the reasons why this is so, David Knowlton maintains that 'problems in the internal structures of Catholicism' have been part of the reason for the Church's success in this region (Knowlton, 1996b, p. 161).

Others have acknowledged that the Catholic Church in Latin America is losing followers to Mormonism and to other Protestant churches as part of a global shift in the experience of Christianity, as established churches decline in favour of charismatic evangelicalism (Decoo, 2013a; Grover, 2015). However, Mormonism has not gained as many converts in Latin America as the other churches have (Knowlton, 1996b), and retention of Mormon converts in the region is a significant challenge for the Church (Grover, 2015).

As Ireland is a majority Catholic country, the shift in the experience of Christianity in Latin America from Catholic to Protestant, and the positioning of

Mormonism within that, is of interest to this research. Protestant religions have been key beneficiaries of Ireland’s increased religious diversity in recent years, (Ugba, 2009; Jackson Noble, 2011), partly due to increased numbers of recent immigrants (Ugba, 2009; Nuttall, 2015). Therefore, in Ireland, as in Latin America, it appears that the decline in the influence of the Catholic Church has allowed for a Protestant resurgence to which the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints potentially stands to benefit from.

The following section demonstrates that European Mormonism can be said to typify the ‘global’ Mormonism as articulated by Davies (2003) where people will need to ‘be prepared to be different from their neighbours’ (Davies, 2003, p. 248). Within this context, I demonstrate that Mormonism in Europe exemplifies the arguments of Davie (2000) who has maintained that NRMs in Europe present significant challenges to the collective religious memories of the majority society.

3.3 The Challenges of Maintaining Continuity in a Global Religion: Mormonism in Europe

Mauro Properzi (2010, p. 42) has acknowledged that differences across European countries necessitates ‘individual treatment’ and that to speak of European Mormonism is therefore by its nature too generalising. Despite this, Properzi (2010) and other scholars of European Mormonism including Decoo (1981, 1996, 2013b, 2015) and Walter van Beek (1996, 2005, 2009) argue that some commonalities can be identified across European countries which reveal why it is that Mormonism appears to particularly struggle in Europe whilst it grows elsewhere. These are summarised below.

1: Cultural and Structural Isolation Amongst European Mormons

Decoo (1996) argues that it is difficult for American members, and therefore Church leaders, to appreciate the ways in which being Mormon in Europe is manifestly different to being Mormon in the US. He maintains that there is often little support within the wider culture in Europe for the Church and its cultural differences. This is partly due to differences in how Europeans experience religion (Davie, 2004, 2005, 2012; Cole Durham Jr., 2008) . However, it also relates to the ways in which joining a minority church in Europe often excludes you from the shared customs and traditions that your family, friends, and the wider culture takes for granted. For instance, Decoo (1996) and Mauss (2008) observe how long church services for Mormons on Sundays often clash with other community events traditionally held on Sundays.

Decoo argues that 'in the European setting, whether or not a family is "religious" it is almost always seen as a tragedy for a family member to join the LDS church' (Decoo, 1996, p. 102). Both Decoo (1996) and Mauss (2008) have observed that the Church has a low level of religious respectability in Europe. It is often associated with other outsider sects such as Scientology, the Unification church (The Moonies), and others who are 'marginalised and stigmatised' (Mauss, 2008, p. 23). I suggest that this stigmatisation amongst the majority may explain why families belonging to established churches such as Catholicism, react so strongly to the conversion of their relatives. These instances confirm the complexity of the position of NRMs in Europe, as outlined by Davie (2000), who has noted how small religions in Europe are often seen to be a threat to the established religious traditions.

Furthermore, van Beek (2009) and Hansen, Noot and Mema (2016) note the strong sense in Europe of 'being a "cultural Catholic" or "cultural Calvinist": raised in that tradition, defining identity in terms of the tradition…but one does no longer go to church' (van Beek 2009). Citing the example of Belgium, his own home country, van Beek notes that 'becoming a Mormon is not done, not so much because one is a Catholic, but one is a Belgian, and Belgium is a Catholic country!' (van Beek, 2009). The parallel between Belgium and Ireland with regards to their intermingling of national and religious identity is clear. Chapter Two has demonstrated that Inglis (2007), Ganiel (2016b) and Shanneik (2015a) have identified similar entanglements of national identity with Catholic religious identity in Ireland. In the empirical chapters, this research will demonstrate how Mormons in Ireland negotiate this.

Additionally, comments from van Beek (2009), Mauss (1996a), and Hansen, Noot, and Mema (2016) reaffirm from a Mormon perspective that connections to historical religion lingers in Europe. This confirms the suggestion from Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) that religious tradition can persist in modernity in much changed form. In this case, it seems that a cultural association with the established religious tradition serves to continue that tradition whilst adapting it in ways that are better fit for purpose in modern life.

2: The Effects of Distinction versus Assimilation

Van Beek (2009) argues that the Church often constructs membership in exclusionary terms with strong boundaries between members and non-members. This leads him to argue that the Church has developed as ‘a global counter-church, not a world religion’. He suggests that Church discourse:

> Supports and ratifies processes of identity formation that are characterised by oppositional definitions of self, polarised constructions of identity that do not fit in with the notion of a global church. Instead, it defines itself as a global counter-church, set against the world (van Beek, 2009).

Yet, Decoo (1996) observes the tendency of the Church in Europe to focus on more generic Christian messages (such as the atonement of Jesus Christ) in church lessons and in church publications, at the expense of elements of Mormon doctrine that makes it unique (such as the Plan of Salvation). Ironically, Decoo (1996) maintains that in Europe this strategy is counter-productive, as most converts are familiar with Christian morality already, and joined the Church seeking something different- the doctrines and practices that set the Church apart from other Christian religions.

It appears therefore, that the Church is caught between exceptionalism and universalism (Mauss, 1994a, 1994c, 1996a, 2011), which is causing particular difficulties within the European context. Mauss (1994a, 1994c, 1996a, 2011) suggests that similar to all social movements, Mormonism needs to sit somewhere between the extremes of assimilation and distinction that might otherwise destroy the movement. This, he refers to as the joint predicaments of ‘disrepute and respectability’ (1989, p. 32). Recently, he describes a process in which the Church’s level of assimilation with the majority society swings forward and back like a pendulum. He says, ‘the growth and strength of the Church depend on periodic “course corrections” to maintain an optimum level of cultural tension with the surrounding society, which itself is constantly changing’ (Mauss, 2011, p. 21).

3: The All-American Church in A Global Milieu

The Church’s policy of Correlation centralised control within the US, causing some unintended consequences in the experience of Mormonism internationally. Primarily, this manifests itself in the perception that Mormonism remains an American religion, hindering growth and integration into non-American cultures worldwide (Newton, 1991; Lobb, 2000; Östman, 2002; Phillips, 2008; Hansen Jr, Noot and Mema, 2016; Rutherford, 2016). The continued American influence as result of Correlation has meant that church publications, doctrines, customs, and even missionaries often hold an inherent American bias. ‘When the original Salt Lake City product itself is exported to each locale, it does not arrive as a culturally neutral orthodoxy, all ready to be interwoven harmoniously with the local colors’ (Mauss, 1996a, p. 15).

Rather, the simultaneously subtle and overt American nature of the Church which has been referred to as a ‘gospel of Americanism’ (Newton, 1991, p. 10), often causes ‘bemusement’, ‘frustration’ and ‘spiritual confusion’ amongst members in Europe (Hansen Jr, Noot and Mema, 2016, p. 315). The Americanism of the Church also alienates non-members in Europe who perceive too much difference between Mormonism and the mainstream. An example of this comes from Kim B. Ostman’s (2002) descriptions of the Finnish media’s coverage of an ‘Open House’ for Finland’s first Mormon temple.

Mormon temples are sacred, associated with specific rituals, and only ‘worthy’ Mormons are eligible for entry. No non-members are allowed inside once the temple has been officially opened. To alleviate concerns by non-members of secrecy regarding the temple and its rituals, the Church holds an Open House for a short period upon the construction of any new temple, to give non-Mormons an opportunity to visit that building.

Ostman (2002) analysed the media coverage of this event to establish the views of the Finnish majority as represented by the media, towards the Mormon minority. The Finnish reaction to the new Mormon temple predominantly emphasised its American nature. He says ‘some reporters thought the temple felt American due to its architecture and its furnishings’ and ‘the totality was, in one writer’s opinion, “undeniably” American’ (Östman, 2002, p. 82). The standardisation of almost all aspects of Church life through Correlation therefore causes difficulties for the Church internationally, with some referring to it as a kind of ‘cultural imperialism’ (Allen, 1992, p. 14). Ostman (2002) notes:

> The Mormon Church in Finland has never shaken off its foreign image… The foreign image is, of course, not unique to Mormonism in Finland. Mormonism fights an identity of otherness and foreignness in all new host cultures into which it spreads (Östman, 2002, p. 75).

The Church’s policy of standardisation has raised questions about whether or not the Church is capable of dealing with the diversity of cultures it encounters internationally, and whether the Church should be willing to adapt itself locally to the particular culture it is attempting to establish itself within (Decoo, 1996; van

Beek, 2009; Gedicks, 2011). Decoo (1996, 2013b), Mauss (1996a, 1996c, 2008) and others argue that inability to adapt to local cultures, the lack of awareness of cultural differences in the experience of religion, and the imposition of standardised materials and regulations are part of the explanation for the poor growth and retention of Mormonism in Europe. The tensions between Mormonism and the majority society in Europe as outlined above lead Mauss (2008) to state that 'for today's European converts…the cost of Church membership is likely to exceed the benefits' (Mauss, 2008, p. 9).

In the next section, I follow these European debates to Ireland. I build a picture of the development of Mormonism Ireland. I establish how the Church has been received in Ireland since its arrival in the nineteenth century, and discuss the challenges faced by Mormonism in a specifically Irish context. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p.132) argues that the 'sphere of believing' has altered in modernity, whilst Davie (2000) argues that in modern Europe increasingly, alternative religious memories challenge and confront the dominant worldview. Below, I show that Mormonism is part of a growing 'sphere' of NRMs in Ireland who are creating alternative collective memories of Irish religion which confront, yet also confirm, previous traditions.

3.4 Irish Mormonism: Confronting and Continuing Irish Religious Tradition

Before addressing the primary argument of this section; that Mormonism in Ireland has been marginalised and stigmatised similarly to Mormonism in other European countries, some points regarding the use of sources should be noted. Brent. A. Barlow's 1968 MA thesis on the history of the Church in Ireland is an invaluable resource on developments during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Very little else has been published which informs understanding of the development of Mormonism in either the Republic of Ireland (post-independence from the British) or in that same geographical area prior to independence from the British, what I refer to here as ‘Southern Ireland’. Although there are multiple sources available that detail the emergence of Mormonism in Britain and/or the British Isles (such as Heaton et al. 1987; Grant 1992; Cuthbert 1987; Buchanan 1987; Thomas 1987; Fielding Smith 1950; Bloxham et al. 1987), there are only a handful of these sources that make any more than a fleeting reference to Ireland (Barlow, 1968, 2000; Card, 1978; Harris, 1984, 1990; Allen, 1990) and some of these are only relevant in relation to more recent periods of Ireland’s history (Harris, 1984, 1990; Allen, 1990).

The scarcity of useful literature pertaining to Ireland is a brief point of discussion for J. Michael Hunter’s (2010) unpublished bibliographic essay on Mormonism in Europe. He observes that ‘more studies are needed’ similar to that of Claudia Harris’s 1990 article on Mormonism in Northern Ireland (Hunter, 2010, p. 15). Harris’s (1990) article focuses upon the Protestant/Catholic divisions within Mormon congregations in Northern Ireland. However, whilst informative, it was focused upon Northern Ireland rather than the Republic of Ireland.

Hunter’s (2010) comment illustrates a challenge in evaluating the Church in Ireland. Before Irish independence from the British, much of the literature on Mormonism appears to interpret the Britain of the 1800s and early 1900s to mean England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There is little acknowledgement of how the experiences or history of the north of Ireland may not have been relevant or applicable to the experience of the south. Hunter’s

(2010) comment regarding Harris's (1990) work similarly shows a continuing lack of awareness of the differences between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the experience of religion in the modern era.

The experience of Mormonism has been different in Southern Ireland/ Republic of Ireland than in Northern Ireland (Barlow, 1968, 2000; Card, 1978). This is due to political and religious reasons explained below. To ignore these differences appears to be a significant oversight in terms of our understanding of the development of the Church throughout the entire region of the UK and Ireland. The following will outline the ways in which the Church developed differently on the island of Ireland.

The first official missionaries to the island of Ireland arrived in County Down, Northern Ireland in 1840 (Barlow, 1968; Card, 1978). The first missionaries did not arrive in Dublin, Southern Ireland until 1850 and set about conducting their work of informing and converting the mainly Catholic population of the south. They received much opposition to their work, with organised anti-Mormon campaigns attempting to subvert their attempts to inform the population about Mormonism. Barlow (1968) recounts from original sources several testimonies of abuse, threats, and violent mobs (some of whom were also Protestant as well as Catholic) who made the missionaries in Dublin fear for their lives. Early experiences of Ireland could therefore be summed up by Heaton et al. who briefly suggest that 'efforts in Ireland were not very fruitful' (Heaton, Albrecht and Johnson, 1987, p. 121).

An article from one of the Dublin missionaries which was published in the Mormon periodical *The Millennial Star* around this time reveals something of interest concerning the Mormon experience in Southern Ireland. He reported:

> Things are going well in the north of Ireland. There are not so many Catholics there, and consequently, we get along better there than about Dublin (*The Millennial Star*, XVIII, 1856, p. 561-562 cited in Barlow 1968, p.52).

It appears that the Catholicism of Southern Ireland was a barrier to Mormon proselytising in a way that Northern Ireland, with far greater numbers of Protestants, did not experience. By 1865 *The Millennial Star* reported:

> Ireland is a dead beat, those who desire persecution have only to declare themselves Latter-day Saints and the multitudes are more relentless in their pursuit than if they were chasing mad dogs (*The Millennial Star,* XXVII, 1865, p. 822, cited in Barlow 1968, p.62).

In 1867 the Mormon mission in Ireland was officially closed, although continued attempts to gain new converts in Northern Ireland from the 1880s onwards were moderately successful (Barlow, 1968).

As Barlow's (1968) work is a history of the Church in Ireland rather than a sociological study, he makes no attempts to establish why it was that a greater number of Catholics would have made the missionary experience more difficult in Southern Ireland. One must assume that either, or both, the Catholic hierarchy and ordinary Catholics were inherently opposed to Mormonism and what they felt it represented. Insight on this comes from Card (1978), writing for a Church magazine *Ensign.* He observes that Irish Catholicism was bound up with Irish nationalism at this time, and so conversions amongst Catholics were unsuccessful, as the Mormons were viewed as ‘just another Protestant church- and Protestant churches were not viewed very kindly in those days’ (Card, 1978) due to colonialisation by the Protestant British. This experience is reflective of similar arguments made by van Beek (2009) regarding the perception of Mormonism in Belgium, where an entanglement of Belgian national identity with Catholic religious identity has led to a stigmatisation of Mormonism.

The resistance to Mormonism within the Catholic south in Ireland provides further evidence to support the ideas of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie 2000) who have suggested that new religions represent a threat to the collective memories of the majority society and raise questions of religious difference and tolerance. In the south of Ireland where Catholicism was also bound up with national identifications, the introduction of Mormonism appears to have been construed as a challenge to not just Catholicism, but to Irishness itself. That Mormonism progressed more easily within the north, with its much higher number of Protestants and those who identify as British, supports this argument.

In the years following Irish independence from the UK in 1922 which led to the formation of the Republic of Ireland, the State implemented deliberate attempts to reassert Irish cultural identity through language, history and its Catholic religion (Whyte, 1976; Smyth, 1995; Kearney, 1997; Kenny, 2000). Throughout this era, Protestantism in Ireland was associated with the British, leading to a legacy of mistrust towards it. In a discussion of the hidden and stigmatised religious lives of Irish Protestants, Tony Walsh explains that ‘Protestants, with their historical connection to processes of English colonialization and their alternative understandings of religion were seen as tainted, foreign, and heretical’ (Walsh, 2015, p. 75).

Joseph Ruane argues that in the twentieth century ‘Irish Protestants saw themselves as Irish, but in a different way from the Catholic Irish’ (Ruane and Todd, 2009, p. 4). Supporting this perspective, Harris’s (1990) article focused on Northern Ireland observes:

> The [Mormon] church is growing much more rapidly in the north than it is in the predominantly Catholic south, where religion and patriotism-being Catholic and being Irish-are intertwined, where leaving the Catholic church is almost synonymous with defecting [from the nation] (Harris, 1990, p. 8).

The Church’s focus on Northern Ireland and the easier reception that Mormonism received there, clearly has a long legacy that can still be clearly seen to this day. According to Church figures, there are 5,358 members in Northern Ireland, and 3,071 members in the Republic (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date b). On this basis, I suggest that the development of Mormonism in the Republic of Ireland has been directly influenced by the religious, cultural, and political meanings behind Ireland's collective understandings of the categories of 'Catholic' and 'Protestant'.

It was not until the 1960s that we see renewed interest from the Church in further developing missionary efforts in the Republic of Ireland. In 1963, six missionaries were sent to the Republic of Ireland as part of a renewed focus on Ireland on behalf of the Church. In Cork and Limerick small congregations were established, the first outside of Dublin. By the end of 1967 there was 107 members within the Republic of Ireland, half of them based outside of Dublin (Barlow, 1968). The years following on from this up to the present day saw good success for Mormonism in terms of increased membership and establishment of new congregations in the Republic. Demographic profiles using Church statistics show that membership increased in Ireland from approximately 650 members in 1966, to approximately 3100 in 2013 (Stewart and Martinich, no date).

However, this success is countered by the country's rapid population growth during this time. For instance, according to Church figures in 1978, Church members in Ireland constituted 0.025% of the general population, whilst in 2012 they made up 0.065% of the population despite large increases in the numbers of members in the intervening period (Stewart and Martinich, no date). This means that despite rapid growth, Church members have remained a tiny minority in the overall population of the Republic of Ireland. It should also be noted that these figures represent the official Church statistics, and therefore will not be reflected in the numbers as calculated from other sources such as the Central Statistics Office. Recent census figures estimate the Mormon population to be 0.03% of the general population (Central Statistics Office, 2017b).

The only research with Mormons in the Republic of Ireland in more recent times has been the work of Cosgrove (2013). Her research identifies that the stigma attached to Mormonism in its earliest days in Ireland has continued to the present day. Her findings of widespread stigmatisation and discrimination towards Mormons in modern Ireland confirm that Mormonism is still constructed by the majority society in negative terms, and seen to be a threat to established perceptions of religion in Ireland. The marginalised and stigmatised position of Mormonism in Ireland from its beginnings to the present day also confirms the work of Decoo (1981, 1996, 2013b, 2015), van Beek (1996, 2005, 2009), and others such as Ostman (2002) discussed above, who have demonstrated similar experiences of Mormonism across Europe.

In evaluating the development of Mormonism in Ireland, it should be noted that Davie (2000) has suggested that the increased visibility of NRMs in modernity forces questions of religious tolerance to the fore. The development of Mormonism in Ireland has from the beginning, shown this to be true. The resistance to the early presence of Mormonism in Ireland as identified by Barlow (1968) and the continuing stigmatisation of Mormonism which Cosgrove (2013) discusses, demonstrates that Ireland’s tolerance of religious minorities has been poor. Unfortunately for Mormonism, it appears that although Mormonism came to be understood as an American rather than a British religion, this was not enough to ensure its acceptability. It seems that Mormonism was nonetheless still constructed as a ‘foreign’ religion and judged to be incompatible with the Irish identity. On this basis, the emergence of Mormonism in Ireland can also be interpreted as an example of the breakdown of the ‘chain of belief’ (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81) of the Irish, who have for so long based their national identity in part, upon Catholicism.

However, an additional interpretation of Hervieu-Léger’s (2000) work would be to view the development of Mormonism in Ireland as a continuation of the ‘chain of belief’ (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81), rather than a rupture of it. The establishment of Mormonism in Ireland is part of an overall shift away from the Catholic Church towards ‘new’ religions and none. The strong emergence of these NRMs and other religions in Ireland ‘challenges the secularisation thesis’ (Cosgrove *et al.*, 2011b, p. 18). From this perspective, Mormonism and other small religions in Ireland demonstrate that the need to believe amongst the Irish is not disappearing, but is manifesting itself in new ways in a variety of faiths and expressions. Chapter Two has already demonstrated that many Irish are engaging with Catholicism in new and complex ways, and that conversion to other faiths such as Islam does not involve a clearly delineated break from one faith to join another. The firm establishment of Mormonism in Ireland and the emergence of other small religions also shows that the adaption of religion in modernity is based upon a continuing need for religious belief. This is in keeping with the argument of Hervieu-Léger (2000) regarding the nature of belief in modernity.

Furthermore, an examination of the beliefs and practices of Catholicism and Mormonism shows significant overlap in some areas (Mitchell and Mitchell, 2008) which indicates a continuation of certain values post-conversion. The ethnographic chapters of this thesis will demonstrate that that the conservative position of Catholicism and Mormonism on many social issues, the strong place of family with the faiths, and a doctrinal focus upon Jesus Christ ensures that the presence of Mormonism in Ireland maintains a continuance of previous religious tradition. Viewed from this perspective, although Mormonism in Ireland may be constructed as ‘Other’, it is in fact proof of the resilience of religious tradition in modern Ireland. Thus, following Hervieu-Léger (2000), Mormonism is paradoxically *supporting* the continuance of religious tradition in modern Ireland, whilst simultaneously *challenging* dominant perceptions of ‘Irish’ religion.

Finally, Davie’s (2000, p. 36) conception of ‘alternative memories’ of religion emphasises that a minority faith both challenge *and* inform the dominant tradition, just as the dominant tradition challenges and informs the minority. She observes that ‘new forms of religious life seldom present themselves spontaneously; they emerge out of older ones and in dialogue with them. Nor do they occur in a vacuum, but are related to wider processes of economic and social change’ (Davie, 2000, p. 138). Just as Chapter Two has shown that Irish Catholicism continues to influence ‘new’ religions in Ireland such as Islam (Sakaranaho, 2003), it is likely that Mormonism and other small religions will in turn influence Irish Catholicism and the majority society in general. Mormonism is certainly a challenge to the Irish religious tradition, yet it is also affecting those same traditions by its existence.

In summary, in examining Mormonism in Ireland through concepts of tradition and change, I argue that Mormonism represents a continuation of previous religious tradition, and simultaneously, a break with it. Mormonism is both confronting and continuing religious tradition in Ireland. This argument will be further evidenced in the ethnographic chapters.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has utilised work from scholars of Mormon Studies to illustrate the relationship between the local and the global within Mormonism in the modern era. I outlined Mormonism's strong US associations, and the challenges it has faced in becoming a global church. My examination of these ideas has identified that Mormons across the globe are creating complex understandings of their religious identities that incorporate both continuity and discontinuity from standard American Mormonism. This leaves modern Mormonism facing a difficult paradox; how can there be a continuity of faith in the global era without marginalising those whose backgrounds and experiences differ significantly from the religious traditions the Church is attempting to uphold?

The evidence presented in this chapter regarding European Mormonism demonstrates that there is no easy answer to that question. Those who have studied European Mormonism maintain that the religion may be forced to make more effort to adapt to local cultures to survive in the long term whilst warning that too much adaption could cause the religion to lose what makes itself unique. In the ethnographic chapters, I demonstrate how Mormonism's continuing association with the US is experienced in Ireland- a country with its own continuing and complex intersections of religious and national identities. I will show how Mormons in Ireland understand their relationship to the US as Mormonism's 'centre', and how they negotiate understandings of Mormonism as an 'American' faith.

The previous chapter identified how the collective memory of the Irish, informed by experiences of colonialisation and trauma causes those seen as outsiders in Ireland to be marginalised to the periphery of Irish society. In this chapter, I have illustrated how Mormonism in Ireland has been positioned as a foreign religion, which has impeded its growth. In parallel, the small but solid persistence of Mormonism in Ireland since the 1800s has allowed an alternative to the dominant narrative of Irish religion to emerge. This narrative now sits along many others, creating multiple religious traditions in Ireland which compete for legitimacy and interact with each other in complex ways.

What I describe later in this thesis as ‘Irish Mormonism’ thus represents a break with previous religious tradition and is representative of a changing Irish religious landscape. However, the steady presence of Mormonism in Ireland also represents a continuity of religious tradition based on a continuing ‘need to believe’ as Ireland moved towards modernity. Before coming to a discussion of these ideas within the ethnographic chapters, in the following chapter I will explain and justify the methods chosen for this research. I will describe the research process, introduce the field sites, and confront the ethical considerations of conducting research of this kind.

Chapter Four: Conducting Ethnographic Fieldwork in Appleby and Sweetwater

4.1 Introduction

Having established the theoretical basis of this research and explored how these ideas inform understanding of both religion in Ireland and global Mormonism, I now move to explain the methodological choices which have shaped this research and its design. The focus of this chapter is to reflect upon the methodological decisions relating to fieldwork and upon my own role as researcher, to discuss and make clear in what ways these may affect the research and the interpretation of the data produced. This research is centred within two places which I have anonymised for the purposes of this research using the pseudonyms of Appleby and Sweetwater.

This chapter will firstly address why I decided to research Mormon identity in these particular places. I follow this with a detailed profile of both places of this research, outlining geographical and demographic details which create a wider context for the lives of the participants. After this, I discuss the fieldwork process, highlighting my routes to gaining access, my positioning during the fieldwork, and the process of doing participant observation and interviews. A discussion of the ethical considerations of conducting ethnographic research follows on from this. The final sections of this chapter explain how I analysed the data from my fieldwork, and describes the presentation of that data in the following chapters.

4.2 Why Research Minority Religious Identity in Appleby and Sweetwater?

I decided upon two field sites for this project rather than one as I felt that given the small size of Mormon congregations in Ireland, this might provide better opportunities to explore the Church more fully. Having spent time with roughly 120 members through the entirety of the fieldwork across both sites, I feel that I have developed a good depth of understanding of the small Mormon community in Ireland of about 1,200 individuals. Additionally, choosing two sites has allowed me to develop a better depth of understanding of the commonalities and differences between Mormon congregations in Ireland.

Nancy Ammerman (1998) and Penny Edgell (1999) have focused upon the study of congregations in their US research with mainly Protestant denominations. They maintain that each congregation has its own unique culture. This congregational culture is constitutive of, but also constituted by, the larger religious tradition it stems from (Edgell, 1999). Likewise Mathew Guest studying UK congregations (2002, 2004, 2005, 2009), has suggested that the larger traditions of the religion are variously negotiated at a local level. In an ethnography of an evangelical church in the UK he notes that ‘while the congregation is united by a common set of symbolic boundaries, members relate differentially to the symbolic resources available to them’ (Guest, 2004, p. 76). Guest (2004) notes that there is no clear agreement on what it means to be ‘evangelical’ amongst individuals in the congregation. Ammerman (1998), Edgell (1999), and Guest (2004) therefore suggest that congregational life is continuously and variously constructed.

Even within hierarchal and tightly controlled religions such as Mormonism, congregations are not static, nor uniform. Rather, they are engaged in an ongoing process of adaptation which is informed by both their congregational culture and the larger religious tradition in which they sit. By studying two Irish congregations within Mormonism, I have a deeper comprehension of which behaviours and attitudes might be explained by the unique congregational culture and which might also be experienced in some way in other congregations, as part of the broader tradition of the faith. Considering these advantages of two field sites, I decided to I spend six months in each congregation, for a total of one year's fieldwork.

The field sites have primarily been chosen for proximity to home and work, as I have lived in Sweetwater for many years and I have worked in Appleby for nine years. When I was exploring the presence of religious minorities in Ireland, I found that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had a presence in both areas, which I thought convenient due to there only being thirteen congregations across the country. However, from a sociological perspective, Appleby and Sweetwater are interesting for two key reasons. Firstly, both field sites are reflective of two very clear demographic trends; increasing ethnic and religious diversity alongside increasing numbers of those of no religion. Both trends evident in Appleby and Sweetwater are also reflected nationally. Yet, in both field sites and also nationwide, these two recent trends exist within a wider context of continued ethnic and religious homogeneity.

Secondly, ethnic and religious diversity is experienced differently between the two regions. In the wider county region which surrounds the city of Appleby (which I call County Appleby), the census categories of ‘black Irish’ and other black identities such as ‘black African’ comprise the largest non-white groupings. In the county region which Sweetwater sits within (County Sweetwater), Asians are the largest ethnic minority. Similarly, religious diversity is also experienced variously. In County Appleby, a much larger presence of Muslims is discernible within the Census information when compared to County Sweetwater, whilst Sweetwater has particularly high levels of Protestantism and Atheism compared to other parts of the country (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). This demographic information will be explained in more detail below to better demonstrate the local context in which the participants live and work. However, I stress here that these demographic connections and disconnections made Appleby and Sweetwater intriguing places for me, in light of the research focus upon ideas of tradition, continuity and change, and Irishness.

In the following section I will provide a sense of place for both Appleby and Sweetwater. Howard Becker has emphasised the importance of locating your research, arguing that ‘everything has to be somewhere’ and so it is vital to pay attention to ‘what kind of place that is to live, work and be’ (Becker, 1998, p. 57). The Church has a small number of congregations in Ireland, which means that many adherents live and work in wider areas which can be some distance from their church building. By providing information on the towns of Sweetwater and Appleby and also on their surrounding county areas, I hope to create a picture of life in Appleby and Sweetwater. This will help to contextualise the experiences of the research participants and add context and greater depth and meaning to the ethnographic analysis of those experiences.

4.3 A Sense of Place in Appleby and Sweetwater

There is no data available for the local Mormon congregations of Appleby and Sweetwater and the national Census statistics do not allow for a breakdown of information pertaining to small religious groups at a local level. However, the national data relating to Mormons has been discussed in Chapter One. All information provided here on Appleby and Sweetwater is from the census data of 2016 from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) unless otherwise indicated. The data on religious affiliation and ethnicity is provided to assist in a greater understanding of the broader religious environments of the two congregations, and to highlight the region’s experiences of ethnicity which might place the participants’ articulations of their own experiences in this regard within a broader context. To assist understanding of the two congregations under study, I have provided a map of Ireland in Figure 1 below. This demonstrates the geographical location of the two congregations within Ireland, and in relation to each other.

Geographical Locations of the Two Congregations

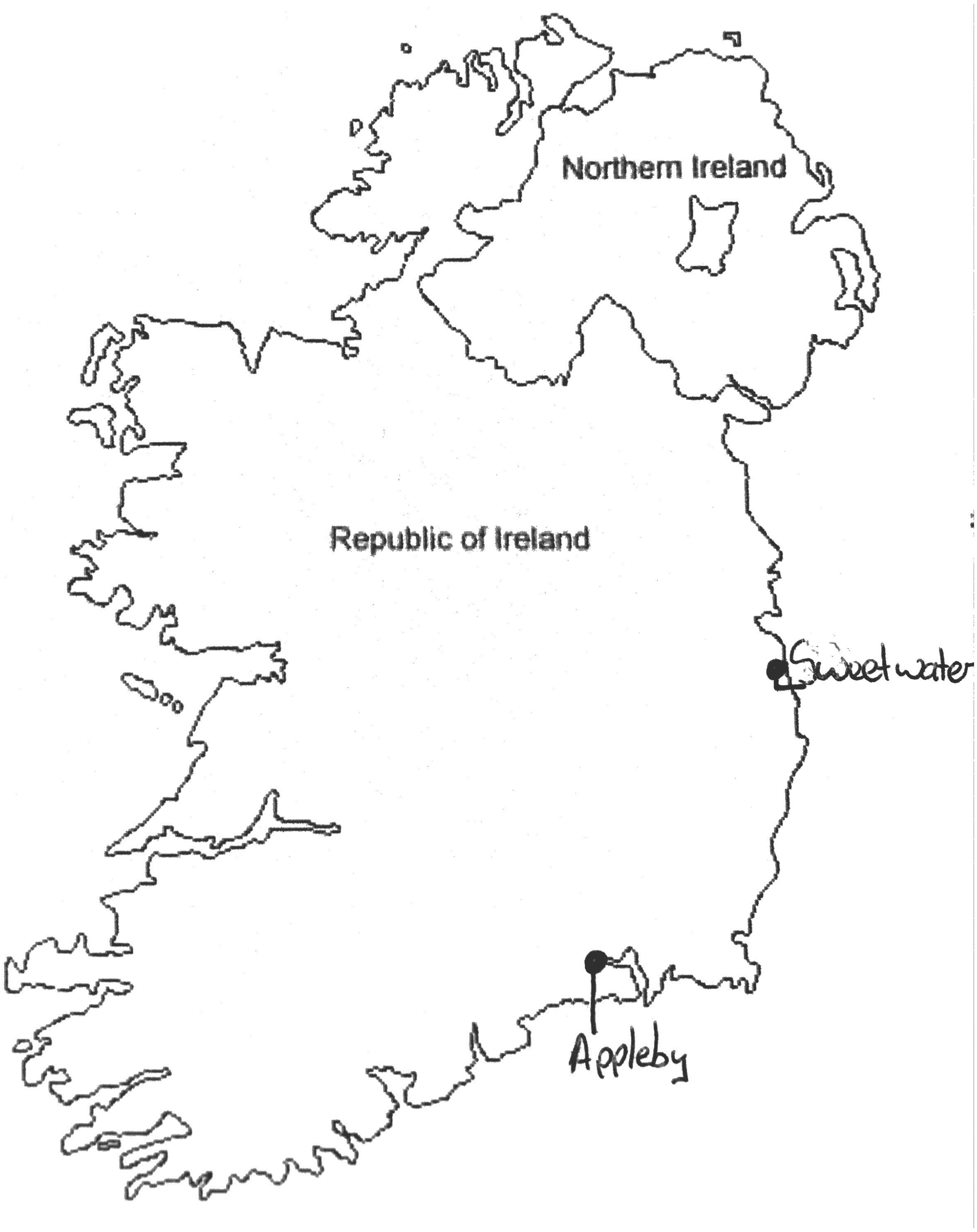
Northern Ireland
Republic of Ireland
Sweetwater
Appleby

Figure 1: Geographical Location of the Two Congregations. Source: Jonto/Wikimedia Commons/Public Domain

Appleby is situated about 180 km south of Sweetwater. There is not a great deal of engagement between the two congregations, firstly because Appleby forms part of a separate Church administrative district to Sweetwater, which means that when congregations do come together, they are often split along administrative lines. Secondly, the relatively large distance between them makes it less likely that individuals might attend church there sporadically, as when visiting family or friends. However, occasionally these visits happen. This means that only some of each congregation have visited the other, or personally know some of the other’s members. With only thirteen congregations in the country, most have at least heard of the other congregations, and have small pieces of information about congregations elsewhere. For instance, Appleby members told me in advance of my fieldwork with Sweetwater that the Sweetwater congregation was ‘very diverse’, ‘transient’, and they knew that the Sweetwater church building was quite small. In contrast, Sweetwater members appeared to have little knowledge of the Appleby branch other than its location.

The town of Sweetwater is located on the east coast of Ireland by the sea. It has long been known as a seaside town, and benefits from tourism during the summer months. Day-trippers from Dublin and other tourists arrive by train to visit the beach and its nearby bars and restaurants. Sweetwater is a large urban commuter town in the county of Sweetwater, with easy proximity to Dublin city centre. The town of Sweetwater is well served by public transport and all amenities. Most economic activity is centred on the Main Street of the town, where the Sweetwater church building was located at the time of the fieldwork. The population of the town of Sweetwater is 32,600 and of the wider County Sweetwater is 142,425 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b).

The area I will refer to as North County Sweetwater encompasses much of the urban part of County Sweetwater, including the town itself. There are a few midsized towns within this area providing opportunities for employment and public transport links to Dublin city and suburbs. The cost of accommodation in North County Sweetwater is significantly higher than in the rest of the county, and it is the most expensive area to buy a home in Ireland outside of Dublin (Property Services Regulatory Authority, 2014).

Sweetwater is a religiously and ethnically homogenous place, where 72.9% of County Sweetwater's population is Catholic. Aside from those who are non-religious, the second largest religious presence in the county is Anglican, at 6.2%. 13.6 % of County Sweetwater identify as Atheist/Agnostic or hold no religious beliefs, and this figure is higher than the national average of 10.2% (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). The breakdown of census information at local level does not provide specific figures for each of the smaller religions as they constitute such small numbers, and so there are no county figures available for the numbers of Mormons living in County Sweetwater.

County Sweetwater is ethnically homogenous, 94.2% of the county identifies as 'white Irish' or 'white'. Similar to the breakdown of religions at county level, the county figures for Sweetwater do not provide a specific breakdown of all ethnic minorities. However, at 1.6% of the population, the broad category of those who identify as 'Asian' or 'Asian Irish' are the largest ethnic minority in the county (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). It should be noted that ethnic classifications of 'Asian', 'Asian Irish' 'black' and 'black Irish', 'white' and 'white Irish' are taken from the terminology used within Ireland's census.

I have found during fieldwork that many Mormons in Sweetwater and Appleby send their children to Catholic schools, where they are educated within a Catholic ethos. This is due to the dominance of Catholic schools within the Irish educational system. Therefore, it should be noted here in a discussion of Sweetwater, that there are ten mainstream primary schools serving the town; two of which are primarily for Church of Ireland (Anglican) children, one school is multi-denominational[2], and the other seven schools cater primarily for Catholic schoolchildren. I will discuss the educational provision for Appleby alongside the detailed portrait of the town which I provide below. Increasingly, multidenominational schooling has become a popular parental choice in Ireland, particularly within the wider Dublin commuter area in which Sweetwater sits. This is particularly the case for religious minority and non-religious families, but a place in these schools is often difficult to secure in urban areas.

In Chapter Five I will discuss the nature and functioning of both congregations in detail. Here, I discuss the location of the church buildings and their place in the wider community. The Sweetwater congregation has recently been moved to a building which is about a half hour drive from Sweetwater, in a Dublin suburb. They now share the church building with another congregation, with Sweetwater's church services taking place on Sunday afternoons after the first congregation has left. However, during my fieldwork with the Sweetwater congregation, their church building was in a central location on Sweetwater Main Street. It is a single storey grey brick building with a flat roof, set back from the street along a curved path in such a way that it does not appear as a noticeable building if one were to be passing by.

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[2] Multi-denominational schools in Ireland are schools that do not hold a preference for one religious denomination in their admittance policies and curriculum. Children are taught about all world religions but instructed in none (Educate Together, 2005).

There are tall black gates at the entrance to the Sweetwater building. During my fieldwork these were usually closed unless it was Sunday, or if other events were ongoing during the week. There was a sign with black letters above the gates, which said ‘The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints’, and underneath that, ‘All Welcome’. As the sign was high above the tall gates, it was difficult to see if you were passing by. There was no additional signage displaying the times of church services or other useful information. On one occasion during my fieldwork I came across a Mormon couple lost on the street outside, looking for the building. When I showed them the location, they exclaimed ‘Oh! We drove right past it and didn’t know that it was the church!’.

The building is not a purpose-built church building. I grew up not far from Sweetwater, and spent much of my childhood in the town. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Sweetwater church building was used as the local branch office of an Irish trade union. My father was the Branch Secretary of this trade union for much of his working life, and so I very clearly remember spending time in the building as a child, visiting my father or waiting for him to finish work. It is a small and claustrophobic building, and although there have been some prefab extensions added since my father’s days in the building, these are cramped. The inside space consists of a narrow corridor, off which is a large room with two partitions. With the partitions open, the congregation would meet in that room for the key Sunday service each week. After this, the partitions were closed to separate the room into three smaller rooms for religious lessons.

There is a small kitchen space at the back of the large room, but not separated from it. There are toilets, and two small classrooms in the prefab extension. The office for the congregation's leader was very small, about the size of a broom cupboard. During my fieldwork, the unsuitability of the building for its purpose was often discussed by members. They cited the small interior, the lack of suitable classrooms, the lack of large outside space for the children to play, and the lack of any car parking.

However, the logistics of conducting fieldwork in Sweetwater was easy for me as my home is around the corner from the church building. I found going back and forth to church in Sweetwater a simple process, which reminded me of the importance of the location of a church building in one's religious experience. I did not have to greatly concern myself with the details of travelling to church such as ensuring I had enough fuel in my car or planning my journey times. This was a contrast to my time in Appleby which necessitated a car journey from my home to the church building of one hour and forty minutes each way on Sundays.

Moving away from Sweetwater towards an examination of the Appleby region, the latest data indicates that the population of the city of Appleby is 71,546 whilst the population of all of County Appleby is 116,176 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Appleby city is one of the oldest settlements in the country and is best known as a Viking city and for its rich Norman history, with much of the old Norman city walls remaining intact. With such a long and varied history, Appleby attracts many overseas visitors interested in the origins of the city. Appleby is home to my employers Appleby Institute of Technology (AIT), where

I am employed as a lecturer. It is a higher education institution in the heart of the city that caters for over 10,000 students. AIT is a major source of employment and business for the city and the surrounding areas.

Appleby has suffered greatly since Ireland's financial crisis began in 2008. It has lost key employers in the area including the closure of a well-known factory with a long and well-respected history in the city as a major employer. Due to these and other struggles, Appleby's unemployment rate is higher than the national average, as is the unemployment rate across much of the wider region in which it is located. The cost of housing is substantially more affordable in Appleby City and County than in other parts of the country (Property Services Regulatory Authority, 2014). Appleby benefits from its 'city' status, and although it is smaller than other key cities in Ireland, it is well served in terms of facilities and services. Regarding educational provision, there are nineteen mainstream primary schools in Appleby serving the city and its surrounding areas. Of these, one holds a Church of Ireland ethos, one is multidenominational, and the other seventeen schools are to firstly cater for Catholic schoolchildren.

The Appleby church building is a rented space on the outskirts of the city in an industrial estate. The Appleby congregation have experienced multiple church buildings since the formation of the Appleby congregation in the 1970s. They have previously attended church in a house in a suburban housing estate, in the function room of a hotel on the outskirts of the city, and in another industrial estate in a more central location. The current industrial estate where they are housed is relatively new, which is pleasing to some members who had previously attended church in an older and more run-down industrial estate prior to the move to the current premises. However, some members also dislike the unconventional premises for church, aspiring for a purpose-built church building instead. Outside there is plenty of car parking, surrounding which are a variety of businesses who are also renting spaces in the estate. During the time of my fieldwork there was a gym, various office spaces, a children's charity, and a Pentecostal church which was mainly frequented by black Africans. This contrasts with the mainly white Mormon congregation who occupy a building close to the Pentecostal church.

The journey to Appleby from my home in Sweetwater was a 3 hour and 20-minute round trip. Hence, I found travelling to church during my time in Appleby more tiring than during my time with the Sweetwater congregation. However, I was glad to have experienced this, as a key issue for the Appleby congregation was the long journeys which some members had to undertake to get to church. Appleby serves as the church building for a wide and mainly rural catchment area. Many members travelled for an hour or more to reach church on Sundays. My own commute during fieldwork meant that I better understood how the distance between church and home strongly affects the participation and wellbeing of the church members, and so although challenging, it was worthwhile.

The Appleby congregational leader told me that using their designated international architectural teams, the Church has converted the space into the configuration which they feel is appropriate for church meetings, and which roughly reflects the spaces of church buildings internationally. Inside, the space consists of a chapel, a series of classrooms, a kitchen, an office, a small library, toilets, and some storage space. Like Sweetwater it is clean and functional in design as Mormon church buildings and chapels tend to be, with little of the typical decorations or adornments which one might imagine would accompany a religious space, such as that of a Catholic church.

The Appleby church building has no permanent signage, but during the time of my fieldwork there were various posters placed on the large glass windows which front the building. They identified the name of the Church, and informed passers-by of assistance which the Church could offer in stopping smoking. This assistance was organised by an elderly couple from the US, who were based in Appleby for a year to do missionary work. They had a background in volunteering in areas of addiction services, and so made assistance in the community with stopping smoking and drinking alcohol a focus for their time on their mission in Appleby. Aside from the posters placed in the window by the elderly couple, there was little that would identify the space as religious to a passer-by.

Appleby is similar to Sweetwater in its ethnic and religious homogeneity, although there are some key differences. Appleby is 92.1% white. It has the same Asian population as that of Sweetwater at 1.6%, whilst maintaining a larger black population. 1.3% of County Appleby’s population identifies as ‘black’ or ‘black Irish’. In evaluating the religious landscape of Appleby and Sweetwater, it is significant that Sweetwater and Appleby have both seen large increases in successive census of two religious categories. These are in the numbers identifying as having ‘No Religion’ and in the numbers adhering to religions apart from Catholicism. In Appleby, 3,771 identified as ‘Atheist’/’Agnostic’/’No Religion’ in 2006, a figure which has increased to 10,297 in 2016. Likewise, in Sweetwater the numbers identifying as ‘Atheist’/’Agnostic’/’No Religion’ increased from 7,303 to 18,977 from 2006 to 2016 (Central Statistics Office, 2017b). Both counties therefore reflect the wider national trend of rapid increases in non-belief and non-religious identifications.

However, when examining those who adhere to religions aside from Catholicism it is evident that increasing religious diversity is occurring *alongside* these patterns. In Appleby, those adhering to all other religions aside from Catholicism increased from 6,425 to 8,895 from 2006 to 2016. In Sweetwater in the same period, numbers of those identifying with religions aside from Catholicism increased from 13,651 to 16,078. Again, these local trends are in keeping with the national pattern. The Central Statistics Office shows that ‘among larger religions in the State, only two have an annualised growth rate that is lower than the overall change in the population between 1991 and 2016, namely Roman Catholics and Methodists’ (Central Statistics Office, 2017a). In other words, almost all religions in Ireland aside from Catholicism are growing, and growing faster than general population increases.

This implies a simultaneous and rapid growth of both minority religions *and up* abstention from religion in both these communities and across Ireland nationally. It is clear to see why discussion of the religious landscape in Ireland in recent years has focused on two seemingly contradictory arguments; that Ireland is moving towards secularism, as evidenced in the increase in those of no religion (Breen and Reynolds, 2011) and that Ireland is moving towards increased religious renewal as evidenced in the increase of those identifying with small minority religions (Cox, 2010). Both these arguments are legitimately represented in the experiences of counties Sweetwater and Appleby and confirm the complexity of modern religious experiences as discussed by Hervieu-Léger (2000). This then, is the local context in which Mormonism in Ireland is experienced.

In the following section I articulate the process of doing fieldwork with these two congregations. By explaining my social positioning and how I navigated an insider-outsider status, and the development of participant observation and interviews during fieldwork, this section elaborates on the research process in these two places in more detail.

4.4 Into the Field: Ethnography with the Appleby and Sweetwater Congregations

I felt that ethnographic fieldwork was the most appropriate methodological approach for numerous reasons. Firstly, it allowed me to create a sense of place first-hand to enhance the interview data. Simon Coleman argues that 'narratives, rituals, memories and so on are not articulated in a vacuum, wither social or architectural' (Coleman, 2005, p. 50), and additionally notes that churches are 'sites of memory' (Coleman, 2005, p. 48). Thus, participant observation offered me the opportunity to build a complex understanding of what it means to attend church as a Mormon, to witness the rhythms of congregational life, and to participate in social and religious events while allowing me to gather a sense of what it is to be Mormon in Ireland. Importantly, it allowed me to contextualise within the wider relations and structures of congregational life, the narratives, opinions, thoughts, and ideas which were articulated by the participants in interviews.

Secondly, through participant observation I built connections with members which was useful in creating a rapport for the in-depth and informal interviews. This has been identified as one of the strengths of participant observation. Becker and Geer (1969 pg. 247) point out that there may be issues participants are unable or unwilling to discuss during interview. This is less likely to happen, they argue, when the researcher has built up a relationship with the participant through regular interactions with them. By immersing myself within each congregation, I built strong relationships with many individuals which greatly supported the interview process.

For instance, a frequent comment I received from members of both congregations was how ‘impressed’ they were that I was firstly attending church at all, and secondly, that I was participating in the congregation for such a long period of time. I was often told that members regularly issued invitations to attend church to people they knew were curious and/or sceptical about the religion, but these invitations were never accepted. By immersing myself within the congregation, I feel that I earned the respect and trust of Church members, who appreciated my commitment to understanding the day to day interactions in church.

Thirdly, an ethnographic approach to interviews opened the interview setting into a more conversational atmosphere and offered the participant the freedom to explore the themes and ideas which mattered to them. From a feminist perspective, Ann Oakley (1981) has argued that when researchers tell interviewees about their lives during interview and engage in a true conversation about the topic under discussion, higher levels of trust are generated which supports the generation of quality data. Similarly, Cameron et al (2005) suggest that less structured interviews create 'richer data' (Cameron *et al.*, 2005, p. 31). I incorporated this advice into the interviews with participants, creating a conversational style of interview which supports the ethnographic approach. However, Cameron et al. (2005) also observe that such interviews can also be more difficult to analyse. Such challenges within this research are discussed in the section of this chapter which outlines the ethical considerations of the research.

Finally, an ethnographic approach also allowed me the space to reflect upon my own position as a white, middle class, atheist, Irish women conducting research with a religious minority in Ireland, and to consider how this has affected the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data gathered. In this respect, I agree with Davies (2005, p. 20) who points out that 'there is no such thing as a neutral observer'. I accept that my identity has shaped my preconceptions of Mormonism before entering the field, as well as influencing the fieldwork and my subsequent interpretation of it.

For example, before beginning this project, I had absorbed some of the stereotypes regarding Mormonism that many participants were keen to emphasise did not always apply to them. I imagined Mormon adherents to be preoccupied with religion and to be socially conservative in their outlook, particularly regarding gender and sexuality. I knew of the association between

Mormonism and the US, leading to my view of Mormonism as an ‘American’ religion. It is of course likely that my non-religious stance made it easier for me to engage in stereotyping about this religious ‘other’. It is also likely that as a white Irish person, baptised as Catholic and surrounded by Ireland’s complex relationship with religion, that I had taken on the views of the majority society of which I am a part.

Just as my early preconceptions of Mormonism have shaped the research, Oakley (1981) emphasises just how significantly her fieldwork affected the participants of her own 1970s research, emphasising that her very presence in the field affected the outcome and the aftermath of her research. I too accept that it is likely that my very presence has influenced the data produced during the fieldwork. However, Davies (2005, p. 20) does observe that ‘it is surprising just how resilient people are to someone in their midst, especially over a length of time’. This is in keeping with some of my own fieldwork experiences; I have on one occasion been described as ‘part of the furniture’, such was others’ familiarity and acceptance of my presence.

When I first began this research, I wanted to make enquiries about the possibility of conducting researching with the Mormon community in Ireland. To do this, I found contact details for the Public Affairs Officer of the Church in Ireland. Upon replying to my email, this person told me that he had recently stepped down from the role, but as he was a long-standing member of the Appleby congregation who I had said I was considering approaching, he would be happy to meet me to answer any questions I had. I came to think of this person as a gatekeeper to the research, as he was the first contact I had with the Church, and the first Mormon who met with me to discuss my research.

We arranged a meeting in a hotel foyer near his home soon after beginning my PhD research, about a year before the fieldwork began. He was very supportive of my research and brought with him a copy of the Book of Mormon and some basic materials pertaining to Church doctrine for me to keep. I thereafter received approval from the current Public Affairs Officer for the Church in Ireland to begin research. The gatekeeper also provided me with contact details for the Appleby congregational leader; known as the Branch President, so that I could arrange a meeting to seek approval to engage in participant observation within that congregation. Once fieldwork was underway in Appleby, the Appleby Branch President provided me with the email address of the Sweetwater Branch President so that I could request a meeting to discuss conducting fieldwork in the Sweetwater congregation.

Before fieldwork with both congregations began, I met with the Branch Presidents to explain the research and its focus. These meetings were positive, allowing me to answer any questions they had about my research and for both parties to make specific requests. In Appleby for instance, the Branch President requested that I not photograph the chapel area as it was a sacred space, although I was welcome to photograph other parts of the building. I reassured him that I was intending on drawing rough sketches of the building only.

In both meetings, I requested of the leaders that I be allowed access to a male-only meeting known as a Priesthood meeting and reassured them that I would remain a quiet observer unless asked to participate. In Appleby, the Branch President gave his permission immediately, and reassured me that providing the congregants were comfortable with my presence, I would have no difficulties in gaining access to various meetings and events. In Sweetwater, the Branch President asked to confirm my access to that meeting with the leader of the Priesthood group first, before granting permission. The Priesthood leader voiced no opposition to my presence, and regularly encouraged my active participation in the meetings whilst I was attending.

Mormonism is a hierarchical faith, and ordinary members are likely to follow the lead of the Branch President and other congregational leaders on many (but not all, I found) matters. In this respect, I think it is likely that the support of branch leadership in both congregations may have been significant in the positive reception I received, even within traditionally male-only meetings. For example, in Appleby I participated in my first ever Priesthood meeting. As the men chatted amongst themselves before the meeting began, I felt nervous and self-conscious. Although my nerves may have affected my interpretation of events, I nonetheless felt that every man who walked into the room looked at me with mild surprise or confusion. In beginning the meeting, the Appleby Priesthood President welcomed me and said, ‘don’t worry, you are not the first Sister (female church member) to sit in on a Priesthood meeting here’. I appreciated his welcome and felt that perhaps his words were also meant for the rest of the men present; as a reminder to them that my presence was not necessarily unheard of, and in any case, was approved by branch leadership.

Whilst attending church, I was conscious of how I was presenting myself, and how that presentation was interpreted by members. I decided before fieldwork began to introduce myself to the congregation during my first day at church. I asked permission from the Branch Presidents to do this, and this was granted. At the lectern in the chapel spaces of each congregation I introduced myself and briefly explained my research. I explained how long I would be attending church and what I hoped to achieve during my time. I explained that I was interested in all aspects of church life, including what might be considered to be quite ‘ordinary’ interactions and conversations. I felt that this transparent introduction to the congregations assisted in there being a clarity amongst regularly attending members about what my role was.

My introduction to both congregations were received very positively. Upon my arrival in Sweetwater, I had already completed six months of fieldwork in Appleby. I felt that I had a good sense of congregational life at that point and had gained an appreciation for the importance of members engaging in talks, prayers, and testimonies at the lectern in a specific way. The phrase ‘I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ, amen’ indicates the end of a member’s talk or prayer, and I became so familiar with the phrase that it seemed to lodge itself deeply in my mind. In Sweetwater, for reasons I am still not sure of, as it certainly wasn’t planned, I ended my introduction to the congregation by using this phrase. At the time, I felt embarrassed about this. I feared that it would cause confusion, as I had mentioned in my introduction that I was not religious. I was afraid it might cause offence or appear arrogant in some way. In fact, I was told afterwards by several members that using the phrase endeared me to them, and made them feel that I could be trusted.

From then on, I was referred to by members as ‘the student’ and ‘the researcher’ in both congregations. In Appleby, I was also referred to as ‘the girl from AIT’- a reference to my employment at Appleby Institute of Technology (AIT). Although many were eager to know if I might consider converting to Mormonism, and some explicitly tried to encourage this, for the most part I was placed in a researcher or student role with few obvious attempts to encourage my conversion. This researcher role led me to have a complex experience of my status. I was often both an insider and an outsider, sometimes simultaneously, and sometimes, it felt as though I was neither. Peter Collins (2002), in his articulation of doing fieldwork amongst the Quakers as a Quaker himself, has observed that the insider/outsider dichotomy within social research is itself a social construction. However, as time went on and the congregations became familiar with me and I became more familiar with the Church generally, and the congregations specifically, there came some assumption of insider status.

Although still ‘the researcher’, my long presence created a familiarity with my unique position. I feel that for this reason my status as an ‘expert’ in religion or in sociology did not serve as a barrier to inclusion. Many members in the congregations had completed their own postgraduate education, and in Appleby the Branch President was also undertaking his own doctoral research in social care. Therefore, many were comfortable with the idea of the Church being studied academically. Even if they had no experience of higher education themselves, many of their friends in church did, which seemed to reassure them.

As weeks passed, people began to treat me with less formality and more familiarity, and began to confide in me the latest gossip or disagreement which was currently underway. I began to understand the inside jokes and ongoing discussions of the congregations and their various subgroups, and I was increasingly called upon to offer opinions, answer questions, and to say an opening or closing prayer in lessons, in the same way as other members. As a non-believer, I always felt slightly uncomfortable saying a prayer, and was fearful that others may interpret it as disingenuous on my part. However, it did give me the opportunity to 'learn' the format of prayers and the patterns within it such as praying for those not present due to illness or praying that everyone present would travel home safely. This shift from observer to active participant assisted the research, allowing me to more fully experience life as a Mormon.

One interesting way in which insider/outsider complexities played themselves out in the course of my fieldwork is in regard to the ethics of the participation described above. In reflecting upon these decisions to pray or to answer spiritual or scriptural questions, I have come to realise how my participation in church raises interesting insights into my own perceptions of my status but also the perceptions of the participants. In agreeing to participate in this way I hoped to better experience life as a Mormon, despite my atheist position. Yet, it may be that those who asked me to contribute might also have been hopeful that my participation might change the nature of my role in church.

As described in Chapter One, Mormonism's 'First Vision' in which founder Joseph Smith gained a personal testimony of God and the Church through prayer, is a foundational narrative within Mormonism. I found during fieldwork that members will frequently encourage each other to ‘pray on it’ to receive wisdom as to the best approach to almost all problems. Additionally, missionaries advise prospective converts to pray to God to ascertain if the Church is true. By encouraging my active participation, members ensured that I too, was doing as they themselves had done. I was following the model set down by Joseph Smith, in which prayer leads to wisdom regarding the truthfulness of the Church. Viewed from this perspective, the positive response of the Sweetwater members to my reciting of ‘I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ amen’ during my first introduction to them is part of this same phenomenon. By inadvertently using a phrase contained in Mormon prayer, patterns I provided proof that I could be ‘trusted’. My prayerlike phrase signified to them the truthfulness of my statements, and my presence there.

Thus, I faced a complex experience when reflecting upon the ethical components of my participation in church. I pondered not simply the appropriateness (or not) of an openly atheist researcher participating in religious rituals whose spiritual basis they did not believe in. I also reflected upon the ways in which the participants of this research used my participation as a tool of conversion. How might my firm continuation of my atheist beliefs at the conclusion of my year of active participation in church disrupt a member’s understandings of the role of prayer as laid down by the First Vision? These attempts to encourage my participation may have been part of a process on the part of participants to move me from ‘outsider’ to ‘insider in spite my own self-consciousness about this part of my fieldwork.

Yet despite this, visitors from other congregations often assumed me to be a regular member and were often surprised to be told that I was not Mormon. One visitor told me that I 'looked like a Mormon'. I did take care during fieldwork to dress in a similar fashion to other women of my age during Sunday services. This often incorporated a long or mid length dress, with shoulders covered. See appendices D and F for photographs of myself in church attire. Another visitor told me that I 'had the lingo and everything'; a reference to my efforts to correctly understand and use the words and phrases common within Mormonism.

Yet, in a variety of ways, I remained an outsider. The congregations knew that I was leaving after a set period, and often would ask me 'when are you leaving us?' as a conversation starter. This conscious awareness of my temporary presence served as a reminder that I was not fully one of them. I was also always honest whenever anyone asked me about my own religious beliefs, and as a result, many knew that I was atheist. This was generally well accepted in both congregations, but it did function as a symbolic boundary. Not only was I not a believer in their particular conception of god, but I did not believe in *any* god, and so I always felt that I was marked as different, though not in a hostile way, for this reason.

On one occasion in Appleby, I was approached by a curious non-member who had met the missionaries earlier that week in town, and at their invitation had attended church that Sunday. Someone had mentioned to him that I was a researcher, and he approached me to question me about the Church. 'Do they really not drink or have sex outside of marriage?' he asked me. 'Where do the missionaries get the money to go on missions, does the Church pay them?', 'where does the Church get its money from?', and 'they all seem very nice but it's a bit weird isn't it?' were some of the questions I was presented with. It was clear to me that this man approached me due to my status as a non-member. He saw me as an outsider, like him. He seemed unwilling to ask the missionaries these questions, but my outsider status made him comfortable to ask these things of me; someone who knows the Church, but is not a part of the Church.

I was surprised by his very direct line of questioning, as I had never met him before that moment. However, I was not surprised by his questions, many of which I had fielded before from other non-members outside of church who heard of my research. I learned that many Irish non-members seem to be intensely curious about the Church. During my fieldwork and throughout my Ph.D programme this has manifested itself in questions about missionary life; I found that an encounter with a missionary is often the only form of engagement a non-member ever has with the Church. I was also often asked about polygamy; it appears the Church is unsuccessful in shaking off the reputation of its polygamous past, at least in Ireland. Due to these frequent questions about Mormonism in my everyday life, I was not overly surprised by the man's questioning of me that day. It did serve however, to remind me of my complicated insider/outsider position.

Jan Shipps has had a similar experience of being in, out, and neither, during her almost sixty years researching Mormonism as a non-member in the US. Shipps (2006, p. 29) argues that she never fully became an insider, yet nor is she an outsider. She says, ‘fortuitous circumstances had worked to usher me into what is best described as a liminal status, into between-ness’. For Shipps (2006), the boundaries are porous, and dependant on context. She suggests that Mormonism created and maintained a complex position for her, and perhaps it is that Mormonism has, in a similar way, also made a place for me. By including me in active participation in church, accepting my presence in male-only meetings, and generally receiving me in a positive way, Mormons in Ireland have endeavoured to make me feel welcome, despite my clear differences from them based on religious identifications, and my researcher status.

In total I interviewed thirty congregants, fifteen from each field site. Sixteen of the thirty interviewees are Irish. Eight are from the US, four are from South America, one is from Africa, and one is from elsewhere in Europe. All were living in Ireland at the time of the fieldwork. The thirty interviewees incorporate sixteen women and fourteen men. They are aged from eighteen to mid-seventies, with each decade within represented. Sixteen of the interviewees were of white Irish descent, thirteen were ‘white’ and of other nationalities, one was ‘black African’. In many cases, these descriptions were used by the participants themselves, who would self-describe themselves as ‘white’ or ‘black’ during our discussions. They would also often describe themselves in terms of the country of their birth, or the broader region; ‘Irish’, ‘African’, ‘South American’.

In both congregations, I asked permission to put up a flyer on the church noticeboard asking for interviewees with my contact details (see appendix C for flyer). During fieldwork, Appleby had a congregational newsletter and so I also placed a brief article about myself and my research there (see appendix D for newsletter piece). I received no phone calls or emails using this method, but people did approach me in church to say that they had seen my flyer and read my newsletter piece and offered themselves for interview. Others approached me to say that they had heard from a friend that they had been interviewed, and they too now wanted to do an interview. I estimate I gathered about three quarters of interviewees from individuals volunteering themselves in these ways.

The other interviewees were sought through conversations with members. Members would ask me about my research during conversation, which would often lead onto detailed discussions between us about relevant issues. Noting their interest, I would tell them I was still looking for interviewees, and if they wanted to sit for an interview with me to discuss these issues in more detail I would be happy to explain the interview process to them. The last quarter of my interviewees were procured in this way.

Although many of my interviews were self-volunteered and so were not targeted by me, I did establish a relatively diverse sample of young and old, male and female, convert and those born into the Church, and Irish and non-Irish. In evaluating my access to a wide cross section of the congregations, I note that I was unable to build a strong rapport with a group of Southeast Asians who attend church in Sweetwater. I had desired to understand more about their experiences of life as a Mormon in Ireland, particularly as Mormonism in Ireland is majority white, and I had interviewed just one non-white participant. It was therefore important to me that this group be represented in the interview sample.

Despite many casual conversations in church and at church events, I was unable to secure an interview with a member of this grouping. At one point, a mother and her adult daughter in Sweetwater had arranged a time and date for interview but they did not arrive at our pre-arranged location on the day, did not answer a phone call from me, and did not attend church for some weeks afterwards. However, I carefully made note of informal conversations in church with members of this group, and was sure to use this material in my analysis of the data, to ensure that as many viewpoints as possible are reflected in the research.

As a white Irish woman, I often found it easier to form friendships with white Irish members. There was a familiarity in our encounters which came easily to me and it is likely that this affected my rapport with other members who were not white Irish, such as the Southeast Asian members in Sweetwater. Ruth Frankenburg (1993, p. 6) argues that whiteness is ‘a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced, and moreover, are intrinsically linked to unfolding relations of domination’. It is likely that my rapport with the Irish participants of this research, all of whom were white, was at least partly influenced by the shared experience of whiteness which Frankenburg (1993) describes. Many Irish participants were also converts from Catholicism and so we straightforwardly found common ground in discussions of the specific nature of Irish Catholicism.

In Sweetwater there were conflicts between the Southeast Asian grouping and an Irish group which meant that there was little meaningful engagement between them. My easy familiarity with the Irish group in Sweetwater probably hindered my friendships with the Southeast Asian group. This would explain their reluctance to participate in interviews with me. It is likely that myself and the white Irish participants were able to find commonality within this particular ‘set of locations’ (Frankenberg, 1993, p. 6), which as a consequence excluded those outside of those experiences. I acknowledge the ways in which this has inevitably shaped the research.

Once interviews with participants were arranged, I emphasised to them that we could meet at a place where they were comfortable and at a time that suited them. I conducted interviews in a variety of places, often in the participants’ homes, but also in the home of a participant’s family member, in hotel foyers, restaurants, cafes, and in empty classrooms in AIT. Some interviews were conducted as joint interviews, often in scenarios where husband and wife would invite me to their home for dinner and talk with me together. These interviews tended to be longer than single interviews, running to roughly two hours and thirty minutes or more, as both participants often wanted to contribute to the discussion, or to pick upon something their partner had said. Most interviews were conducted with one participant at a time, and these were approximately one hour and forty-five minutes in length. The shortest interview was fifty minutes, and the longest was three hours.

When I met each interviewee, I gave them a copy of the Interview Consent Form and Information Sheet (see appendix B for these documents). Participants and I read through the information sheet together, and I always asked had they any questions about my research before the interview started. I also showed respondents the consent portion of the sheet, explaining the nature of consent and the meaning of the form to them before the interview began. I told them that they should sign it at the end of the interview if they were comfortable with how the interview had proceeded. However, most interviewees signed their consent before the interview began and so I reminded them once more of their right to withdraw at the end of the interview.

Ethnographic interviews are described as:

> Those projects in which researchers have established respectful, on-going relationships with their interviewees, including enough rapport for there to be a genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds (Sherman Heyl, 2001, p. 369).

I followed this model for the interviews of this research, using a list of broad themes to guide the interview (see appendix E for Interview Guide), but mainly allowing the interviewees to control the direction of the interviews.

Often, interviewees would mention an incident that had occurred in church, or use other examples from church to make their points, confirming the usefulness of engaging in participant observation whilst the interviewees were ongoing. Jenny Hockey (2002) argues that participant observation and interviews are part of the same ethnographic experience. Hockey suggests that ‘we need to question the distinction between interview data and ‘what really happened’ (Hockey, 2002, p. 210) thereby breaking the distinction that is sometimes made between experience-led participant observation and narrative-led interview.

The interviews loosely followed an interview guide which was based around key points of discussion. The interview guide was developed based on my reading of the literature pertaining to Mormonism, to Ireland, and to the sociology of religion more broadly. The interview guide was used as a frame for the interview. Sometimes it was followed quite closely, in the case of very nervous participants for example. In other cases, participants might have other themes they wanted to discuss and in such scenarios the guide was referred to much more loosely. Most interviewees addressed a little about their childhood experiences of religion, their conversion stories (if this was relevant), their experience of the current and any past congregations they had attended, their experiences of Mormonism within their family, their thoughts on religion in Irish society, and their thoughts and experiences on life as a Mormon in their engagements with wider society.

I found that the balance between myself and the participant in interviews was variable and shifting. Often, participants were nervous when beginning but were open in telling me so, allowing me to reassure them that this was common at the start of interviews. However, these nerves did shift the influence of the interview towards myself as the researcher, as for the first few minutes I often felt as though I was leading the participant through the process. Usually however, the balance quickly shifted back to the participant. They became more at ease, gaining an understanding of the feel of the process from the first few introductory questions.

By growing in confidence, they became the ‘expert’, and I, the learner. They informed me of things I was not aware of, told me stories of their own lives, and educated me in their own experiences. Before the interview I reminded participants that they could refuse to discuss any topic they liked, stop the interview at any time, and withdraw from the research entirely even after their interview was complete with a full withdrawal of their data. This assisted in reminding the participant that the interview was a dialectic process between both of us, and that they were active in guiding the direction of the interview.

I had planned originally to ask some interviewees to participate in a visual ethnography task which would involve my providing them with a disposable camera with which they could photograph items which they felt were meaningful for their Mormon identity. I had hoped to then discuss these photos with those individuals in interviews. However, during my first six months of fieldwork in Appleby, I quickly realised that there was little enthusiasm for the task amongst the congregation, and many of the older members of the congregation appeared intimidated or confused when I had mentioned this idea to them. Based on these responses, I decided to forgo the photography component of the fieldwork, to focus upon interviews and participant observation instead.

In evaluating the commonalities and differences across the two congregations during fieldwork, I found that each congregation has its own atmosphere and patterns of behaviour. Appleby is a stable congregation and well developed, whilst Sweetwater is more diverse and transient with greater levels of conflict between members. Similarly, each congregation has its own challenges which shape the identity of the congregation and the ways in which they engage with each other and the Church. These challenges are often the flashpoints around which the congregational identity of the group is negotiated. In Appleby, it is the great distance which people have to travel and their unusual church building, whilst in Sweetwater it is their interpersonal conflicts and lack of space. It is evident that differing circumstances provide Sweetwater and Appleby with an experience of Mormon congregational life which is unique to each. More detail will be provided on this in Chapter Five to demonstrate the adaptation of Mormon traditions which occurs at a local level, but it is enough to note here that the specificity of congregational experience confirms existing literature within congregational studies such as Ammerman (1998), Edgell (1999), and Guest (2004).

The following section describes the ethical considerations which need to be evaluated when conducting research of this kind and the efforts taken in this study to ensure ethical rigour.

4.5 The Ethics of Ethnographic Research

The research was formulated to be in keeping with the ethical guidelines issued from the British Sociological Association, the Association of Social Anthropologists of Britain and the Commonwealth, and the Sociological Association of Ireland. Most ethical guidelines are based on the four principles of ethical theory, as outlined by Murphy and Dingwall (2001, p. 339); nonmalfeasance, beneficence, autonomy and justice, and this research was created to be mindful of these ethical principles.

Ethical guidelines such as those of the British Sociological Association, articulate that:

> Sociologists have a responsibility to ensure that the physical, social and psychological well-being of research participants is not adversely affected by the research. They should strive to protect the rights of those they study, their interests, sensitivities and privacy, while recognising the difficulty of balancing potentially conflicting interests (British Sociological Association, 2002).

I particularly acknowledge the ethical debates surrounding participant observation, and the need to be mindful of ongoing consent throughout the fieldwork using this method. However, I also argue that engaging in participant observation whilst also protecting individuals' and communities' physical, social, and psychological well-being is achievable. The measures described below articulate how I have worked to achieve this, particularly considering the very small numbers in the Church in Ireland which make anonymity more difficult.

I have ensured to protect the interests and privacy of participants at every stage in the research. During my first meeting with the Branch Presidents of each congregation, I discussed with them a Gatekeeper Consent and Information Sheet (see appendix A). I described to them the nature of participant observation and explained their gatekeeper role through being the leader of the congregation. I clarified that individual consent for each interview would still be sought with that person, and that the consent of the Branch President for my attendance in church did not in any way affect interview consent. In both cases, the Branch Presidents were happy to agree to their initial consent for my participant observation in church and understood that this consent was ongoing.

To ensure continuing consent throughout the fieldwork from both the Branch President and ordinary members I endeavoured to spend some time talking with a wide variety of people, including the Branch President on a regular basis. I felt that this would provide a natural conversational moment for someone to mention to me any reservations they had about my research, should they be feeling unhappy. I regularly had conversations with branch leadership and ordinary members in which they asked how my research was going, asked me about how easy or difficult I was finding it to gather interviewees, and offered their assistance in any way they could with the research. These sorts of conversations reassured me that consent on the part of branch leadership and ordinary members was ongoing. Additionally, I gauged each individual's interest in my research, their decisions to speak to me or not, and their general demeanour towards me, as broad indicators of consent in participant observation.

From the start of my fieldwork I was open with all members of the congregations about my reasons for attending church and associated events, the purpose of my study, and my date of departure. My initial introduction to the congregations on my first day in church, the newsletter piece, the noticeboard flyer, and ongoing interviews throughout my time attending church served as reminders to the congregations of my research and my purpose for being there.

Furthermore, members witnessed me taking notes of church services and meetings in my notebook each week, and in fact came to expect that this would be the case. For example, during a particularly sensitive incident during an all-female meeting known as the Relief Society meeting in Appleby, I made an on-the-spot-decision to stop note-taking as I felt that it was disrespectful in that context. However, two members in the meeting jokingly used hand gestures to me to mimic writing, and pointed at my notebook, indicating that they believed that I should continue to record the incident as it was unfolding. Afterwards, they laughingly told me that they thought that the incident would 'be good for the research' and so I should have continued to take notes. My note taking became 'normal' for participants and served as a good reminder to them of my role. However, my shifting decisions regarding what to record, when, and why, also assisted in reminding participants that their privacy and sensitivities were also being respected, and that sensitive moments would not be exploited.
Throughout the fieldwork, I participated in numerous church meetings which are described in detail in Chapter Five as part of an effort to build a detailed picture of Mormon congregational life in Ireland. The meetings I participated in were all adults-only apart from Sacrament Meeting; the main weekly church service in which the entire congregation participates. Children had their own Sunday School meetings, and attended meetings called 'Primary' in which they discussed doctrine and sang children's hymns. Mindful of the additional vulnerability of children within research, I decided to observe and participate only adult meetings apart from Sacrament Meeting to protect the children in

both congregations from any potential harm. I explained this decision to both congregations in my first introduction to them. I highlighted that although children were present in the Sacrament Meeting which the entire congregation participates in, that they were not the focus of my research. The decision to focus on adults has inevitably meant that I have missed out on certain meetings and conversations which might have contributed to the research. However, I am satisfied that I nonetheless experienced a diverse range of experiences and encounters in church.

Whilst Murphy and Dingwall (2001, p. 341) provide various examples of how ethnography can cause harm during the research process (causing stress, anxiety, or embarrassment to participants for instance) they maintain that within ethnography, the greatest risk to participants arises at the time of publication. They note that ethnographic observations might reveal something of the community that had previously been hidden, and that information is being used against them now that it is in the public domain. Though clearly this risk can never be completely eradicated, I have created pseudonyms for the two congregations and for all individuals. I was also clear to participants who agreed to interview that I would ensure no one in their congregation would learn from me during fieldwork that they were an interviewee. Most told me that they didn’t mind if this was the case, but nonetheless I was careful in my conversations with others in church to ensure that I did not divulge the identities of any of those who had participated in interviews.

A significant risk for these two communities relates to the small size of both congregations, and the size of the Church in Ireland. There is a risk that through close reading of the thesis, individuals could become identifiable, or more likely identify themselves, through small details revealed despite pseudonyms. I am mindful that communities can often feel hurt and betrayed by the researcher's interpretation of their experiences (Ellis, 1995). For this reason, I have endeavoured to only provide information which is important for understanding the broader context of a person's statements. For instance, instead of stating which specific nationality a person identifies with, I have used the broader geographical region instead. These methods of protecting anonymity will go some way to ensuring the privacy of participants but cannot unfortunately, completely alleviate these concerns.

However, so mindful am I of causing hurt to the congregations of this study, that my over-protectiveness may in fact affect my interpretation or writing of what I found in the field in other ways. I feel a sense of friendship and loyalty to the individuals and congregations of this study. I am also mindful of how open and helpful the congregations were to me throughout the fieldwork. Due to this, I have been fearful of being overly critical in my writing, or of exploiting the participants for the sake of being what Carolyn Ellis calls a 'good ethnographer' (1995, p. 87). In not considering the reaction of the fishing community of her study, and in overlooking issues of consent in the publication of a book about her research, Ellis (1995) acknowledges causing pain to the community in the effort to demonstrate interesting data. In efforts to avoid such a scenario on my part, I am conscious of my tendency to be overly hesitant to provide a negative critique of what I found during my time in the field.

I found for instance, many participants were devoted to issues of gender equality and I discuss this at various points in the thesis. Yet, it has to be noted that the institutional structures in which these opinions exist are nonetheless inherently sexist. It is difficult for me to acknowledge that people whose company I enjoy and whom I would consider friends are, despite their own views on gender, complicit in upholding and perpetuating gender segregation and discrimination through their church involvement. However, this is the case and it would be a disservice to the research to not acknowledge it. Ellis' (1995) experience of not being careful enough to protect the emotional wellbeing of participants, and my own experience of being overly careful in that regard, are both scenarios which remind us of the importance of being self-aware in the analysis of one's own engagement with the data.

Elisabeth Arweck (2002, p. 122) engages with similar problems in her discussion of researcher 'affinities, sympathies, and agendas'. Arweck (2002) notes that such sympathies can be observed when:

> An academic feels strongly that the particular group is portrayed in a consistently negative way by the media, a picture which may not be borne out by the researcher's data' (Arweck, 2002, p. 123).

In finding that many of the participants of my research did not reflect the stereotypical representation of Mormonism as socially conservative, sexist, racist, and fundamentalist in religious outlook, I did sometimes feel a drive to present what Arweck (2002) describes as a 'corrective approach'. Indeed, on these occasions I justified such an approach by telling myself that I was after all only reporting what I had found, and that I had a duty to present this rarely represented reality of life as a Mormon. The ways in which the participants' experience of their religious identities diverges with common understandings of Mormonism is of course a valid point of sociological analysis and is dealt with in Chapters Six and Eight of this thesis.

However, there is an ethical risk inherent in allowing such 'corrective' motivations to blind the researcher to the ways in which the data fulfils the stereotypes which they are keen to avoid. I have been conscious of how my attempts to disrupt common stereotypes of Mormons may inadvertently result in my overlooking aspects of the research which do not fit this narrative. These ethical risks can never be eradicated, and the responsibility of the researcher is to reduce the risk wherever possible, and to reflect upon it. To this end, I have endeavoured to ensure that those voices in this research who do fulfil Mormon stereotypes have been represented and form part of the ethnographic analysis which follows.

These voices include people like James in Appleby who is against same-sex marriage and sees himself as a religious conservative in an increasingly secular society. Stephanie in Appleby insists that she feels no gender discrimination in church, despite clear hierarchical Church structures which exclude women from key leadership roles. There are also other participants whose narratives are not represented in the thesis in such depth, such as an elderly missionary named Elder McGuire. He rails passionately against what he sees as the ills of a modern society which has rejected God. Frequent targets of his criticism include one-parent families whose children he describes as being from 'broken homes', and the rise of internet pornography. His perspectives are not discussed in depth in this thesis, but this does not mean that I have deliberately excluded him to present a more palatable representation of what Mormonism is. His narrative has still informed my understanding of Mormonism, and its diversity.

Elder McGuire's views, and those of James and Stephanie are just as much a picture of Mormonism in Ireland as the views of those I encountered more frequently; those whose views diverged from the conservative stereotype of Mormonism. In reflecting upon these issues, I have concluded that it is a difficult balance to master when doing research. One one hand, the need to (as faithfully as is possible in any research) represent the reality of the participants. On the other, the need to ensure that in the process I am not conveniently ensuring that the story produced is one which simply satisfies my own emotional impulses. I have self-consciously worked on achieving this balance throughout the writing of this thesis and feel confident I have come as close to achieving it as anyone can, given the impossibility of ever achieving 'objectivity' in ethnographic research and writing.

It is common to engage in 'respondent validation' or 'member checking' (Bryman, 2012, p. 391) before the research has concluded to ensure the community under study have an opportunity to corroborate or clarify the findings of the researcher. This has not been done in any formal way with the congregations of this research due time constraints on my part. Nonetheless I feel that my methods of interviewing and participant observation both incorporated ongoing elements of respondent validation by engaging in open and conversational styles of inquiry. I endeavoured to confirm with others what I had learned by asking direct questions like ‘I think that when members speak of ‘eternal family’ what they mean is… am I right about that?’. I also used casual conversations between church meetings, before and after church, and during social events as a way for participants to confirm, reject, or modify my growing assumptions throughout fieldwork.

These sorts of clarifications throughout the fieldwork ensured that my assumptions were checked with research participants (Torrance, 2012). Bryman (2012) acknowledges that respondent validation can take many forms; including providing each interviewee with an account of what they said in interview or providing feedback to the group on impressions formed. I feel that my informal approach to member checking was the most appropriate form for this research. It ensured that my findings were corroborated and clarified where needs be, without any undue formalities being placed upon the research process which might affect rapport with participants.

Upon completion of the thesis, I intend to provide feedback to the two congregations of the study. I intend to meet with each congregation as a group to give an overview of the key findings of the research, and to articulate my experiences as a researcher within their community. I am mindful of the experiences of Beverly Skeggs (1997), who found in feeding back to the working-class women of her own study that some participants found it difficult to understand the academic language used. To avoid this experience on the part of participants, I hope to produce a leaflet to distribute at the meeting which will summarise the findings of the research in non-academic language.

4.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis was not a linear process. I began to analyse the data whilst I was still conducting fieldwork with the two congregations and I often brought emerging ideas into interviews and conversed on these themes with the participants. Throughout the fieldwork phase I was involved in a process of continuing reflection upon the emerging observations and interview data. Additionally, I had read a wide range of literature that had shaped my research questions and focus, and this information was inevitably a part of the fieldwork process. However, as far as possible I took an inductive approach (Bryman, 2012, p. 24) to data analysis as the themes produced for analysis arose mainly from my fieldnotes and interview data.

The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and then fully transcribed verbatim. The fieldnotes were firstly written by hand in notebooks, mainly during church meetings. Ocassionally, in a one on one conversation for example, notes were not written in the moment but soon after returning home. Due to these instances, it is possible that my recollection of particular conversations may be muddied. However, I endeavoured to record precisely my recollections as quickly as possible after returning home to support an accurate account. In Appleby for example, I had a long drive from church to home so I would scribble words or phrases in my car before starting the drive, so that key information would be available to me to jog my memory when I sat to write more complete notes later.

I used fieldwork notebooks before, during, and after the fieldwork phase for multiple purposes. Firstly, to constantly record the research as it progressed, and to reflect on the research and my role in it. Using field notes for these purposes is perhaps one of the hallmarks of ethnography and in particular, participant observation (Emerson et al. 2001; Lofland 1971; Bryman 2012; Fetterman 2010). Secondly, during the fieldwork phase, the notebooks were used as the primary way to record field notes of church services, events pertaining to church, informal conversation, and my own reflections and ideas as they emerged.

The purpose of note taking in the field is best described by Nigel Rapport (1991) who argues that for ethnographers, field notes are ‘something which simultaneously immerses them deeply in the conventions of a subject community and the self they become there’ (Rapport, 1991, p. 11). For this reason, my fieldnotes were a mix of direct observations, some early analytical thinking on those observations, as well as reflections upon my own role in the interpretation of these observations. I later typed up the fieldnotes and along with the interview transcripts, coded them thematically, first by hand, and then electronically.

I used NVivo, a form of Computer Assisted Qualitative Data AnalysiS (CAQDAS) as an organisational tool to assist in the research. In using such software, I did not intend to disrupt the traditional use and analysis of field notes as advocated by Rapport (1991) above. Indeed, it has been noted that although CAQDAS and other technological tools may be time saving devices and useful for tracking large amounts of raw material, they do not create codes for analysis. Therefore, it is still the responsibility of the researcher to interpret the material (Gibbs, 2002; Bryman, 2012). I agree with Graham Gibbs in his discussion of the uses of NVivo, who observes that ‘there is no substitute for reading and thinking. No computer can interpret the text, only people can do that’ (Gibbs 2002 p.307).

Therefore, I emphasise that I used NVivo simply as an organisational device which allowed me to view transcripts and fieldnotes in one place and to more easily search the material, and not as a tool to code or analyse the data. I coded the data firstly by hand, using different coloured highlighters and plenty of note taking on the hard copies of transcripts and fieldnotes to identify large themes. Within NVivo, I then engaged in a second, deeper level of coding by creating subthemes, and more specific codes. As advocated by Fielding (2001) and Bryman (2012), I also created analytical memos pertaining to codes, which articulated in what context this code was being utilised and why. This ensured that I had clarity about my deployment of codes.

In addition to basic codes designed to easily identify foundational information such as references to particular church rituals and specific meetings, I also established thematic codes based on ‘scrutiny techniques’ advocated by Ryan and Bernard (2003, pp. 88–91). They argue that useful thematic coding should prioritise:

- ‘Repetitions’: the topics and ideas which reoccur frequently across the different data materials
- ‘Indigenous typologies or categories’: language, phrases, or definitional categories that are specific to the group or used unusually.

- ‘Similarities and differences’: the varying commonalities and divergences in participants’ discussions of key topics.
- ‘Missing data’: Noting what individuals did not talk about, or what remained unaddressed in a group setting, can be as significant as what was discussed. Ryan and Bernard (2003) advise incorporating this missing data into the analytical process
- ‘Linguistic connectors’: Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest noting the use of language such as ‘because’, ‘due to’, or ‘since’, as participants often reveal their thinking around the causes and effects of particular phenomenon using language of this kind. Identifying patterns of thought amongst participants can identify important causal connections.
- ‘Theory-related material’: Using key concepts from the literature as themes to be analysed (Ryan and Bernard, 2003, pp. 88–94).

Once this process was complete, I could quickly find data across both fieldnotes and transcripts pertaining to particular ideas, using the codes I had created and NVivo’s search functions. Throughout the analysis, I drew upon both interviews and fieldnotes, often finding that the fieldnotes assisted in providing context for the narrative of an interview, and vice versa, where information provided in interview helped me to better understand what I was seeing and feeling during participant observation.

4.7 Presentation of the Data in the Thesis

In this thesis, I draw upon both fieldnotes and interviews in a fluid fashion to enhance each other, to provide a sense of place, and to support my arguments. However, in this thesis I do not claim to provide any objective or generalisable analysis of the two congregations, nor of life as a Mormon in Ireland. I concur with James Clifford (1986) who argues that ‘we can no longer know the whole truth, or even claim to approach it’ (Clifford 1986 p. 387). Rather, this thesis is reflective of a moment in time, and my own subjective interpretation of that moment.

I acknowledge that the presentation and analysis of the data is inevitably partial and subjective. Clifford emphasises that this awareness is a form of ‘liberation’ (1986 p. 384) rather than a barrier to research. He argues that a ‘complex, problematic, partial ethnography’ can lead to ‘new conceptions of culture as interactive and historical’ (1986 p. 384). I am sure there are alternative interpretations of the data presented here, and my own interpretation is by no means intended to be the authoritative, or even the only interpretation. Despite this acknowledgement, my analysis of the thematic patterns which emerged from the research are essential to provide knowledge in an under researched area.

Crossing the four ethnographic chapters of this thesis in chapters five to eight, are three significant themes which have defined the experiences of the participants. I have found that themes of tradition, community, and Irishness are central to explain and explore Mormon identity in modern Ireland. The four ethnographic chapters are structured around Mormon life within the congregation, family, nation, and global faith, but throughout, these themes reoccur continually in the narratives of the interviewees, and in the church events I have experienced. Therefore, the themes of tradition, community and Irishness should be viewed as intersectional and cross cutting throughout these chapters, as they shape Irish Mormonism in complex and sometimes contradictory ways.

4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have reflected upon the benefits and challenges associated with ethnographic research and outlined the ethical issues and the measures taken to ensure ethical research. I have also articulated why I feel ethnography was the most appropriate methodological route to take for this research and its research questions. It allowed me to build relationships of trust with the members of both congregations. This trust led to the successful completion of thirty interviews, and encouraged participants to share personal and sensitive information with me which has ultimately enriched the quality of the research. I have been privileged to hear these stories, and to experience the trust which participants have placed in me and this research. Using ethnographic research methods opened up opportunities for me to observe the rhythms of everyday life in these congregations and the routine ways in which tradition, community, and Irishness are lived by Mormons in Ireland on a daily basis.

The ethnographic analysis begins with the following chapter which describes and explains Mormon religious life in Ireland within the congregation. This is essential for a full understanding of the other ethnographic chapters which follow it, as Mormonism within the congregation and outside the congregation is not experienced as two clearly defined and separate spheres. Rather, life outside of church affects the experience within church, and vice versa. By exploring what congregational life feels like for Mormons in Ireland, the following chapter will contribute to a deeper understanding of the subsequent ethnographic chapters which focus upon Mormonism and its relationship to Irish society, the family, and global Mormonism.

Reflecting the key themes present throughout the thesis of tradition, community, and Irishness, Chapter Five articulates how Mormon congregations in Ireland adapt aspects of a standardised Mormon congregational model to fit the circumstances of the Church in Ireland. They thereby disrupt Mormon tradition to better support the maintenance of a form of Mormonism suitable for the Irish context.

Chapter Five: Tradition and Adaption within Mormon Congregations in Ireland

5.1 Introduction

Chapters Two and Three have identified the importance and complexity of tradition in experiences of modern religion. This chapter demonstrates the extent of the adaption of Mormon tradition which local faith communities are capable of within their congregations in Ireland. This chapter also sets the scene for the subsequent ethnography chapters by providing an explanatory space in which key terms specific to Mormonism and relevant to the ethnography, are explained.

By firstly describing the organisation and leadership of the congregations, followed by the experience of Sunday meetings, and finally the nature of social events in church, I will provide insight into life as a Mormon in Ireland within the specific context of the congregation they belong to. The uniformity of the 'standard' Mormon congregational experience through Correlation has aided its expansion globally and has allowed the basic format of church life to be replicated in many different types of cultures. However, in this chapter I will demonstrate that these traditions must often be adapted to create a congregational life which is fit for purpose in the local areas in which it functions.

In the following section on the organisation of Mormon congregations in Ireland, I will explain the fundamentals of the hierarchical structures within Mormonism which organise congregational life.

5.2 Conforming to Mormon Structures: Branch Organisation

Within Mormonism, each local congregation is called a ‘branch’ or a ‘ward’ depending on size, with a branch being a smaller congregation than a ward. These congregations are part of a regional grouping of congregations for administrative purposes, which is referred to as a ‘stake’ or ‘district’, again dependant on size. A stake is larger than a district. Therefore, the Appleby branch forms part of a district which covers much of the south of the Republic of Ireland, whilst Sweetwater is part of the Dublin Stake, which covers much of the northern part of the Republic.

At branch level, several sub-organisations exist which segregate church activities according to age or gender. The Elder’s Quorum (referred to as ‘the priesthood’) is an all-male meeting of adult Priesthood holders, whilst Relief Society is a meeting of adult women in the Church. Both meet weekly, during a three-hour block of church meetings on Sundays from eleven am to two pm. The Relief Society might also have an additional social event during the week, and will occasionally join with the other Relief Societies in their Stake or District for a regional get-together. Children are separated into an organisation called Primary for young boys and girls up to age twelve, or Young Men and Young Women for children age twelve to eighteen. These core children’s activities also take place during the three-hour block on Sundays.

I have provided two tables below. The first summarises the Church meetings which take place on Sundays in the three-hour block, and the second provides a timetable of these meetings to clarify the scheduling of these meetings during my fieldwork, as some run concurrently.

Summary of Weekly Church Meetings

Table 1: Summary of Weekly Church Meetings

Name of Church Meeting	**Description of Church meeting**	**Included in Fieldwork**
Sacrament Meeting	The main Sunday service in which men, women and children participate together, partake of the sacrament, and renew covenants with God.	Yes, six months' attendance in each congregation.
Sunday School	A mixed gender, adult meeting to study scriptures.	Yes, six months' attendance in each congregation.
Gospel Principles	A mixed gender, adult meeting for newcomers who are learning about the Church and considering being baptised.	Yes, one to three weeks in each congregation. This meeting ran sporadically during fieldwork, depending on newcomer presence in church.
Youth Sunday School	A mixed gender meeting for children age twelve to eighteen to study scriptures.	No, as the research was limited to adults only.
Relief Society Meeting	A women only meeting based around a weekly topic. Discussion and activity based.	Yes, three months' attendance in each congregation.
Priesthood Meeting	A men only meeting based around a weekly topic. Discussion and activity based.	Yes, three months' attendance in each congregation.
Young Men's Meeting	A meeting for boys age twelve to eighteen to prepare them for the priesthood and their role as adult men in the Church.	No, as the research was limited to adults only.
Young Women's Meeting	A meeting for girls age twelve to eighteen to learn about what is expected of them as adult women.	No, as the research was limited to adults only.
Primary	Allows children under twelve to learn the key doctrines of the Church.	No, as the research was limited to adults only.

Timetable of Sunday Meetings

Table 2: Timetable of Sunday Meetings

11am	**Sacrament Meeting** *[adults and children]*				
12pm	**Sunday School** *[all adult members]*	**Gospel Principles** *[adult men and women considering conversion to the Church]*	**Primary** *[children less than twelve years]*	**Youth Sunday School** *[girls and boys twelve to eighteen years]*	
1pm	**Priesthood Meeting** *[adult men]*	**Relief Society Meeting** *[adult women]*	**Young Women** *[girls twelve to eighteen years]*	**Young Men** *[boys twelve to eighteen years]*	**Primary** *[children less than twelve years]*

For the six months of fieldwork in each congregation, I attended the Sacrament Meeting for the duration, and spent three months in each congregation in the Relief Society meeting and the Priesthood meeting, respectively. These meetings ran at the same time, and were divided by gender. Therefore, by spending three months in each meeting in both congregations, an equal time spent gathering data in each was achieved.

As you can see in Table 2 above, the Sunday School and Gospel Principles meeting also ran concurrently. However, in both congregations, and particularly in Sweetwater due to a lack of interested newcomers (whom members refer to as ‘investigators’), the Gospel Principles meeting would often not run. For this reason, I attended three Gospel Principles meetings in Appleby before switching to attending the Sunday School meeting. In Sweetwater I attended one Gospel Principles meeting, and in lieu thereafter attended Sunday School. I did not attend any of the children's meetings listed above, as my research was limited to research with adults.

Each of these organisations in the branch has its own leadership known as a presidency. The presidency consists of the organisation's president and their two counsellors. Each branch and the organisations within it, are overseen by the Branch Presidency, which incorporates the Branch President and his First and Second Counsellors. Some participants of this research who were used to attending church in larger congregations called wards, were prone to refer to the Branch President as a 'Bishop'. This is the title of the equivalent role in wards rather than branches. Only open to male members for reasons that will be explained below, the Branch President (or 'Bishop') is normally called for a term of approximately seven years, although he may be released by his stake or district superiors sooner or later than this period. The Branch President prays for revelation from God regarding his choice of counsellors, and so the Branch Presidency is formed. Below, I have provided a figure which outlines the hierarchy of leadership within the branch.

Hierarchy of Branch Leadership

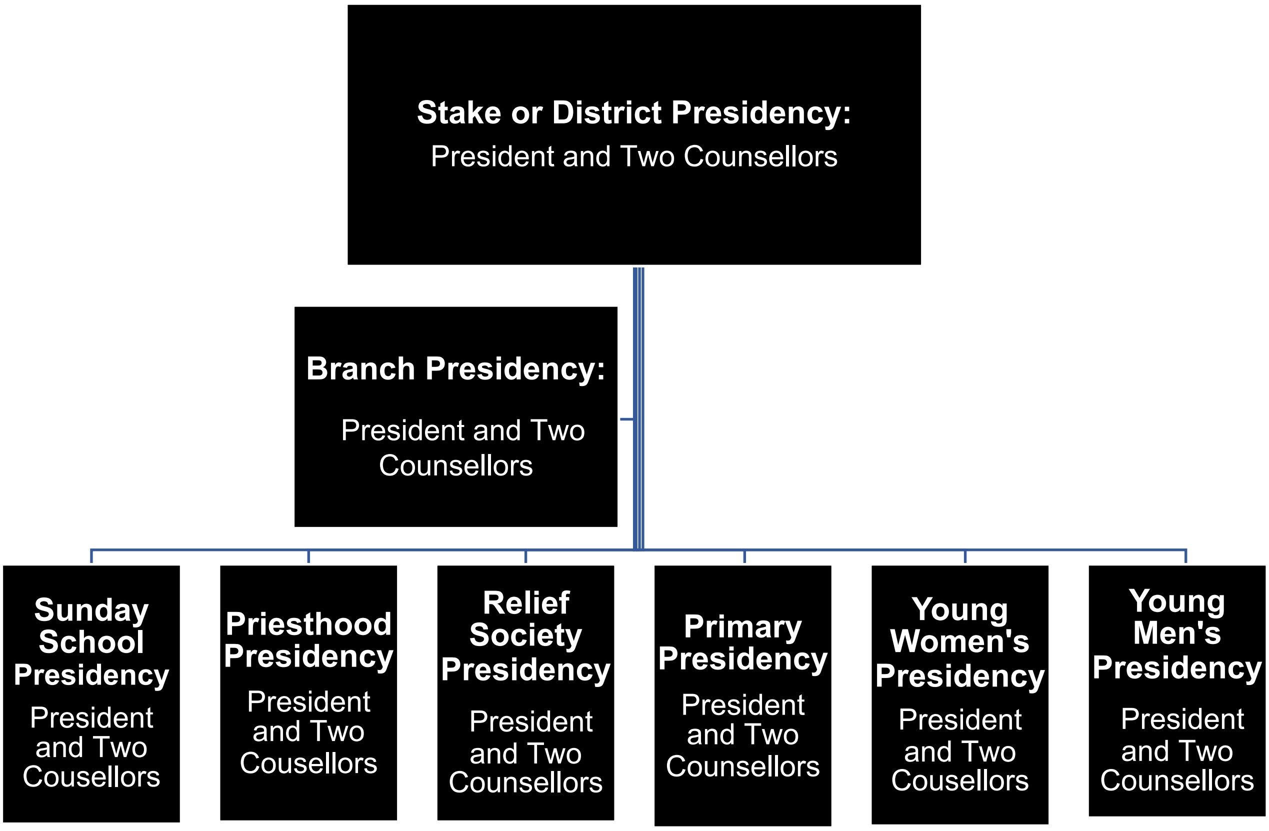
Stake or District Presidency:
President and Two Counsellors
Branch Presidency:
President and Two Counsellors
Sunday School Presidency
President and Two Cousellors
Priesthood Presidency
President and Two Cousellors
Relief Society Presidency
President and Two Counsellors
Primary Presidency
President and Two Counsellors
Young Women's Presidency
President and Two Cousellors
Young Men's Presidency
President and Two Counsellors

Figure 2: Hierarchy of Branch Leadership

Together, the Branch Presidency make key decisions on behalf of the congregation, schedule events, manage the church building, manage the budget, allocate ‘callings’ (voluntary roles in the branch), conduct and preside over Sunday meetings, liaise with auxiliary organisation leaders such as Relief Society President and Primary President, and liaise with regional leadership such as the Stake and District Presidency. In addition, the Branch President is also responsible for assisting members with personal and financial problems, and is in general a listening ear and support for all members of the congregation. All these tasks and others, are completed on a voluntary basis with no payment. These are well known functions of a Branch President, clearly articulated in handbooks issued by the Church to assist in local organisation and leadership (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2011a).

The section below moves to discuss the nature of leadership roles within the congregation and emphasises that leadership is a contested concept at a local level within Mormonism. I also discuss the place of gender in Mormon leadership, noting the variety of opinion amongst the participants regarding the position of women within the Church. This will demonstrate how Mormon traditions thought to be universal, such as a conservative outlook on gender roles, are variously negotiated within Mormon congregations in Ireland.

5.3 Confronting Conceptions of Leadership

Mormonism is a hierarchical faith in which the Branch President is usually accepted and respected as the leader of the congregation. Although some of the decision making is communal because the Branch President may consult his counsellors for advice and support, ultimately the final decisions regarding the congregation rest with him. Seán from Appleby is an Irish convert to Mormonism in his seventies who has previously served as a Branch President and on the District Presidency. He explains that 'the Branch President has the final say. He is literally the representative of Jesus Christ locally. If you disobey, you're telling Jesus to take a hike'. Jason, an Irish convert in his forties who is the current Branch President of Appleby, readily acknowledges that the system of leadership in the Church is quite hierarchical, but points out that the power that comes with leadership should be attached the leadership role itself, and not the individual person who holds that role. He says 'it is quite hierarchical. You know like in the army, if you are the lower rank you salute the higher rank. You not saluting the person, you are saluting the rank’.

During my time in Appleby and Sweetwater, I quickly noticed that the Branch President would often be absent from all or part of Sunday meetings once the Sacrament Meeting had concluded. I soon realised that these absences were due to the sheer number of meetings the Branch President would hold before and after the main meeting of Sacrament Meeting on a Sunday. The time-consuming nature of the role and the stresses it can bring can be seen from my interview with Jason, which took place in an empty classroom in a quiet part of the building in my place of work, AIT. Jason suggested meeting me in my building as he was already scheduled to be in Appleby that day. Additionally, Jason attended AIT for his undergraduate degree in the same department in which I now work, but before I was employed there. I suspect that his familiarity with the campus and building may also have been part of his motivation for choosing it as our interview location.

On being Branch President, he said:

> You only see the tip of the iceberg, but I am sitting in the office on a Sunday, and somebody could come in and drop a bombshell on me. Something terrible has happened to them, they have been diagnosed with a life-threatening disease or their marriage is falling apart, and it’s my responsibility to give them good counsel as best I can and to seek the Spirit and guide them.

Given this centrality of his role to the congregants, the Branch President can make or break the spirit and functioning of the branch.

Stephanie's explanation of leadership in Appleby demonstrates this idea. She is an Irish Mormon in her twenties; her parents converted to the Church in their younger years. She was Relief Society President in Appleby during my fieldwork, which gave her responsibility for overseeing the women only Relief Society. For our interview, we went to a small Italian restaurant in the centre of Appleby on a rainy winter's night midweek. We had a pleasant evening of good food and conversation, whilst my recorder recorded us unobtrusively from one corner of the table. Over dessert she told me:

> If you have a strong - Jason is a great Branch President- so good. Previous to that we had another two who weren't that great and you could feel the branch kind of dwindle…Jason is such a get-go person… he is really motivational… Because we had a Branch President before, and he was an older guy so he kind of wasn't good at the computer stuff, and you would ask him for things that he would be all like 'what are you talking about'? Things like that when you look back at that, you think well that wasn't great. And this is fantastic.

In contrast to Jason in Appleby, in Sweetwater some members were disappointed at the performance of the Branch President who was in place during the time of my fieldwork. He has since been released from the role after about five years of service. His most strident critics were some of the Irish members of the congregation; particularly a strong willed, vocal woman named

Suzanne, her mother Mavis, her South American husband Michael, and some of her Irish friends. I heard criticism about the Branch President from others also, such as an American named Mandy and South American Maria. Unhappiness with the Branch President was therefore not solely experienced amongst the Irish. However, their complaints to me about the Branch President were less forthright than those of the Irish group which suggested to me that the Irish members were opposed to something significant regarding their understanding of how the Branch President performed his role.

The criticisms from the Irish were wide ranging- they claimed he was too traditional in his attitudes to women, he didn't make enough effort to support social activities in the branch, he was biased towards the American members, and he was overly concerned with his home country in Southeast Asia and not enough with Ireland. The vocal nature of the Irish group's complaints meant that it was commonly known in Sweetwater that some members were deeply unhappy with their Branch President, leading to poor relationships between some members. The Southeast Asian members tended to sit and socialise together in church and social events, leading to obvious divisions along ethnic and national lines.

Additionally, it brought about disputes in church which were ostensibly about other issues, but appeared to me to be rooted in this particular issue. Suzanne and her friends enjoyed what they told me was a better social life in church under the leadership of the previous Branch President. Suzanne told me that the response of the Branch President to these complaints was to point out the small space available in the building and the poor kitchen facilities, which he said made social events in church difficult. I agree with the Branch President that the Sweetwater building was not ideal for large events. The building was mainly dominated by just one room-the chapel space, which was then subdivided into smaller rooms when needed by the use of folding partition walls. The kitchen consisted of little more than a sink and some kitchen cupboards at the back of the chapel space. Conflicts therefore arose between members about what was achievable within the constraints of the building's cramped facilities.

Behind these disputes about facilities however, lay another issue. Over dinner one evening in her apartment with her mother Mavis and husband Michael, Suzanne told me that they believed the true reason for the lack of social events in church was that the new Branch President was not as committed to holding parties and other social events in church as the previous Branch President. Therefore ultimately, conflicts about facilities were not really about facilities at all, but about the nature of leadership. The validity of the criticisms of the Irish group does not concern me, so much as what these concerns represent. In her studies of congregational cultures, Edgell (1999) argues that congregational leaders can reaffirm the current path of the group or shift the congregation onto a new path for the future. In Sweetwater, I suspect this is the true cause of the concerns with the Branch President. Suzanne and Mavis agreed that the current President is being compared to the previous leader. Suzanne tells me:

> You would have had that before [a 'good' branch president] so you've had that with other priesthood and other bishops, you felt it, and all of a sudden it's not there anymore and it's like, I miss that.

Suzanne's explanation demonstrates that the current Branch President has changed the path of the congregation in a way which causes concern amongst some segments of that congregation.

As a Southeast Asian, the Branch President was racially marked as different from the mainly white Irish group encompassing Suzanne and her family and friends. It is possible that the Branch President's visible difference made his distinction from the previous white President more acute, and aided perceptions that he was also culturally different from the mainly white Irish group. Evidence of this comes from Suzanne's husband, South American Michael. He cites the cultural background of the Branch President and his wife and another couple from the same country in his justification for his dislike of the Branch President:

> Maybe he has a problem with his own culture, because I remember he always talks about [his home country]. He never stopped talking about [his home country] and for him, his wife has to always be very patient. Say like, when you are in the airport and you are going through security [at the time of this interview they recently had travelled together for a branch trip to visit the temple in the UK]. He's standing there with his arms crossed, and she is using all the bags and getting the buggy put through, and he is just standing there, you know what I mean? And that is just his culture. The other couple- I went to do something for Suzanne at about six in the morning, and she was almost finished doing the breakfast for her husband and I said, 'is that for you?' and she said 'no, it for him, he likes to have breakfast at six thirty!'.

Michael appears to be suggesting that the Branch president's cultural background is the explanation for his dislike of him. It is interesting that South American Michael, as a fellow immigrant to Ireland, is so forthright in his articulation of these cultural differences.

However, getting to know Michael over the course of my time in Sweetwater, I came to understand that an embrace of Irishness and Irish culture more generally, was very important to Michael. On St. Patricks Day, Ireland's national holiday, Michael arrived at the branch party dressed head to toe in a green suit and a leprechaun tie. He and Suzanne were also big fans of traditional Irish music and they travelled all over Ireland to follow one well-known traditional Irish band, the Merry Ploughboys, at their live appearances. He frequently mentioned his love of Ireland in casual conversations with me. Michael appears to have fully embraced a particular form of Irishness, and it shapes his understandings of who he is as a non-Irish person in Ireland.

Michael's reference to the Branch President's 'problem with his own culture' is about the extent to which Michael feels the Branch President has or has not embraced Irish culture. Michael says, 'he always talks about [his home country]. He never stopped talking about [his home country]'. It does seem that the ethnic and national diversity of the Sweetwater branch has negatively affected the cohesiveness of the congregational community. Suzanne says of the branch; 'because it's kind of international you don't always have that kind of unity'. It seems the difficulties of the Sweetwater Branch President is emblematic of the challenges inherent in maintaining tradition and building community in a diverse congregation.

Additionally, I feel that Suzanne and those who are unhappy with their Branch President also hold a very particular conception of leadership. Suzanne and her mother Mavis told me they see the role of Branch President as someone who 'listens' and 'cares'; someone who supports the personal and collective wellbeing of the congregation. This comes into conflict with other Sweetwater members such as David from South America, who argues in relation to leadership that 'the Church is not a democracy; it is a theocracy. So, whatever happens, it is not by popular vote. It comes from above'. Yet, as the head of the congregation and Christ's representative locally, the attitude and behaviour of the Branch President becomes a communal concern; he does not simply lead the congregation, he represents them. The differences of opinion represented here by Suzanne, Mavis, and David regarding what makes a good leader illustrates that the role of the Branch President can become a contested symbol of congregational identity.

Diversity regarding conceptions of leadership is also evidenced in the variety of opinion on the role of women in Church leadership. which grants them a sacred power known as 'priesthood authority' or 'priesthood power'. This sacred power allows men who hold the priesthood to conduct blessings for new babies, baptisms for young children who are not baptised into the Church until age eight, and allows them to offer a blessing for any member who might request one. They can conduct the sacred Sacrament ceremony which takes place each Sunday, and hold most of the key positions of responsibility within the branch. hold most of the key positions of responsibility within the branch.

The concept of ‘priesthood authority’ or ‘priesthood power’ goes to the heart of Mormon doctrine. The Church’s position on the relationship between priesthood power and gender has been articulated by Dallin H. Oaks who is a member of the Quorum of the Twelve; a group of the most senior leaders in the Church, based in Utah. In a talk during the Church’s bi-annual General Conference held in Utah and streamed worldwide, he explained:

> Priesthood authority functions in both the family and the Church. The priesthood is the power of God used to bless all of His children, male and female. Some of our abbreviated expressions, like “the women and the priesthood,” convey an erroneous idea. Men are not “the priesthood.” Priesthood meeting is a meeting of those who hold and exercise the priesthood (Oaks, 2005).

The Church argues therefore, that it is not men who are powerful, but the priesthood, which works through male members. Whilst these distinctions might be made, the reality is that it is only men who can ‘hold’ this special power, and so there is a significant symbolic difference between the genders on the basis of the ability to hold priesthood power.

Additionally, there are practical ramifications leading out of this distinction which affect how men and women experience leadership at a local level. For example, the Church’s hierarchical system is designed so that top leadership positions are priesthood positions. Therefore, key roles are out of bounds for women, even at branch level. Female members are aware that leadership in church is skewed towards the men. Not long after I began fieldwork in the Appleby branch, I was talking to members in the chapel in-between meetings one Sunday, when Mary Daly, an Irish convert in her sixties, told me that I should try to sit in on the Priesthood meeting despite it being male-only because 'the men run the Church you know'. When I told her that the Branch President had already approved my access to this meeting she was pleased, telling me ‘that’s good’.

When I have discussed gender and leadership with female members, many like to point out that women do hold leadership positions both within the branch and at the higher levels. For instance, Stephanie in Appleby reminded me that women hold Auxiliary organisation positions such as Relief Society are leadership roles looking after groups of other women and children. Women never hold leadership positions overseeing men, yet men hold leadership positions over women.

This is problematic for some women I spoke with, such as Mandy from Sweetwater who is an American convert in her forties, living in Ireland for the previous year. She says:

> I think that definitely women should have a bigger say in the Church. Like, I see no reason why a Sunday School President can’t be a woman. Like, there is no rhyme or reason for stuff like that. You know, I dunno, I just feel like that sometimes in the Church they tend to put these women on a pedestal, as wives and mothers. They say, ‘you’re so great, we’re just so not worthy of you’ but I just feel like that is patting them on the head, patting *us* on the head saying ‘you stay there’ you know? ...I would

> appreciate more visibility of women leaders in the Church…and having more influence in the way wards and branches and stakes are run.

In Appleby however, it is interesting to see how an atmosphere of gender equality can still be fostered in spite of these bureaucratic and doctrinal gender distinctions. Stephanie the Appleby Relief Society President, told me about her discussion with Jason after she had been given this role of responsibility:

> This is the way Jason said it to me, he said 'there is a Branch President and his counsellors and then there is the Relief Society President and hers'. He said, 'I would never do anything to your organisation without your say-so, that is totally yours'.

Stephanie's anecdote shows that the attitude of the Branch President regarding gender influences how the women of the branch feel about their place in the congregation. In Stephanie's case, she feels equal to the men in the congregation because of the example Jason provides to all members.

Stephanie and Mandy's diverging opinions on the position of women in the Church is not unusual. I encountered a variety of opinions on this issue in both branches, showing that despite clear doctrine and church guidance on the role of women, this is regularly negotiated and even disputed at a local level, thereby confirming the presence of 'local creativity' within a heavily standardised Church (Ammerman, 1998, p. 79).

These diverse experiences and opinions on gender also illustrate that maintaining the Mormon tradition of conservative roles for men and women may be more difficult in the modern global Church. Despite clear hierarchal structures built upon gender and which inform the structures of the branch, local experiences can both disrupt or maintain this, sometimes simultaneously. In Stephanie's case her role as Relief Society President is still below the Branch President in the hierarchy of the Church, thus maintaining the Mormon tradition of female subservience. Yet, her lived experiences contradict this, as she told me she feels 'equal' in church.

Perhaps Stephanie was simply presenting me with an ideal of gender equality for the purposes of the research, or perhaps she wanted to present the Church and her branch in a positive light. Yet, during my time in Appleby I often saw male leaders challenged by female members. These instances occurred frequently during discussions on doctrine in Sunday School. I also witnessed female members strongly challenge branch and district leaders regarding decisions to be taken for the future development of the branch, in a formal meeting. It seems then, that Stephanie's protestations of equality could not simply have been for my benefit as 'researcher'. In evaluating these contradictory experiences of gender at a local level, I suggest that Mormon tradition on gender is both maintained and ruptured at a local level in Irish branches.

A key way that members serve each other and assist in the organisation of the branch is through carrying out their 'callings', the voluntary work in the branch which they are personally called from God to carry out. Callings are allocated from branch leadership through a process of personal revelation from God. The Branch Presidency prays to God, who is mostly referred to by members as ‘Heavenly Father’, for assistance in deciding which member is the most appropriate person for that calling at that time. The most appropriate person may not always be the most experienced or best qualified. Rather, revelation from Heavenly Father means that those who are ‘called’ to a role may also be those who are in need of a purpose, or those who are struggling in their personal lives.

All positions in the Church at a local level are unpaid and voluntary. Callings such as the Branch President and his counsellors are leadership roles. Oher callings could be as a Teacher; to teach classes such as Sunday School, as a Chorister; to assist with music, as a Branch Clerk; to manage administrative tasks such as processing tithes and donations and tracking attendance, or many other necessary roles. The nature of callings is that:

> Every Mormon is the preacher, teacher, exegete, and definer of meaning before an audience of peers, who at a moment or a month later may switch positions with him’ (Leone, 1979, p. 168).

This is because once called, an individual may be ‘released’ from that calling at any time.

In the mainly white Irish and well-established Appleby branch, the process of allocating callings is fairly well managed, and causes no significant effects on the atmosphere of the branch. Appleby has less ethnic and national diversity than Sweetwater, but at the time of my fieldwork two men who were not white or

Irish held the Sunday School President calling, one after the other. This demonstrates that efforts were in place to ensure not all leadership roles were held by the majority white Irish members. However, in the diverse Sweetwater branch, the allocation of callings is a divisive issue and relates to much branch conflict. One ongoing dispute relates to allegations from Suzanne and her family and friends, that branch leaders are not truly praying to Heavenly Father for revelation and inspiration about which member should be called to roles. They allege that instead; personal alliances infiltrate the process of calling members.

Suzanne and her husband Michael strongly believe this to be the case. When I ask her if the Branch President is inadvertently placing people into callings who reflect his own worldview she says:

> He loves Americans, like that is a fact. Any American who comes to the branch gets a calling immediately…and it's not about bitterness, it's not that I need to be in a calling, no, no, no. Lots of responsibility and you don't always want that… You have to be careful, *they* have to be careful, when they are in that role, to think 'are we really praying about everybody here and going with who we feel?', not like 'well we think that they should do the calling because they've been years in the Church, because they are American, and they know a lot of stuff'. It doesn't work that way. It *shouldn't* work that way.

These types of disputes are further complicated in Sweetwater by its increasing diversity. In Sweetwater, the majority of members are now not Irish born, and a significant minority are also not white. This diversity is a change for Sweetwater;

Mavis told me that Sweetwater branch and its closest neighbouring branch were majority white Irish until relatively recently. I have a sense that the Irish members of the branch such as Suzanne and Mavis feel marginalised as a minority in a now diverse congregation. These are points which will be discussed further in following chapters.

At its heart however, I contend that these kinds of conflicts reflect a lack of agreement within the congregation about ‘who we are’ and ‘what we do here’ (Edgell, 1999, p. 3) in the face of rapid social change both inside and outside of the congregation. As discussed in Chapter Two, the nature of religion in Ireland and of Irish society more generally, are changing rapidly. The congregational conflict in diverse Sweetwater is therefore emblematic of life outside the congregation, where old traditions are being cast off or adapted, and new ones created. As Ammerman (1988) reminds us ‘congregations are also, of course, shaped by the larger secular culture in which they are located’ (Ammerman, 1998, p. 78).

Finally, some small explanatory points to note regarding the role of missionaries and the use of titles in the branch. Men and women in church tend to formally refer to each other by ‘Brother’ for men, and ‘Sister’ for women, such as Brother Murphy and Sister Murphy. However, these titles are often abandoned in casual conversation in favour of the person’s first name. If a person holds a calling of responsibility, they are often referred to by the title of that calling. For example, Jason Byrne is Appleby’s Branch President, and so is often referred to as President Byrne.

Missionaries are men and women between eighteen to twenty-five years, who serve a mission of up to two years for the Church in a particular mission area such as the Scotland-Ireland Mission, the Church missionary jurisdiction which Ireland falls under. Their role is to proselytise on the streets each day and to ‘teach’ interested individuals known as ‘investigators’ a basic version of church doctrine, and to introduce them to church life by accompanying them to meetings if they choose. Missionaries are normally allocated a branch or ward for a period of about three to four months, before being ‘called’ to another branch or ward in the jurisdiction of their posting.

The number of missionaries posted to each branch or ward depends on the size of the congregation. In Appleby during my fieldwork, there were four missionaries, plus a ‘senior couple’ who had chosen in their retirement years to spend a year in Ireland on a mission. Sweetwater had two missionaries during most of my fieldwork and towards the end, had none. Male missionaries are referred to as ‘Elder’ during their time on the mission, whilst female missionaries are referred to as ‘Sister’. Their first names are never used whilst on their mission, in recognition of their special role.

In the following section I describe weekly Sunday meetings, where all ‘active’ Mormons (those who regularly attend church) participate for three hours. Describing in detail the most sacred of these meetings; Sacrament meeting, and outlining the experience of other meetings which follow from this, this section will demonstrate the commonalities and differences between the two congregations of this study. Particularly, I will highlight the specific ways in which each congregation adapts the standard Mormon experience to better suit their own circumstances

5.4 Sunday Meetings: Adapting Tradition in the Irish Branch

Church meetings are held on Sundays and usually take place from approximately eleven am to two pm. The centrepiece of this three-hour block is the time from approximately eleven a.m. to after twelve p.m. in the chapel, where the Sacrament meeting takes place for just over an hour. In this meeting, the members take the Sacrament of bread and water, and renew their covenants with God. The chapel space in both branches is sparse and plain, as is the norm in Mormon chapels. This is due to the nature of Mormon church buildings, which are ideally used as 'cultural centres' as well as religious spaces. Anna from Sweetwater, an Irish convert in her forties explained to me one day whilst sitting at her kitchen table:

> Church is just church. You can have church anywhere; you have church in the middle of the garden [she points out the window to her own back garden]. That's why it wouldn't have to be ornate. It's not that nothing ever really important happens there- I know we partake of the Sacrament, but again, you can do that anywhere.

This attitude towards church spaces means that the chapel area in both branches is rather prosaic.

In Appleby, green plastic chairs are arranged in rows facing the front of the room, where the altar would be in most Christian worship. In Sweetwater, the chairs are a drab blue and grey, and fold up for easy storage. This is useful given the tiny spaces in which the meetings take place in Sweetwater. I spent a lot of time during my fieldwork there adjusting the layout of chairs on Sundays; rearranging them from long rows for Sacrament Meeting, into short rows for Sunday School, and then into circles for Relief Society and Priesthood Meetings, before finally folding and stacking them against the wall when the three-hour block was complete. In the chapel of both branches instead of an altar, there is a lectern with a microphone. Both branches suffer with faulty microphones that cause equal amounts of frustration and humour amongst the congregations.

Behind the lectern there is a row of chairs that look out towards the congregation. It is here that the Branch President and his two counsellors will sit throughout the Sacrament Meeting. I have seen more elaborate seating in another larger ward which I visited for a Church event. This ward had imposing wooden seating on a raised platform for their leaders. However, in both congregations in this study, the physical separation between the leadership and the rest of the congregation is much less pronounced. As I haven't attended Sunday meetings in larger 'wards', I can't say if the more imposing seating arrangements for the congregation's leadership there is reflective of their interactions with the congregants. However, I can confirm that whilst the leadership in Appleby and Sweetwater are treated respectfully by referring to them by their title (President Byrne etc.), there is little in the way of outright deference in members' ordinary casual interactions with them.

The industrial unit used by the Appleby congregation for their church building means that the only windows in the chapel area are small, and look out onto a badly managed concrete space. In Sweetwater, the very small functional space is counterbalanced by a large window at the front of the chapel which lets light pour in and provides a beautiful view of a lovely tree right outside the building. In both branches, there is a keyboard on one side of the room, and on the other, a small table covered in a white cloth which is known as the Sacrament table. From direct observation and discussion, I have realised that outside of the Sacrament meeting this table holds no sacredness, and is used as a regular table in all other instances.

The structure of a typical Sacrament meeting is as follows. We are welcomed by whichever member of the Branch Presidency is conducting the meeting, followed by an opening hymn for which the congregation remain seated, as they do throughout. A typical opening hymn would be '*Welcome, Welcome, Sabbath Morning'* (Baird and Beesley, no date), an upbeat cheerful song which myself and other members enjoyed. As someone who enjoys singing, I always appreciated the hymns in church, and made sure to have a hymn book to hand so that I could sing along. Over time, I came to know some hymns off by heart including my favourite hymn due to its happy melody, *'Put Your Shoulder to The Wheel'* (Thompson, no date). This hymn was sung regularly in Appleby but never in Sweetwater.

After the opening hymn, there is then an opening prayer given by a member of the congregation. Those who give prayers may be male, female, child or adult. Child-led prayers are less common in Sacrament meeting, and if this does happen, it is generally a teenager rather than a younger child. This is followed by any branch, stake, or district business, which often involves someone being called to a new position or being released from an old one. This process involves each member of the congregation being asked to raise their hands to ‘sustain’ the individual in their new calling, or to give a sign of thanks for their work in the event of a release. I have never witnessed any congregational opposition to someone being called to a position but have heard of rare instances where this does occur, usually due to interpersonal differences. In such cases, discussions will be had privately with the Branch Presidency after the meeting to try to resolve the cause of the dispute.

The branch business is followed by the Sacrament hymn, during which the two priesthood holders responsible for the Sacrament on that day, break apart the Sacrament bread into bite size pieces and place it into plastic trays. Communion wafers are never used, relying instead on ordinary sliced bread which is brought to church each Sunday morning. The Sacrament begins with one priesthood holder blessing the bread, after which it is distributed amongst the congregation. This is then followed by the blessing and distribution of the Sacrament water which is managed by using plastic trays which hold miniature individual plastic cups of water. There is little textual basis for belief within Mormonism; the only prayers which are based on canonical scripture are the Sacrament prayers to bless the Sacrament bread and water, a ritual completed each Sunday in Mormonism’s Sacrament meeting.

The administration of the Sacrament reflects the hierarchical nature of the Church. Upon the conclusion of the prayers over the bread[3] and water[4], the individual who has completed the prayer looks to the Branch President to get his approval to continue by a nod of his head, before passing the bread and water to the other priesthood holders to distribute. If the recital of the Sacrament prayers is not entirely accurate, the process must start over. I witnessed this occur on only one occasion during my fieldwork. The priesthood holder responsible for the blessing of the bread stumbled over his words, and struggled to regain his composure, At the end of the prayer, he looked to the Branch President who very subtly shook his head, and at that gesture, the blessing of the bread began all over again.

Such need for accuracy in the recitation of these two prayers are also an indication of their symbolic significance for the faith. As the only two canonical prayers within Mormonism, they provide an opportunity to reaffirm the chain of belief within Mormonism, on each occasion that they are recited. They allow the priesthood holder and all who witness his blessing, to insert themselves into a legitimised collective memory, which sustains the community.

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[3] The prayer over the bread is as follows; ‘O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it, that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them; that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen’ (Doctrine and Covenants 20: 77 and Moroni 4).

4 The prayer over the water is as follows; ‘O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this water to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen’ (Doctrine and Covenants 20: 79 and Moroni 5).

After these blessings, the Sacrament trays are then passed throughout the congregation. In the Sacrament meeting there is no wine, as alcohol is advised against under Church doctrine.

In Sweetwater, there are enough youth in the branch to ensure that two teenage boys are responsible for distributing the Sacrament amongst the congregation, as is usually the case during a standard Sacrament Meeting. This phenomenon is explained by Justin Bray who explains that ‘worthy young men are ordained to the office of Deacon in the Aaronic Priesthood at age twelve and are commissioned to pass the bread and water each Sunday in LDS congregations’ (Bray, 2013, p. 63). However, in Appleby, there were no young men of a suitable age in the congregation to do this job during the time of my fieldwork, and so two adult priesthood holders would complete this task.

Everyone, including children and non-members, may take the Sacrament, unless for some reason they feel that they should not do so. Jason in Appleby explained the basics of the Sacrament meeting to me before I began my fieldwork and told me that I could take the Sacrament if I wished, it was up to each individual. I decided to partake of the Sacrament in both congregations despite being atheist. I reasoned with myself that as I was involved in participant observation, I should aim to participate in church life wherever possible, and I understood that partaking of the Sacrament is an important spiritual moment for Mormons, which made it important that I experience it directly. Additionally, I felt it important to show other members that I was actively involved in church. Nonetheless, I worried over the ethics of participation regarding such activity. In many ways I felt a fraud for engaging in a sacred ritual in which I did not believe. It is not true to say that I didn’t find such participation meaningful. To the contrary although I may have taken no spiritual meaning from my participation, I still always found meaning in my role in that moment, in my place in the congregation, and in their acceptance of my unusual position, In these moments I felt a part of a communal experience and felt an odd sort of belonging despite the nature of my place in the congregation being somewhat unusual.

Upon the conclusion of the Sacrament in Sacrament Meeting, the time is handed over to three speakers, male or female, who have been asked in advance to speak on a prepared topic. I have noticed that the allocation of ‘speakers’ to ‘talks’ can often be pragmatic. For instance, Jessica in Sweetwater is a devout and involved member of the branch. She was leaving Ireland for a month with her four children. On the Sunday before she left, she and her teenage son were both asked to speak and her family also played music and sang later in the same meeting. In smaller branches such as Sweetwater, this pragmatism is necessary, as the pool of available and willing speakers who have not been asked to speak in the recent past, may be small.

Giving talks is a central part of the ordinary Mormon experience (Shipps, 2006; Cannell, 2013). For new members, their ‘first talk’ can be a watershed moment, the point at which they realise that they have been recognised as a true member. In Appleby, a new convert I have named Ruby was open in expressing her nerves when she got up to give her first talk on the topic of ‘Following Christ’ during Sacrament meeting early in my fieldwork. Ruby says:

> I was having a panic attack during the week thinking about speaking, and wanted to make up some excuse that I was sick so that I wouldn't have to do it, but I realise that this is what I have to do, that there is a reason that I was asked to do it.

For many, listening to and giving talks is a way to support each other in their faith. John Murphy in Appleby, a member of the District Presidency, observes that ‘what the speakers do is uplift us and send us home with a better spirit'. Typical talks by members would be on topics such as the temple, eternal families, developing a testimony, or the atonement.

On the first Sunday of each month, the usual Sacrament meeting with three speakers is set aside in favour of what is called a ‘Fast and Testimony’ meeting. Members are encouraged to fast for two meals of the day and to donate the money they have saved on food to the Church as a ‘fast offering’. During the Sacrament meeting, instead of the usual three speakers, all members can approach the lectern and to ‘bear their testimony’; to share with the congregation why they know the Church is true and to share their belief in Jesus Christ. In Appleby, there would usually be an intermediate hymn in between talks, but this is less common in Sweetwater. Likewise, Sweetwater often provides a musical item from the children during Sacrament Meeting, whereas I have never witnessed this in Appleby. To close the Sacrament meeting, the three talks are followed by a closing hymn and prayer.

Church tradition is a key part of the Sacrament experience, as evidenced by the routine deference shown to the Branch President after the Sacrament has been blessed and before its distribution to the congregation, and in the very precise reading of the bread and water prayers which must be adhered to minutely. Yet, it appears that each branch is also capable of creating its own traditions. Sweetwater has a clear tradition of incorporating the participation of the younger children into the Sacrament meeting by offering frequent musical interludes from the children in Primary. Similarly, the lack of youth in Appleby necessitates that the tradition of young men distributing the Sacrament is abandoned. This delicate balance between tradition and change, adaption and continuity, means that it is possible to argue that the Sacrament meetings in the two branches of this study are simultaneously both very similar, and different. They are both maintaining and adapting existing tradition.

Following the Sacrament Meeting, several other meetings run concurrently for the time remaining. Firstly, all adults not supervising the children in Primary attend Sunday School where the Bible and Book of Mormon are studied. Then, the final hour of the day segregates the congregation by age and gender. Children remain in Primary, youth attend Young Women and Young Men, women attend Relief Society, and men attend the Elder's Quorum meeting, which is usually referred to in Sweetwater and Appleby as 'the Priesthood meeting'. For all my time with the congregations under study, I spent the final two hours attending the Sunday School class, followed by either the Relief Society meeting or the Priesthood meeting. In both congregations, I spent three months in Relief Society, followed by three months in Priesthood meetings, to ensure I experienced both meetings in both congregations equally.

In attending Relief Society and Priesthood meetings, which are separated by gender, I found little significant differences in content and teaching style along gender lines in these meetings. I found that the men were quite open in their Priesthood meeting, providing personal examples from their lives to demonstrate a point they were making, just as the women regularly did. I did find that in both congregations, women were more likely to cry than men; in the telling of a personal story, or in the hearing of someone else's. However, I have also observed men crying in church on multiple occasions. This is usually when giving talks to the congregation during Sacrament meeting, and often when speaking about their families, or their testimony of Jesus Christ.

There were gender differences in the physical use of space in Relief Society Meetings and Priesthood meetings. In Appleby the Priesthood meeting took place in the chapel, and the men sat with the chairs facing the front of the room in rows, as they had been laid out for previous meetings. This created a less intimate atmosphere than was evident in the Relief Society meeting, where the small room's chairs were arranged into more of a circle arrangement. However, the chapel was seen as the more 'important' room in the building, and the women in Relief Society did occasionally grumble that they were allocated such a small room by comparison. In Sweetwater, the Relief Society also used a circular arrangement of chairs, but the Priesthood meeting was held in such a small space that the chairs were arranged against the four walls in a vaguely circular fashion as any rearranging was almost impossible without large disruption. Therefore, there were some differences between the gendered meetings, but these were not sufficient to create drastically differing experiences, and these were heavily dictated by space.

In evaluating the effect of the Church policy of Correlation on the local congregations, I found that it was individual personalities which most affected the diversity of teaching and learning that I experienced. Some teachers lecture the class in a traditional manner, whilst others use the method of facilitation that is so heavily encouraged by the Church as a teaching tool in recent years (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016). In short, despite a standardisation of lesson material in these meetings, lessons still mainly vary depending on who is teaching, what topics are being taught, and who is participating in the lesson.

In the section below, I explain the unique challenges facing each branch in the development of the social life of the congregations. Clear differences between the social life of American and Irish congregations are apparent, affected by structural and cultural differences between the Church in Ireland and the US. Like Sunday meetings, each congregation has also developed their own distinct social events which work best for them given the circumstances of their congregation, which results in the emergence of unique congregational patterns.

5.5 Building Community Through Social Events

Social events in both branches of this study were constrained by the small numbers of members in the branches, and the geographical distance which many people would have to travel to attend church. In Appleby, numerous people would travel an hour and a half each way to church on a Sunday, which limits their enthusiasm for further journeys during the week. I was told by

American Mormons in both branches that the social calendar in US wards is much fuller, as the size of the congregations and small distances between home and church support a busy schedule of sports, crafts, and other social events. This means that American Mormons feel they 'have far more interactivity' (Elder McGuire', Appleby) within US congregations than in Ireland.

In Appleby, a good solution to the geographical spread of their membership was the commitment to the 'Munch and Mingle' event which took place once a month on the day of Fast and Testimony. As the members would have been fasting earlier in the day, they would bring along sweets, cakes, crisps, as well as dishes such as quiche which were easy to eat whilst standing. I also fasted, and brought cakes and crisps along, as I understood the communal effort of the event and committing myself to experiencing life as a Mormon as much as possible. After the three-hour meeting block was finished, the members would gather in the foyer area to break their fast and to chat with their fellow members. As this event took place directly after church, it facilitated those who had a long distance to travel.

The foyer was a bright light filled space due to large windows all around, which made it a pleasant space to gather around the long table filled with tasty food. I always enjoyed these occasions as it offered me an opportunity to get to know members that I had not yet had an opportunity to talk to, and to build upon existing relationships. The event also provided members with an opportunity to ask me about my research; asking questions such as 'why did I decide to research their religion rather than another?', or 'what did I hope to achieve by my research?'. The relaxed nature of 'Munch 'n' Mingle' meant that these questions could be asked and answered in an informal manner, building trust and rapport between myself and the congregation.

During the time of my fieldwork in Sweetwater, a ‘Munch and Mingle’ was never held, though since the congregation has now moved to share larger and better church facilities with another ward, they have started to develop ‘Potluck Dinner’ after church- a similar idea. However, Sweetwater was more likely than Appleby to organise regular Relief Society social events outside of their weekly Relief Society meeting on Sunday afternoons. These social events would often take place on a Thursday evening in the branch building from about 7pm to 9pm. They involved craft events such as knitting, clothing swaps, and gardening. Small numbers of women often attended these events, and the pool of available people was already reduced, due to Relief Society being a female-only organisation. This meant that these events sometimes numbered just seven to nine people, including the organisers. I never encountered any male-only social events in either branch.

Appleby held an event each Wednesday evening during my fieldwork which I never saw replicated in Sweetwater. This was a ‘Mormons Having Fun’ evening, which was open to all members and non-members. A night of games and conversation with a brief religious message at the start, this event was launched by an elderly missionary couple from the US, Elder and Sister McGuire, who were in Appleby for a year’s missionary work. The idea behind it was to give ‘investigators’ a chance to become familiar with the church building, meet other members, and consolidate their relationships with the missionaries. Like other social events in both branches, ‘Mormons Having Fun’ was often poorly attended, particularly by the existing members of the branch, who seemed to view it more as a missionary-investigator event. Numbers attending would average at eight, including two to four missionaries and children.

By attending ‘Mormons Having Fun’, I learned that developing ‘investigators’ interest in the Church involves creating and maintaining positive relationships with missionaries and the wider congregation. For instance, a key part of ‘Mormons Having Fun’ was playing team bonding games, designed as ice-breakers and to allow people to let their guard down. After an evening of imitating elephant, cat, snake, and other animal noises as part of one such game, I certainly felt as though I had made a real connection with the other participants, as we laughed our way through the deliberately silly activities. Thus, social events such as ‘Munch and Mingle’ or ‘Mormons Having Fun’ are an important part of building and maintaining Mormon community at a local level.

Many of these social events (with the exception of branch parties which are generally well attended) suffer from what Andrei in Sweetwater told me is called ‘S.T.P, which is Same Ten People’. He says:

> That’s what is happening when you have a small number of people, there is ten people that are doing everything all the time, and maybe in Sweetwater it’s only five or whatever. So, that’s the problem.

Andrei was one those ‘S.T.P’, alongside people like Jessica, an American mum of four who had a deep commitment to the Church which fuelled her participation, but who also had more scheduling flexibility for helping out due to her position as a stay-at-home mum. Andrei was clearly frustrated by these dynamics of the S.T.P, and from my time in his branch I came to understand how this experience fulfilled a circular pattern. Few people would assist in or attend events outside of Sunday meetings due to difficulties in scheduling and work or family commitments, causing a lack of enthusiasm for social events generally, which then continued to fuel the low participation. These difficulties present clear challenges for the branches in maintaining community locally, and are often compounded by difficulties like the distance from members' homes to the church building which deters community development.

The other main social outlet for both branches was the holding of branch parties to celebrate various events in the calendar. Both branches held Christmas, Halloween, and St. Patrick's Day parties, which were well attended. The celebration of Christmas was clearly related to their Christian beliefs, St. Patrick's Day events were held to celebrate Ireland's national holiday, and Halloween events held due to the ubiquity of Halloween celebrations in Ireland, where the event originated before it became popular in the US. Halloween is a key family event in Ireland's national calendar, with children and adults dressing up in costumes and going 'trick or treating'. Given the family focused values of Mormonism, it is unsurprising that they embrace this holiday.

Parties were held in the branch buildings. Appleby normally held their parties during the day- usually Saturday, finishing at about six pm, whilst Sweetwater usually held their parties on Saturday evenings, finishing at about nine-thirty pm. Most social events are equally open to non-members as well as members, but I have found that it is really only at branch parties that Church members will bring along non-member family and friends, perhaps because branch parties were the best attended social events, and celebrated moments such as Christmas which were also celebrated by most non-members in Ireland.

Social events in both branches are constrained by the facilities available to them. Appleby's church building is in a unit in an industrial estate. Members such as the influential Murphy family who are founding members of the Appleby branch, feel that the branch deserves a purpose-built church building. They cite their shame in bringing family and friends to the current and to previous buildings, as part of their justification for this. Sue Murphy told me:

> I think for me it's just the idea of being somewhere respectable. I have a little bit of snobbiness about where I go to church and not in a bad way, but I just don't want to have to walk over broken glass to get there. I just want to go somewhere that's nice that you can bring people and they are not looking at the outside going, 'what have I got myself in for'. You just want somewhere that's welcoming.

Sue imagines the church building as a symbol of who the congregational community is; the words she uses; 'respectable', 'nice', 'welcoming' reflect her need for the building and the character of the people inside the building, to more clearly align. Although Sue's brother who is 'inactive' (baptised but no longer attending church) along with his partner and children do attend branch parties, it is obvious that Sue feels some shame in bringing him to such a building. I have seen other members bring along non-member friends to such events in both branches, though this is not enormously common, and missionaries will bring along 'investigators' to experience the social side of life in church.

In Sweetwater, a key challenge for conducting social events was inadequate facilities, particularly the inadequate kitchen. Mormon social events often centre around food. For instance, convert Mary Daly from Appleby jokingly told me during a ‘Munch ‘n’ Mingle’, ‘I was skinny before I was Mormon! That’s how we celebrate everything, with food, because you don't drink’. It is the centrality of food for Mormon social life which dictates that each congregation should have kitchen facilities in their building so that food can be cooked and heated for social events. These issues have recently been addressed by the move of the Sweetwater congregation to the purpose-built church building about twenty-five minutes’ drive away from Sweetwater.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has taken the exploration of Mormonism in Ireland into the local congregations which make up its whole. To further my argument that Mormonism in Ireland is both maintaining and disrupting religious tradition, I have demonstrated in this chapter that despite the standardisation of Mormon congregational life by the Church headquarters in Utah, each branch has developed adaptions of Sunday meetings, social events, and leadership which challenge the notion of a fully standardised Church. This allows Irish branches to maintain a congregational life which is familiar to Mormons all over the world, whilst also taking account of challenges which are specific to them. Likewise, I showed how core components of Mormon tradition which are upheld by Church structures; such as limited roles for women, are both challenged and maintained at a local level. These negotiations of Mormon tradition allow the fundamental form of Mormon congregational life to remain, whilst simultaneously creating something new and distinct. This is a confirmation of the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) who has argued that such adaptions are common, and necessary, for religious life in modernity.

I have also demonstrated that differences between the two branches of this study show that unique congregational patterns have emerged in each branch. This confirms the work of Edgell (1999) and Ammerman (1998) who have argued that each congregation contains its own unique congregational culture which shapes, and is shaped by, the wider denomination. I have shown that Appleby's general stability is assisted by a commitment to cohesion through managing social events in a way that take account of the branch's circumstances, such as the steady commitment to the Munch 'n' Mingle event. Similarly, Sweetwater's general transiency and conflicts between members are influenced by the greater diversity in the branch and creates a unique culture in which leadership is challenged and negotiated.

Leadership is not the only concept which is being uniquely engaged with within Ireland's Mormon congregations. I have illustrated how Mormons in Ireland are navigating concepts of Irishness at a local level. In recent years, changes to the ethnic and national makeup of the Sweetwater branch has resulted in white Irish Mormons becoming a minority within church. This development appears to be forcing Irish and non-Irish members in Sweetwater to confront what it means to be Irish and what it means to be a Mormon *in* Ireland, particularly through conceptions of leadership. These challenges demonstrate the difficulties in maintaining a common Mormon culture in a modern world of increasing diversity and a global Church present in a variety of cultures. Hervieu-Léger (2000) suggests that the collective memory of the religious group can be sustained through the legitimisation of tradition. However, this chapter has illustrated that who has, or *should* have, the power to legitimise these traditions is questioned at a local level and is mediated through personal understandings of culture and belonging.

Finally, I have illustrated the difficulties inherent in building unity and commonality in diverse branches such as Sweetwater, and in branches far away from members' homes, such as Appleby. Community feeling does not manifest itself within the group simply as a result of a common religious belief and practice. I have shown that the building of religious community must be carefully managed, often through social events designed to strengthen existing relationships and create new ones. Maintaining community in Irish branches and wards is not easy, but is vital to ensure that members feel themselves to be a part of something greater than themselves. This is particularly important given the minority status of Mormons within wider Irish society.

The following chapter engages with this reality of life for Mormons in Ireland. I move to discuss the experiences of Mormons in Ireland in their engagement with the majority society. This chapter explores life as a minority religion in a country which is still heavily influenced by the presence, and legacy, of Catholicism. I show that Mormons in Ireland navigate this landscape in complex ways which both support and disrupt concepts of tradition, community and Irishness.

Chapter Six: Managing a Minority Religious Identity in Modern Catholic Ireland

6.1 Introduction

Chapter Five has argued that congregational identity is variously constructed in Appleby and Sweetwater. I have also illustrated there that such group identity is also shaped by wider debates of belonging and community which are ongoing outside of the congregation. In this chapter, I examine the experience of being a minority religious group within the specific context of a majority Catholic Ireland where many religious minorities, and Mormonism particularly, are little understood. Through an examination of key encounters with the majority where Mormon identity is negotiated, I show how the Mormon experience with the majority society is one of tension between continuity and change; where Irish Catholic religious tradition is challenged and disrupted in complex ways.

The first section of this chapter explores conversion experiences. I outline the experiences of Mormon missionaries in their attempts to convert the majority Catholic population in Ireland. I then explore the commonalities and differences inherent in the narratives of the converts of this research as they discuss conversion to Mormonism. Following this, I demonstrate the varying strategies employed by Mormons in Ireland in managing their religious identities in their encounters with the majority society. I then move to discuss the intersections of Mormon and Irish identities, noting particularly how Mormonism is viewed as incompatible with an Irish national identity. I also discuss here how non- Irish Mormons experience multiple marginalisation because of their religious, national, and racial or ethnic differences from the majority. Finally, I use a St.

Patricks Day party in the Sweetwater branch to explore how many of these experiences converge in the everyday lived realities of Mormons in Ireland. This social event highlights conflicts and commonalities of Mormon experience around Irishness, community, and belonging that are representative of many Mormons' lived experiences in Ireland.

The section below will focus upon the conversion process from the perspective of Mormon missionaries who are at the forefront of conversion, and from the perspective of converts to Mormonism.

6.2 Conversion: The Creation of a New Religious Identity

The missionaries of Appleby and Sweetwater at the time of my fieldwork were all white Americans, except for one white British woman for a time. All missionaries are referred to as Sister (female) or Elder (male) for the entirety of their time on their mission. Of the missionaries mentioned here, Elder Prince and Sister Ross had been born into the Church, whilst Sister Fisher had been a convert of just one year before deciding to go out on her mission. They were well placed to provide a unique insight into the religious lives of the majority in Ireland as they were on the streets proselytising and teaching interested individuals about the Church, all day, six days a week. Being American, they also brought a different perspective to discussions of how the Irish engage with religion.

They encountered a wide variety of people from all walks of life and their stories paint a picture of a majority population uninterested in other religions, fearful of change, with a generational gap made up of older active Catholics, and younger ‘cultural Catholics’ (Inglis, 2007, p. 11) who are non-practising. Elder Prince was based in Sweetwater during my fieldwork. He spent his days trying to make connections with locals in the Sweetwater area. He noted the patterns he has observed:

> The ones that are least likely to do anything with what we teach is the older people because the Irish Catholic culture is just so ingrained in who they are, I feel they just wouldn't know what to do.

Similarly, during an interview with Sister Ross and Fisher of Appleby Sister Fisher told me of her struggles to convert the Irish; ‘older people are stuck in their ways, younger people aren’t so religious’.

Identifying that younger people are more likely to display ‘cultural Catholicism’ Sister Fisher says:

> A lot of people are like ‘I’m Catholic’ and then you are like ‘oh cool’ and ask them the question ‘what church do you go to? and they say, ‘oh I don’t go’ so you always ask them are they practising or not.

Elder Prince comments:

> The overall, average conclusion would be that people are ignorant towards spiritual things in general, even Catholic. But even, kind of nervous about the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, due to a lack of understanding. I feel that most are just unwilling to listen because

> they fear change, they fear what others will think, so they make fun of it because of a lack of understanding.

The missionaries are clear that their engagements with the majority are challenging for two opposing reasons. Older active Catholics are happy with their beliefs, and hold a strong sense of religious tradition which precludes them from considering another faith. The younger generations are non-practising or often non-religious and they have no interest in religion other than identifying with Catholicism as a cultural, rather than a religious, tradition. Both scenarios make the work of conversion difficult for the missionaries:

> Sister Ross: Irish people seem just very set in their ways. Very comfortable with their life and they don't really want to step out of their comfort zone…The most receptive people I think actually, are people from Nigeria, somewhere like that. Where they are foreigners, they are in a new place, their church might not be here. They are looking for something to believe in, a church to go, to so it's kind of fun to talk with people who are foreigners I guess.
>
> Hazel: So, do you think it is a cultural thing too?
>
> Sister Ross: Yes, it's a cultural thing too. Correct me if I'm wrong but I think with you guys in Ireland, it's not just your religion, but it's your country background, it's your, it's your history, it's a

> place. I can see how it would be so hard to grow up here, to have that history….

Sister Fisher: It's a way of life.

Above, I ask Sisters Ross and Fisher if they felt that the Irish attitude towards religion was shaped by culture. In answering, Sister Ross demonstrates her own understanding of culture as being the 'country background', 'history' and sense of 'place', showing a clarity that this means something different from religious beliefs and practices. Additionally, as Americans, the missionaries are perhaps able to observe the Irish from a different perspective. This sense of difference is present in Sister Ross's comments; she uses the phrase 'you guys' when speaking to me about the Irish, thereby revealing an awareness of the national differences which provides her with an outsider perspective on religion and culture in Ireland, as well as demonstrating a conscious awareness of my own Irishness in her conversation with me.

Despite the missionaries' struggles to convert the Irish, Catholicism and Mormonism do share many key elements of faith; such as a focus on tradition, family, community, and Jesus Christ which could make conversion from one to the other an easier process. These commonalities are important for this research, to assist in identifying the points of connection and disconnection between Mormonism and Catholicism. In fact, in speaking to missionaries, I came to understand that a key problem they face daily is that some Irish struggle to understand the unique nature of Mormonism. The specifics of doctrine which make Mormonism different such as sacred temple rituals, and the central Mormon doctrine the Plan of Salvation, are not usually taught to an interested person until they have established a grounding in the faith.

For example, I once sat in on a ‘lesson’ with Sisters Ross and Fisher whilst they were teaching an African woman about the Church. Sitting in a less-than-ideal location for a religious lesson; a busy and loud Bagel Factory cafe, I ate lunch with the missionaries and their ‘investigator’. The missionaries had intended on meeting at the local library, but upon arrival we had to change venues due to a water leak which had forced the library to close. So, surrounded by the lunchtime rush, I observed as they attempted to introduce the woman to the basics of the faith. I came to understand how the first few encounters an interested person will have with the missionaries are relatively generic. They are taught about Jesus Christ, and told a little about the central messages of the Bible. They will be asked if they accept that Jesus Christ is our saviour, and if the interested person agrees with this, then this becomes the building block upon which the specifics of Mormon faith will be slowly introduced over several further lessons. Therefore, an interested person could have had several lessons with missionaries focused upon general Christian teachings which are not dissimilar from Catholicism.

The effect of this was evident when Sister Fisher told me about the mainly Catholic people she meets during her proselytising on the street. She says ‘they don’t understand, like what the difference is [between Catholicism and Mormonism]. Which is so funny! Because I’m thinking how can you not see a difference’. She tells me of an older Irish man who is considering joining the

Church from Catholicism. He struggles to differentiate Mormonism from the one faith he has lifelong experience of, Catholicism. Sister Fisher tells me:

> He sees the churches as all being similar. So, he says 'yeah but as long as I've a good life and I'm a good person right, God is not gonna be like oh you are a part of this faith or this faith.

For this gentleman, the denomination of the church he is affiliated with is less important than the need to have a connection to God and live life in the 'right' way. In this case, the gentleman is following a tradition of belief, where the content of that belief is of less value to him. Here, the traditions of 'Irish Catholic culture' (Elder Prince, Sweetwater) are too entrenched for the young missionaries to be able to make much progress with their proselytising.

Maureen and John Murphy who are in their sixties, are part of a key family in the Appleby branch. When they heard I was seeking interviewees for my research, they invited me to their home in a quiet housing estate in a town near Appleby. I arrived on a Friday evening for a dinner of Chinese takeaway. At the kitchen table Maureen interspersed our conversation on Mormonism with frequent entreaties of me to have more food, thereby ensuring I was both well-fed and well-informed. In our conversations, Maureen used her experience of the Catholic Church as a reference point in explaining her motivations for conversion:

> I was brought up with a religion that was fear and guilt. And we were taught that this life was a vale of tears, that you couldn't expect

> happiness in this life. And then when I started reading the Book of Mormon…and I thought, yeah, you know, I've always believed this…It made complete sense to me. And it was so positive and it was, you know, while the Catholic Church was a Christian church, to me it was a very negative at that time, it was a very negative lifestyle. Whereas I changed it for a different Christian church that had a totally positive lifestyle.

From this perspective, conversion to Mormonism represents a continuity of a tradition of religion to shape the person's worldview. In continuing to hold religious belief and engage in religious practice, Maureen is continuing, if adapting, the 'chain of belief' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81). She says of the Book of Mormon 'I've always believed this', illustrating that there is a continuity of previous belief post-conversion. Yet, it is also break with the past, as Maureen's words demonstrate. Her negative evaluation of Catholicism in comparison with Mormonism represents a break with previous religious tradition.

For some of the older generation such as Maureen and her husband John, the authoritarian all-encompassing Catholic Church who 'ruled the roost' in Ireland (Maureen, Appleby) is something which deeply shaped their early experiences of religion and something they now wish to avoid, even within Mormonism. When I asked Maureen Murphy if she would ever like to see Mormonism be as successful in Ireland as Catholicism once was, she very clearly said no. She said:

> When I was growing up, the Catholic Church ruled the roost, and I think that was a bad thing. You need to have a complete separation between Church and State and I wouldn't like to see any church rule the roost in Ireland again… But I think there is space for smaller religions, depending on the needs of the people…. We express our faith through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, other people might want to express their faith through other churches. Good luck to them if they do, and if it helps them to have a more fulfilled life, and to have more peace and joy in their lives I think that's a good thing. I think there should be separation between church and state. Total.

For Maureen, her previous experiences of religion have been an intermingling of church and State which she now rejects. Maureen therefore creates a continuity of religious experience by using her previous experiences to make sense of her present. Yet, she also simultaneously creates a rupture of religious tradition by rejecting Catholicism for Mormonism.

Conversely to Maureen who rejects the dominance of the old Irish Catholic Church, younger converts who came of age in an era of a declining institutional Catholicism and the rise of 'cultural Catholicism' (Inglis, 2007, p. 11), speak of dissatisfaction with modern Irish Catholicism in which doctrine and tradition do not need to be adhered to. They are searching for a church which provides structure to their lives. James from Appleby is Irish, in his thirties, and converted to Mormonism from Catholicism when he was eighteen. Our interview took place in Maureen and John Murphy's home; his parents-in law. His own home is just around the corner within the same estate, but with four boisterous young children there, he felt it would be too loud for us to enjoy an in-depth conversation.

James openly describes himself as a traditionalist, and disapproves of the direction which he feels Irish society is moving towards:

> Ironically, when I joined the Church the society was much more traditional, the Church was quite close in that sense [to the values of Irish society], but now the opposite has happened… what gets me is that a lot of people in society think that traditional values are just outdated and don't apply anymore, that they are just not applicable; 'ah sure that's great we have moved on from those times' and that thing. I think there is nothing wrong with those values and some people want those values. Now I feel there is a lot of people out there who want those older values and those kind of family values and that sort of thing, and some people feel more progressive and they want everything changed.

James' conversion to Mormonism was fuelled by a desire for tradition, a search for continuity. He believes that recent changes in Irish society have negatively affected the expression of traditional values. On this issue of gay marriage, he tells me:

> I'm personally not in favour of gay marriage because of my belief in the Church. But when I talk to people about it, they are very aggressive with me, I won't go and say, 'gay marriage is terrible', but if they ask me about it; 'Oh you are a homophobe' they say to me, I'm like no, I just believe in

> the family as in the traditional sense. But they are totally aggressive and offensive.

James feels that Irish society does not respect his conservatism, and his conversion therefore becomes a way to maintain the values he believes in. For James therefore, the existence of Mormonism in Ireland serves as a continuation of traditional values in a changing society. Yet by converting, he also becomes part of the wider social change occurring in Ireland, as he becomes one of the many in recent years who have left Ireland's traditional religion to join a new religion. Therefore, through his conversion he has inadvertently added to the societal changes he wishes to avoid. James, like Maureen, is responding to the changing place of religion in modernity. Whereas Maureen's opinions display a desire for a break with the past, James' focus upon traditional values reveals a desire to 'actualize the past in the present' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 88). This can be seen in his conversion to another socially conservative faith just as Ireland began to liberalise and as Irish Catholicism began its acceleration towards a cultural rather than religious identity.

Many of the conversion stories of this research showed a clear desire on the part of the convert for something different, either spiritually or socially, which led them to Mormonism. Motivations for conversion were frequently discussed in a comparative context; using the Catholic Church as a reference point. Maureen and James' narratives of conversion represent the varying ways younger and older converts engage with Catholicism's past to make sense of their present.

Both old and young often narrate their conversion to Mormonism through Catholicism which reveals a generational change in the reasons for conversions, but the continuance of Catholicism as an influence in those decisions. The continued influence of Irish Catholicism on other religions in Ireland therefore cannot be overlooked. Irish Catholicism remains an influential component in modern religious experiences in Ireland, even outside of Catholicism itself. This continuity of the influence of Catholicism post-conversion, supports the research of Shanneik (2011, 2015a), Sakaranaho (2003), and Ganiel (2016a, 2016b), who have shown similar findings from their studies with other converts from Catholicism in Ireland. The participants of this research are also engaged in complex understandings of their conversion which incorporates both change and continuity.

After conversion, a new stage of identity management occurs for many members. Participants told me of feeling great motivation and enthusiasm for the Church in the early days of their conversion, and that over time, their involvement in the Church changed, and their perceptions of their own religious identity adapted. The early stage following conversion, was frequently described to me by using the word ‘zealous’. Jason, Appleby’s Branch President, converted from Catholicism when he was nineteen. He says:

> When people first join the Church they identify themselves very much as Mormons for the first few years, they become a little bit zealous. But over time, you can’t really maintain that level of, zealousness, zealous-osity?! [searching for the right word, he laughs] You can’t maintain that level of intensity. And then you become who you are, as a Mormon.

> Where your behaviour has altered, your views are altered, and you just become yourself within that new skin.

Mary Daly is an Irish convert in her fifties who attends church in Appleby. She describes her early years in the Church when she lived in Dublin:

> The Church was a huge, huge part of our life…it replaced even friends in some ways because there was a part of me certainly in the Church in the early years, that felt nobody in church would ever do anything wrong. The naiveté…There was a kind of a community feeling, very much a community feeling that I had lacked.

This contrasts with her current experience as a convert of over twenty years:

> I find now in my membership of the Church is that I do it my way. And that isn't a problem, and God is okay with it, and my leaders are okay with it…so there is less pressure on me being in the branch I'm in now than there was.

In a majority society in which at least a passive, if not active Catholicism is often a taken for granted part of everyday life, converts' early enthusiasm for their new faith may be a response to the wider environment in which they are converting. To be 'zealous' (Jason, Appleby) is to make a clear statement of change, and to become a visible expression of a rejection of the traditional Catholic identity.

The transition from zealous to settled in conversion stories is not universally experienced. I have encountered some members who are long time converts, whom many would consider to be as zealous today as they were when they first joined many years ago. Jimmy, an elderly man attending church in Sweetwater, had been a convert for some twenty years or more but adhered to the teachings of the Church in every respect. He sat in the same seat in church every week, and never missed church during the six months I was there. In Appleby, I met an elderly man named Donal who had converted in his twenties. I thought of Donal and Jimmy as being similar characters, as Donal also never missed church and sat in the same seat each week- coincidently sitting in a similar location to Jimmy in Sweetwater, in the front row, on the left-hand side. Donal told me:

> When a member becomes baptised…he takes it a step at the time and learns a little bit at a time from the Book of Mormon. As you read the book…it's so true that the Holy Ghost can reveal to you every section down along that you are reading is correct and true. So, a member has to start slowly a step at a time…And as they learn over the years, they get more and more close to the Lord, and the more it will be real to them.

Donal indicates that his faith in the Church has grown in the years since conversion rather than diminished. Both he and Jimmy are committed members in their older years. They are proof that not all conversion narratives follow the same path

Another experience of conversion is that of those converts who ‘fall away’ (Melanie, Sweetwater) from the Church. Jason informs me:

> We have a member list in Appleby of, I think it’s 203, and we had seventy in church this Sunday. So, the other 130 don’t come. And probably will never come again.

This high level of attrition may be explained by Mauss (2008), who has suggested that the social and personal costs associated with membership of the Church are high in Europe. In Ireland, a convert to Mormonism must navigate multiple identities within the wider context of a society which is often unaccepting of religious minorities. For instance, I often heard participants express the general idea that ‘it’s hard being a Mormon’ (Jason, Appleby), or spoke unprompted of the challenges of being Mormon in Ireland. These comments occurred during interviews, in my conversations with members, or during talks and lessons in church.

David from Sweetwater commented whilst giving his testimony to the congregation in church on a Fast and Testimony Sunday that ‘many times people who are not religious mock us a lot, especially the media. It is a fashionable thing to mock us, to say that we are so stupid’. Suzanne from Sweetwater commented during a Relief Society Meeting that ‘when you tell people you are a member of the Church they might treat you differently. You might lose some people, or they might ridicule you’. Jason in Appleby expanded further on why life as a Mormon is considered difficult by many members in his interview:

> The changes that are expected- when you come from a society where premarital sex is completely acceptable, there is no question about it, alcohol is completely acceptable, smoking tobacco is maybe less acceptable but still it’s okay, and being a Catholic now is no big deal to anyone. So, I think it’s just a difficulty of living the standards that makes it difficult. There is a lot expected of Mormons, we have this constant need to be better. To improve, to challenge yourselves, to push forward.

From the comments of Jason, Suzanne, and David above, it is apparent that members are conscious of their break with Irish religious tradition, and they experience life as a Mormon convert in Ireland as one of difference from the majority. This is despite of a continuity from Catholicism to Mormonism based upon family and Jesus Christ, which might be thought to ease such disruptions. Additionally, comments from Jason specify that conversion to Mormonism is also considered a break with Irish societal values more generally. He notes that in Ireland premarital sex ‘is completely acceptable’, yet Catholic doctrine rejects it. This indicates that although Irish society may still be ‘Catholic’, it is also moving away from traditional Catholic values. Conversion to Mormonism in this context is viewed as a breach of Irish social norms and values.

The following section will explore the variety of identity management strategies which Mormons in Ireland utilise to navigate their way through these complexities, arguing that as many Mormons in Ireland are white Irish, and as Catholicism is so ubiquitous in Ireland, many Mormons can ‘conceal’ or ‘reveal’ their religious identity depending on the circumstances in which they find themselves.

6.3 Identity Management Strategies in the Spaces of In/Visibility

Stigma, abuse, or indifference from the majority are a regular part of life as a Mormon in Ireland. As the visible 'face' of the Church, the missionaries are often a target for those who don't respect religious difference. Sister Fisher and Sister Ross told me of their negative encounters with the majority. Sister Ross says:

> As soon as they see the badge [their missionary badge which states their name and the name of the Church] they say, 'oh no, don't talk to me'. And you're trying to skirt around it, I'm wondering do I have the plague? I'm just trying to give a card to someone once, and I just said 'hi, how are you?' and he just looked at me like what the heck? And then I was like 'oh I was just going to give you this card', so I took a step, just a tiny bit of a step towards him, and he like, full on like ran away from me and started screaming 'GET AWAY'.

James in Appleby served a mission in England when he was younger. He articulates how life as a missionary brings with it a higher level of religious visibility, which might explain the levels of hostility which missionaries particularly, endure. He says, 'when you have badge on and you are dressed up in a suit, that's our identity and people expect that of you'.

However, Sister Fisher and Sister Ross' stories were also echoed by many participants of this research who were not missionaries, and therefore not as visible to majority. Most had encountered stigma and stereotyping, with some encountering physical violence such as bottle throwing (James, Appleby), being spat at on the street (James, Appleby), and threatening behaviour (Andrei, Sweetwater). Anna in Sweetwater, tells me of the stereotyping she has experienced:

> I was at a funeral one night, and I was standing in the kitchen. There was one particular woman… she said ‘so I can’t believe you’re actually Mormon. I can’t believe it.’ And I just thought okay keep your voice down. And she’s like ‘just, wow! I watched this documentary’…She is just like ‘oh my gosh you know they’re just so weird’. And I’m going ‘no actually I’m not. I don’t think I’m weird’ and then I go and I turn around to Louise and I’m like ‘am I? Am I weird?’. I don’t like doing that to people, but I had to make her feel a little bit uncomfortable because she was coming out with some crazy stuff. ‘Yeah, they get married really early and they get married when they’re like, fifteen’ and I just was like, ‘well I don’t know that person’ and you know, ‘actually we don’t believe that, so sorry if you think that’. You know, it was dreadful.

For her faith to be discussed so publicly and inaccurately without her consent was troubling to Anna. In her telling of the incident above, it is clear she felt objectified, like a curiosity to be stared at. Her question to her friend*,* ‘am I weird?’ was designed to make the other person aware of how uncomfortable she was, but it also reveals how Anna herself was feeling in that moment of the exchange. Anna is a private person who is generally uncomfortable with publicly discussing her faith. In this moment, her faith is made visible. Her narrative also demonstrates the frustration she felt when her attempts to educate the woman about her faith fell on deaf ears; ‘she was coming out with some crazy stuff’.

Stephanie in Appleby is in her twenties and enjoys socialising, but struggles with her sobriety as a Mormon in a society in which alcohol is central to social events. She has also had experience of being publicly humiliated due to her faith. She tells me of a night out with friends where her faith was made unexpectedly visible by an acquaintance:

> I remember there was one night we went out for the Twelve Pubs at Christmas [a pub crawl] and I was standing there chatting away, wasn’t talking to anyone nothing had come up about religion at all. And this guy pulled my arm up like this [she raises her arm high in the air] and said, ‘this is the one with the weird religion’ and I was like, ‘what are you doing?’ I was like, ‘that’s so mean’. I was so drop-kicked by it that I actually left. I just thought, why? Why? It’s not like I had a Book of Mormon. I was just out for a normal night, and that’s what I get.

Often, these negative encounters are framed by the participants of this research as normal, almost a taken for granted part of being a minority religion in a homogenous country. Maura an elderly woman from Appleby, casually mentioned to me as we walked along a corridor one morning on our way to Sacrament meeting in the chapel; ‘people think we are like a cult, you know, but we aren't, we are like a family. We have our ups and downs and get over them. We are just ordinary people’. I was struck by the casual way in which the revealing comment was inserted into an otherwise mundane conversation, but for Maura, these experiences form part of her everyday life and this is reflected in her everyday discourse.

Maura, Jason, Anna, Stephanie, Elder Prince, and Sisters Fisher and Ross all told me that the Irish were mostly ‘ignorant’ (Elder Prince, Sweetwater) about Mormonism. Most participants were reluctant to outwardly accuse the majority of deliberate discrimination against them, choosing instead to frame negative encounters in a discourse that emphasised the majority’s lack of knowledge of Mormonism. Yet, it is also clear that the participants perceive that the majority in Ireland identify them as a minority group that is ‘different’. This is despite the reality of life as a Mormon in Ireland, which is often lived as a member of the minority on the basis of religious identity yet also as a member of the majority on the basis of other characteristics such as Irishness or whiteness.

American Mandy attends the Sweetwater congregation and has been in Ireland for about a year. She told me that she feels that an awareness of other religions aside from Catholicism is not something she feels even young Irish people really engage with.

> I think people are almost surprised when someone is not Catholic…I was just getting my hair done a couple of weeks ago, and the girl was washing my hair and she was asking me how old my kids were, and I told her about my son and she said ‘oh he’s doing his First Communion’ [a Catholic Sacrament] and I said ‘no I’m not Catholic’ and she said ‘oh!’ [surprised tone] Like, it didn’t even dawn on her that there might be other

> religions.

Mandy’s anecdote about the hairdressers reveals just how assumed Catholicism is in Ireland, even amongst the younger generation. It illustrates how the rituals of Catholicism permeate everyday Irish life. It is this context which allows Elder Prince and others to argue that if Mormons are misunderstood, it is through a lack of knowledge, rather than a lack of acceptance of diversity.

Yet, despite widespread evidence of stigmatisation and marginalisation, simultaneously Mormons in Ireland are expected by the majority to ‘perform’ an active religiosity, and are defined by their faith by others in Irish society. As Stephanie’s experience in the pub shows, a Mormon identity becomes a master status which obscures other pertinent aspects of that individual’s identity. In informal conversations in church and during social events, participants told me how others in Irish society police their behaviour; they are chastised for cursing, or questioned about why they aren’t at church. Jason in Appleby has experienced chastisement for both of these ‘breaches’ of behaviour. He expresses his frustration with this:

> If they expect me to be a Mormon all the time, and they class me as a Mormon and their view of me is as a Mormon, then that’s all I am. I’m also Irish, I’m also doing research, I’m also obsessed with computer games, you know? So, Mormonism is just one part of who I am.

Maureen in Appleby told me during our interview about how her work colleagues police her actions based on their perception of her as a Mormon.

> He [a colleague] was after bringing us in a box of sweets, and they were liqueurs and they were beside the photocopier….and I picked up a liqueur and ate it and he says ‘you’ll have to tell them on Sunday about that’ and I said ‘huh?’ and he said ‘you’re not supposed to be eating them, there’s drink in them, you’ll have to tell that on Sunday’ and I started laughing because I had never spoken to him about the Church, you know?

Later, she tells me another anecdote about her work colleagues, related to the Mormon abstention from tea and coffee:

> I brought back in a cup of hot chocolate but the paper cup it was in said ‘coffee’ and I put it down on the desk and Sheila comes over and she looks at it and she says, ‘Maureen Murphy are you drinking coffee?’ and I said ‘no, it’s hot chocolate’ and she says, ‘oh that’s alright’.

Maureen’s husband John also tells me that he has been chastised for eating meat, as some mistakenly believe Mormons are vegetarian, and are concerned that he has breached his religious obligations. The Word of Wisdom does specify that meat should be eaten ‘sparingly’, which might explain where this misconception springs from. However, given the lack of general knowledge of

Mormonism by the general public in Ireland, it is more likely that this misconception actually springs from confusing Mormonism with another small religious minority. The participants and I often swapped stories of how our explanations of Mormonism had often caused confusion, when others imagined we were speaking of groups such as the Jehovah's Witnesses or Mennonites, both of whom had a presence in Appleby.

Maureen, John, and Jason's experiences show that being a Mormon is viewed as a master identity by the majority society. They demonstrate that there is an expectation amongst the majority in Ireland regarding the behaviour of religious minorities. When their expectations are breached, Mormons experience judgement from the majority for not performing their religious 'role' correctly. As this research has identified a growing number of 'cultural Catholics' for whom religious belief is less important, this policing of the religious behaviour of other faiths is interesting. It illustrates that although increasing numbers of Irish are less religious than in previous generations, they are still very familiar with the active adherence which normally accompanies religious belief and are quick to enforce it on others whom they consider more 'religious' than themselves.

Cosgrove's (2013) Irish research with religious minorities, including Mormons, has identified that strategies for coping with the perceptions of the majority are mostly, centred around concealment. This is evident in this research through participants' discussions of religion within the educational system. Most participants who spoke to me about their own or their children's education told me that given the religious nature of Irish education they will invariably be pushed into a public disclosure of their faith, or encounter circumstances where they feel it becomes a relevant point of discussion. This is the case even where those individuals feel generally that they would prefer to be quiet about their religion.

For Anna in Sweetwater, her dealings with her children's schools reflect her position generally on managing her religious identity. She tries at all costs to avoid discussing her religion, for a fear of negative reactions. She tells me:

> I don't go out of my way to talk about it. Because then it's kind of like, 'she rams her religion down people's throats'. You are always, even when you're trying to be nice about it, and they are the ones asking the questions. I'll just give yes or no answers if I'm asked usually.

Anna's quiet strategy in navigating her own religious identity is reflected in her management of her children's religious identities within their Catholic schools:

> I didn't tell them what we were, to be honest with you. Because I just didn't want the, you know 'they have more than one wife, they're from Utah', you know the usual. So, I just said 'no we are just a different religion, we're just not Catholic'. I left it like that for ages and ages. I don't go out of my way to tell people. If they ask I will tell them, but I don't go out of my way.

Anna's position reflects many of the themes which reoccur when Mormons in Ireland discuss how their identity is managed in public spaces. Fear of others' reactions, anticipating negative stereotyping, and a desire to stay quiet unless it is directly addressed, are almost universal experiences in the management of a Mormon identity in Ireland. Many Mormons in Ireland such as Anna are Irish of many generations, and many have converted from Catholicism. Therefore, they have a pre-existing natural familiarity with the subtle indicators of belonging which perhaps allows them to ‘pass’ more easily than non-Irish Mormons.

Another key social space in which members confront their own identities is within the workplace. Many who spoke with me about the intersections of religion and employment were clear that they did not see the workplace as an appropriate space to begin a conversation about religion. For example, Maureen Murphy joked with me; ‘we don’t really go around asking people what they think’. Work becomes a site where religious identities are hidden, both consciously and unconsciously. In contrast to Irish schools, the workplace tends to be seen by the participants of this research as a secular space.

Many such as Chase, told me that they felt they were more easily able to hide or downplay their religious beliefs should they want to. Chase is a successful American business consultant in his forties who was born into the Church. His employment causes him to relocate with his family across the globe every few years. During my time in Sweetwater, he and his family were living a few miles away, although they have since moved abroad once more. In church every Sunday, Chase epitomised the clean-cut image of a confident, successful Mormon, and was very popular within the congregation due to his cheerfulness and outgoing nature. During our interview held in his large sprawling home in one of the wealthiest parts of Dublin, a more cautious and less confident Chase emerged during discussions of how he managed his Mormon identity outside of church.

> If I'm somewhere on business and I don’t want religion to come into things, and they’d ask me if I want something to drink, sometimes I don’t make a big deal, I don’t drink but I won’t say it’s about religion I’ll say ‘I just don’t drink for health reasons’ or whatever. But I don’t always have to bring it up- ‘no because I'm Mormon’, which probably I should do all the time. But I weigh it, I don’t know. It depends if I want to make it an issue, I can. if I don’t want to make an issue, I don’t.

For many Mormons then, the workplace is not constructed as a religious space. Their faith becomes mainly privatised, and the decision to make it public is very much dependant on context. Like Anna, Chase is careful about how he addresses his faith and depending on the context, he will hide his religious identity, particularly when on business. This privatisation of religious identity causes a paradox to emerge. The hegemony of Catholicism in Irish everyday life continues unchallenged, as alternative expressions of religiosity which could challenge such dominance are hidden.

As Cosgrove’s (2013) research has identified, members of minority religious faiths will sometimes choose to explicitly reveal their religious identity, though this is less common than strategies of concealment. Jason, the Branch President in Appleby, is one such example of how revealing strategies operate. Jason is quiet about his faith in most circumstances. He says:

> I wouldn't be starting a conversation [about religion] because I pretty much know people's opinions and I know the difference so I wouldn't be starting a conversation to voice my own opinions.

However, Jason decided to take a more open approach in his relationship with the educational system, precipitated by the way in which he felt his child's faith was not being accommodated appropriately by the Catholic school which his son attended.

> Jason: We had our oldest son in a Catholic school, a local small rural school and we had a lot of difficulties…in primary school religion goes throughout the day, prayers, and preparations for the sacraments, holidays and celebrations… It's everywhere. When his class were preparing for Easter, the whole class had to go over to the local chapel and decorate the place and learn the hymns and all that. So, we would try to get them to disengage, to not be teaching our son and they just could not let him. It just wasn't physically possible.
>
> Hazel: Were they used to dealing with children of different religions?
>
> Jason: They really were, they really were. I think there was, there was a couple of Muslims in the class with dark skin, so they were treated much differently because they were seen as an ethnic minority, so they went out of their way. Because

we were white Irish from a different background, they just, it would be ignored… If you want to be anonymous, it's easy. If you want to be different and not make a fuss about it, it's okay. But if you want to make a fuss about it, there is resistance because you are not that different.

Hazel: And is it important to make a fuss about it? Is it important that he is able to have an active identity as a Latter-Day Saint and not have that minimised?

Jason: Well for us in the school, it was. Because our concern is that we are teaching him what we believe at home, and he is being taught separate beliefs in school and he's being confused.

Jason and his wife were so upset by their experiences that Jason's wife became heavily involved with the establishment of a new multi-denominational school in their local area, and their second child attended primary school in that new school.

Jason's experience is reflective of the complexity of managing religious pluralism in modernity as described by Davie (2000, 2014). In noting tendencies within Europe to welcome acceptance of ethnic diversity whilst rejecting religious diversity, Davie (2014, p. 616) reminds us that 'the management of ethnic pluralism overlaps with the management of religious pluralism but is not coterminous with it'. In Jason's case, he maintains that his son's white Irish identity prevented an understanding of his religious difference in a way that his classmates who were also of a minority faith, but were not white, did not experience. Yet, the ability of the white Irish participants of this research to choose when and how to reveal or conceal their religious identity illustrates a white privilege which other religious minorities in Ireland may not experience.

Despite the generally invisible nature of religious identity within the workplace and other spaces, there are cases where this is revealed by choice or by necessity. This can be seen in the case of Sue in Appleby, a second-generation Mormon who is one of the only Mormon teachers in the State. Sue is a primary school teacher in a Catholic school, and must provide Catholic religious teaching as a key part of her employment. Her employers and the inspectors who evaluate her teaching, are aware of her religious status. Sue deliberately ensures that her teaching of religion is exemplary, as she feels vulnerable due to her religious difference:

> It’s just when I know I'm different I don’t want anyone to come back and say, ‘you never taught religion because you are…’ you know what I mean? I always, that box is always ticked for me. And I'm one of the first ones to go to the Principal and say, ‘look we are coming into Lent, we should be going to Mass at least once a week now here’.

Wendy Cadge and Emily Sigalow in the US (Cadge and Sigalo, 2013), have observed two strategies used by healthcare chaplains when working in hospitals with patients and families of a different faith to themselves. They identify ‘neutralizing’ (2013, p. 193) as a way to speak of spirituality in broad terms, and to focus on the commonalities of the different faiths. They identify 'code-switching' (2013, p. 193) as switching between the religious language, rituals and practices of the people whom they work with. Sue utilises both strategies in her work; neutralizing, by focusing on what Mormonism and Catholicism have in common with each other and code switching, by familiarising herself with the language and practices of Catholicism through an explicit embrace of the majority religion that surrounds her.

Sue tries to integrate her own positive experiences of her Mormon faith into her Catholic teaching practice such as her creation of 'Pope-Watch', a teaching tool designed to pique the children's interest in the election of a new Pope:

> I was recording at home what was going on, because the different colour smoke for when the Pope was elected. And this is back in the days of videos and we'd watch ten minutes of the video of the wrong colour smoke coming up, and then they'd see the change and they were all excited. Like, my religion would be important for me, and I do what I can to make religion important for them, regardless of what that religion is. Because there is going to be times in their lives they are going to need it.

For Sue, the contours of her religious difference are made visible through her work, and she manages this through an embrace of the majority religion that surrounds her. Sue describes this approach, including the management of her own children's education within Catholic schools, as 'pragmatic'.

Whereas Sue's strategy of engagement with a Catholic educational system has been to embrace the elements she feels she can adopt, Jason's strategy has been more combative, arising from a sense of exclusion and inequality that he struggles to ignore. Sue is a second-generation Mormon, who has experienced being the outsider all her life. Her sister mentioned to me in church one day that they 'know no different' than being Mormon in a Catholic majority country. Jason converted to Mormonism as a teenager and so has not had such experiences all his life. His son's very different experiences of religion in school is a source of frustration to him, and may explain why he has chosen to engage with the Catholic school system in such a differing way to that of Sue.

The following section will outline how Mormonism is viewed by many as incompatible with Irishness, and demonstrates that Mormons in Ireland who are not white or Irish experience a more pronounced exclusion from the collective narrative of white Catholic Ireland.

6.4 The Contours and Conflicts of Mormon Identities in Ireland

Thus far, this thesis has demonstrated that Irishness and Catholicism are still unavoidably intertwined. Within this worldview, Mormonism is not associated with a sense of being Irish and so Irish converts from Catholicism are thought by others to have in some way, lost a part of their national identity. Viewed as 'traitorous' (Seán, Appleby) by some in the majority society, both Irish Mormons and Mormons of other nationalities attempt to assert belonging in various ways. Though their very presence constitutes a break with the past, their attempts to belong signify that they recognise the importance of the continuance of traditional conceptions of Irishness.

Seán is a retired Irish convert in his seventies who is based in the Appleby branch. Seán has a very strong and proud Irish identity, and he highlights the ways in which Irish and Mormon identities conflict in his dealing with others, despite being reconciled within himself. He says:

> I served in the Army Reserve for thirty-seven years. When I became a member [of the Church], I went to my Company Commander at the time and said I want to change my army record [on religion] and the immediate reaction was ‘oh I will organise for you to meet a Jesuit [Catholic religious order] friend of mine’. And I said, ‘hold on a second, I’m second-in-command of the company of soldiers, do you not think that I have the ability to decide, you know, who or what it is that I want to follow?’
>
> > ‘Oh yeah, yeah, but I mean they are brainwashed’ [comments from his Company Commander]
>
> I said, ‘hang on a minute!’ I said, ‘look I want the record changed’. He then for me, unknown to me at the time, I arrived in one evening and he said, ‘the Battalion Commander wants to talk to you’. So, I went up to the Battalion Commander and he bared his teeth at me like a dog. When I told him I wanted the record changed, he goes ‘ARRRRGGGHHH’… [Seán mimics someone lunging across a table, growling aggressively].

Seán believes he understands where these attitudes stem from. The Army, as an agent of the Irish State, upholds 'Irish' values and his conversion to Mormonism highlighted that this was to be less than Irish.

> With the Army, the distinct impression I got was that it was a traitorous act. I mean to be Mormon, and then Protestant as well you know? I mean anything that was, anything at all that would smack of Protestantism was to be avoided.

It is clear then, that Seán's conversion to Mormonism was constructed by his superiors in the Army as a rejection of Catholicism, and due to its connection to Protestantism, a rejection of Irishness itself.

Whilst Seán's Mormonism caused problems for him within the Irish army, his Irish patriotism also became a source of tension within the Church. He found himself embroiled in conflict with higher levels of Church leadership in Ireland and in Europe, as he strived to raise the 'Irish' profile of the Church in Ireland. Resentful that the Church in Ireland has its administrative centre in the UK, he tells me:

> I believe that people in Salt Lake [Salt Lake City, Church headquarters] need to be educated properly with regards to what I've been pushing lately, and to be honest it's that this is a sovereign republic. You either give us due recognition or continue to insult us by telling us we have to do what England tells us to do. And they say, 'oh no it's not like that', then I say, 'well the facts prove otherwise'…My father was very much

> involved in the War of Independence [from the British], I'm a Republican to the core… I refuse to be told by anyone in England how we should behave, or where we should go, or when, and that includes the Church.

Seán tells me of the small ways in which he actively attempts to emphasise Irish Mormonism's unique nature in church:

> As an Irish man I'm looking at things Irish you know? And about the Church in Ireland-let's celebrate that… I would hope that eventually the message will get across that these [Irish people] are separate nation, they speak another language. I keep emphasising that, that we use our own language. I use it on a regular basis all the time in church, if I am asked to do a prayer. I do it in Irish to let them know that we are a separate nation, we are different culture and it's high time I think that the Church recognises that. They don't as far as I'm aware anyway. Like, I've attended church in Nigeria and the Nigerians are not expected to behave as anything other than Nigerians.

Seán's experiences show that an Irish Mormon identity can disrupt belonging both within and outside of the Church. Seán deliberately inserts Irishness into Mormonism. He is aware that this sometimes causes conflict, but feels strongly nonetheless that Irish Mormonism should be celebrated.
His narrative also highlights the struggles of Irish Mormons to be recognised, and to recognise themselves, as truly Irish.

Suzanne in Sweetwater shares Seán's strong sense of patriotism. I spent the Easter of 2016 conducting fieldwork within the Sweetwater branch, and that Easter Sunday helped me to better understanding Suzanne's Irishness. Easter 2016 was the 100th anniversary of the Irish Easter Rising, a 1916 Dublin rebellion against British occupation. After the unsuccessful rebellion was quashed, key rebel leaders were executed, creating a martyrdom around their personas which was subsequently used to fuel a popular backlash against the British in Ireland. The Rising therefore became a key event in Ireland's eventual independence from the British.

The anniversary was not referred to at the lectern by branch leadership that day. I initially assumed this to be due to the Church's tendency to avoid engaging in political discussion. However, reference was made by the Branch President on another occasion, to the anniversary of a Day of Independence celebrated in his home country. Despite the lack of 'official' recognition in church, the Easter Rising commemoration was discussed by the congregation in casual conversations amongst themselves; usually by asking each other if they were planning on attending a commemoration ceremony being held in Dublin later that afternoon. In Sacrament meeting that day I noticed that Suzanne and her mother Mavis were wearing shades of pastel green and yellow; Easter colours, I thought to myself. Pinned to their chests, were small pins of the Irish flag, which I assumed to be a visible commemoration of the Rising's anniversary. I felt that their physical commemoration of the event through their clothing was a significant statement of identity.

Suzanne and Mavis had converted to Mormonism from the Church of Ireland. Suzanne's motivation for conversion was the sense of exclusion she felt in her old faith community, based on social class differences. Her perception of difference continued after conversion to Mormonism, by showing awareness of distinctions between Irish Mormons and other Irish. During a conversation with me in between church meetings one Sunday, Suzanne stated that 'Irish people in the Church are different to Irish-Irish people'. Her description of Irish non-Mormons as 'Irish-Irish' also implies that Irish Mormons such as herself, are less Irish than others. She shows understanding, as Seán does also, that Mormonism is incompatible with the Irish identity. As Suzanne was born into the Church of Ireland, she understands how non-Catholic experiences are marginalised within the national narrative. Her clothing and pin of the Irish flag worn on Easter Sunday, served in that moment to reassert her Irishness as a Mormon.

As I spent more time with Suzanne and her mainly Irish friends in church, I came to understand that Suzanne was resentful of the other nationalities within the congregation, particularly the large group of Americans. Her friend Marilyn told me 'she thinks they take over'. In conversation with me, Suzanne referred to her Irish friends from the branch as 'regular people'; her language constructing the others in the branch as unusual in some way. Already feeling marginalised by the majority Catholic society due to her Mormonism, Suzanne now also felt marginalised within the congregation as one of the few regularly attending Irish people in a diverse congregation. Like Seán, Suzanne's complex experiences of her Irish Mormon identity caused conflict in church as she tried to incorporate a sense of Irishness into her congregation.

Non-Irish Mormons also navigate a complex relationship between religion and national identity in Ireland. They are often also part of Ireland's fast growing ethnic minority groups, and so must navigate a multiple minority experience. Matthew attends church in Appleby with his wife and children. He is an African man in his early forties who has been in Ireland since 2008. He converted to Mormonism in 2013 after some time spent attending a local black Pentecostal church which is housed in the same industrial estate as the current Appleby branch. As one of the only black families in the Appleby branch and the only black participant of this research, he told me of his sense of responsibility to grow the black Mormon community in Appleby:

Matthew: I think my presence in the Church, it makes a big difference because I was the first, no, the second [black] member of the Church in Appleby. And there are some who are black, but not my colour! So they are not so visible like me.

Hazel: Are you conscious of how visible you are?

Matthew: Oh yeah! [Laughs]…and I managed to bring a new member who was also from [his home country]. They are now a member of the Church. More of my colour are coming to church. Because they see me there and they see me with my family, and they hear- of course people will not tell you, but they hear and they know what's going on in my family. And they want to experience that in their family.

Matthew feels that his identity as a black African Mormon in Ireland is changing the racial and national makeup of the local Mormon branch; he speaks of how ‘visible’ he is in church, and how his presence makes a ‘big difference’.

However, Matthew also indicates an awareness that his religious conversion is being discussed by people he knows in Appleby’s black African community; ‘people will not tell you, but they hear and they know, what’s going on in my family’. Matthew thus indicates that is he also adapting the religious makeup of the black African community in Appleby itself; ‘more of my colour are coming to church’. Matthew works as a hospital porter, and serves meals to patients which brings him in regular direct contact with the majority population. He tells me of the ways in which the patients assume he might be Muslim because he is black, and of their subtle attempts to discern if he is Muslim or Christian. He says:

> I always go direct to what the patient asked me. When they ask me my country, I tell them. If they ask me my religion, I can tell them but nobody has ever asked me. But always they ask me my first name. They always ask me. They want to know. Because Christian- we have to do things in a Christian way with love, but there are some people who don’t do it that way, but once they ask my name, they know I’m Christian.

Matthew knows that his biblical name symbolises Christianity to his patients, and for many of them, that is enough.

> The people, once they know that we are Christian, they have that acceptance which comes to them. They start to believe in you… But when you tell them a different religion which is not Christian, then they have different feeling. It's like when someone tells you they're from Ireland and you've been living in Ireland for a long time, you start to see his behaviour. There are people from neighbouring countries like Rwanda and Kenya and Tanzania, but someone, you can see him or her in the distance, and you know that he is from Kenya. The way he walks or the way she is dressed. It is the same with Christianity. Once they know your name, they start to study you. Sometimes, if you do things not in the right way, they may say 'that's not Christianity'.

In Matthew's workplace then, his skin colour inadvertently raises questions of his religious identity.

Both he and his patients never mention 'Muslim', 'Christian', or 'Mormon', but both understand the unstated query and response that lies behind the exchange. In Ireland, to be non-white is to immediately be labelled as an outsider, and both Matthew and his patients understand this. These processes of identification are common across the island of Ireland, and work by Larsen (1982) in Northern Ireland has articulated the ways in which coded language and euphemisms are used to navigate public references to religion as 'to display open interest in the religion of anyone present or being referred to is incompatible with the norms of decent behaviour' (Larsen, 1982, p. 138).

For Matthew, emphasising his Christian identity is a way for him to connect with those Irish people who view him as an outsider by virtue of his skin colour. Matthew uses Christianity to move inside Irish conceptions of belonging, just as Suzanne and Seán use their nationality to disrupt the marginalisation they feel they experience on the basis of their faith. Matthew suggests that his patients seem relieved to know that he is Christian. However, I suggest that behind the knowledge that he is Christian is an assumption that he is Catholic or a member of one of the mainstream Protestant denominations. Matthew has never told his patients that his particular form of Christianity is Mormonism, and I suspect that if he did, he would be viewed as a stranger once more.

Another aspect of the complex interactions between Mormon and Irish identities can be discerned by an examination of individuals' positions on social issues. During my fieldwork, many participants used the example of same sex marriage to demonstrate particular ideas they were expressing. Countering the stereotype of Mormonism as a conservative faith, I discovered that people like James in Appleby who expressed outright disapproval of same sex relationships, were in a minority. Most who spoke to me about this issue brought it up in the context of a recent referendum on the extension of marriage rights to same sex couples, which was passed by the majority of Irish people just three months before my fieldwork began. These participants used the example of the referendum to tell me that they voted yes to same sex marriage and had no problem with homosexual relationships, despite Church teaching.

Diane in Appleby told me about her thoughts on same sex marriage, during our morning interview in her home in a housing estate in Appleby. She told me:

> God says that it is man and woman. But now I voted for it [same sex marriage]. Because the way I see it is, that for society and people if they are gay, it would make life so much easier for them. There would be so much less suicides, there would be so much less of everything, the trauma that they have to go through, the problems of coming out to their parents… I think I want them to be happy and be fulfilled and have the same life that I would have, and I don't see why they should be different just because they are gay and the same way with people of colour, I think they should be entitled to everything I have. Just because they are a different colour or a different religion it doesn't matter, so I voted for gay marriage… I would have talked about it with other people, other members, and I think nearly everybody nearly voted for gay marriage. Now I think of it, I only know of one person that didn't.

Diane mentions that virtually all the Church members she spoke to about this issue voted yes, in direct contravention of Church guidance on the most appropriate forms of family.

Those who spoke to me about being in favour of same sex marriage were explicitly aligning themselves with the values of the majority in Ireland, rather than the values of the Church. The Church has been outspoken in its disapproval of same sex marriage and has implemented policies designed to discourage same sex families within Mormonism. Yet, many Irish Mormons are disregarding the guidance of their religious leaders. Therefore, Mormons in Ireland are capable of rejecting key aspects of Mormon doctrine if they feel that this goes against the values of the wider society which they happen to agree with. This disruption of the stereotype of Mormon conservatism highlights that significant adaption of religious tradition is possible locally and that the maintenance of a common Mormon position on social issues may be challenging in the global Church.

The following section describes a St. Patrick’s Day branch party in Sweetwater which demonstrates many of the ideas of identity expressed by the participants in this chapter thus far. At this party, expressions of Irishness, tradition, diversity, and community combined within one social event, which was celebrated by many Sweetwater members in their church building.

6.5 Celebrating St. Patrick’s Day, the Mormon Way.

A social event within the Sweetwater branch represented many of the themes discussed within this chapter. My time in the Sweetwater branch coincided with St. Patricks Day, Ireland’s national holiday. The branch held a St. Patrick’s Day party in the church building on the Saturday night closest to St. Patrick’s Day. This would not have been unusual; most branches, including Appleby, also hold their own St. Patricks day parties each year. The Relief Society President in Sweetwater; an American woman named Abbey, had responsibility for coordinating the party and spending its budget as the Relief Society President normally manages all social events in the branch. However, it is usual for the practical planning to be delegated to a willing member of the Relief Society, and in this case, Suzanne took over the planning of the event.

The Irish group in Sweetwater comprised about nine regularly attending members within a congregation of roughly fifty members from all over the world. The party offered an opportunity to see how Irishness would be approached by the various diverse groups present. The party was a great success, and was well attended by the various nationalities within the branch who seem to have enjoyed the traditional Irish music playing in the background, and Irish themed party games. Below, I have drawn on my field notes from the party, highlighting the food and clothing, the engagement with the party games, and the group's participation in singing Ireland's national anthem.

On the evening of the party, I arrived early, and helped the missionaries put up the last of the green coloured decorations. Despite putting in a significant amount of work in preparation, on the evening of the party Suzanne was delayed by about thirty minutes. Rather than keep everyone waiting, American Abbey decided to formally welcome everyone and to get the celebrations underway. I found out afterwards that this decision caused great offence to Suzanne, who felt that her fears of the Americans 'interfering' (Marilyn, Sweetwater) were being proved correct. No doubt her anger was heightened due to the party being a celebration of all things Irish, in a congregation where the Irish were a minority.

Once the party got underway myself, Marilyn, and her friend Evelyn went to get some food, and brought it back to our seats where we continued to chat. The congregation had been asked in advance by Suzanne and Abbey to bring 'Irish' food with them for the party. It was emphasised that if they were unfamiliar with cooking traditional Irish dishes they could choose to bring along food decorated in Irish colours, or with an Irish theme. As a result, there was a wide variety of foods laid out on the long table. People brought Leek and Potato soup, Irish stew, Mikado and Kimberly biscuits, Jacob's cream crackers with cheese and jam, and Shepherd's Pie. There were also plenty of sweets and cakes decorated with green food colouring, including my own.

The congregation had been encouraged to dress up for the party and people of many nationalities had come wearing costumes, or incorporated the colour green into their outfit. Some of the men were wearing comedy ties, and many Southeast Asians gathered in one corner to use face paint to draw shamrocks, green hearts, and the Irish tricolour on their faces. Suzanne’s husband Michael arrived dressed entirely head to toe in a bright green outfit. Seeing such a display of enthusiasm for costumes, I felt a little self-conscious that my only concession to the theme of the night was to wear a gaudy pair of green, flashing earrings that said ‘Irish’. However, I was conscious of the inter-group disputes in Sweetwater and I had not wanted to wear a costume or other clothing that would mark me too clearly as Irish and therefore a part of the ‘Irish’ group in church, as I was trying to maintain relations with all the various groups. Simultaneously however, as one of the few Irish people regularly attending church, I felt an obligation to get involved and mark my nationality. Although the earrings I chose were gaudy, and clearly identified me as Irish, they were also the only marker of identity I wore that evening, in an attempt to get the balance right.

Suzanne had organised party games, and particularly used a game of Bingo to educate the diverse congregation on aspects of Irish history, culture, and literature, and language. I played the Bingo game with American Mandy and her three children. Suzanne put a lot of effort into the game, she had hand-drawn the bingo cards beautifully, and each square on the bingo card related to an element of Irish culture, history, or language. She included items in each square such as a dolmen [ancient Irish tomb], a crannog [ancient Irish dwelling], an Irish Wolfhound dog, Newgrange [ancient burial ground], and Irish authors such as Bram Stoker and James Joyce. She also included a square which represented the cross of St. Bridget, a well-known Irish saint within Catholicism. Other squares included Irish words like 'Ceol' [music] and 'Slán' [goodbye]. Suzanne also took the time to explain each reference as she calls out each new bingo square. I talked to the children and to Mandy about these various references. Having been in Ireland for just a year, they were interested in learning more.

I was intrigued to see Suzanne's inclusion of the St. Bridget's Cross in the Bingo game. Mormonism does not celebrate saints, as Catholicism does. Additionally, Suzanne herself converted to Mormonism from the Church of Ireland, rather than from Catholicism. Nonetheless, she is clearly familiar with St. Bridget and feels her to be a significant enough character that she chose to include her in the Bingo game. Similarly, St Patrick's day is a Catholic religious holiday celebrating a figure of Catholic significance, despite its conflation with Ireland's national holiday. The broad acceptability of this within Irish Mormonism reveals the ways in which Catholicism and national identity are entwined in Ireland and the acceptance of this by small religions such as Mormonism.

The party culminated with the singing of the Irish national anthem, made more difficult by the fact that the anthem is in Irish, a language unfamiliar to almost all of the non-Irish people present. Suzanne came up with a solution for the multinational congregation. As we all gathered in rows facing the front of the room, Suzanne handed out a phonetical version of the national anthem to everybody. Once the backing music began, we all stood up and sang. Most of the adults didn't know the words because they don't speak Irish. I noticed as we began to sing that many of them looked a little nervous. Abbey, who had come to sit beside me, was joking about how bad everyone would be at this task.

Yet, once we had begun I notice that the children, many of whom are ethnically Southeast Asian but born in Ireland, were singing very enthusiastically and full of pride, and they clearly knew all the words. In fact, in many ways they led their parents and other adults through the anthem. As an Irish person in this environment, I felt a certain obligation to dampen the nerves I saw crossing the faces of some of the non-Irish members in expectation at having to sing in Irish. Cracking jokes and keeping the atmosphere around me light-hearted, I tried to create a space where the non-Irish surrounding where I stood (mostly Americans) felt more relaxed. During the anthem, I made sure to sing out loudly, to help those around me who were unsure. At the end, I told Abbey that she had succeeded in singing her first ever Irish song and she smiled broadly back at me, obviously proud of her effort.

The singing of the national anthem did serve as a good reminder of just how few Irish attended the party, with perhaps just seven other Irish people present amongst a group of forty who were at the party that evening. However, it is important to note that for most Irish members, this non-attendance would not have been a deliberate snub to the party and its symbolism. The Sweetwater branch has very few regularly attending Irish members, being a diverse branch in which Irish members are a minority. Therefore, the small numbers of Irish present reflected the small numbers of Irish attending church within the branch more generally.

Suzanne's careful preparation of traditional food and music for the event, and her attempts on the night to educate those of other backgrounds about Irish culture, history, and language through games, reveal that as one of the few Irish in the branch this celebration represented for Suzanne far more than a simple party. For Suzanne, the party offered an opportunity to bond with others under the umbrella of an Irish identity, and to invoke Irish traditions despite the very nature of the branch and its congregation being proof of Ireland's rapid change.

Additionally, the embrace of face-painting the Irish flag by the Southeast Asian adults, the ease with which their children sung the national anthem-being already familiar with it from school, and the abundant use of costumes by South American Michael and others, all show how Mormons in Ireland can utilise Irishness to create a sense of belonging despite their minority status. In this case, it appears that the congregation could coalesce around an Irish identity and it became a way for them to overcome some of their challenges as a group. For both ethnic minorities and white Irish, one strategy in managing multiple minority status appeared to be to embrace a sense of Irishness. In this way, one might not identify with the majority based on religion or ethnicity, but through an embrace of an Irish national identity one can nonetheless begin a route to finding commonality with the majority by adopting elements of the Irish collective memory as one's own.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown how the participants of this research are re-formulating traditional conceptions of Irishness and are confronting the connection between Catholicism and Irish identity through their social relations as a Mormon. As Mormons such as Seán, Sue, and Jason engage with social institutions like the educational system and the workplace, they insert an Irish Mormon narrative into spaces once dominated by Catholicism. Seán and Jason powerfully argue that Irishness and Mormonism are reconciled within their own understandings of self. However, the stigma experienced by them and other Mormons such as Stephanie and Anna demonstrate that the majority still perceives Mormonism as 'other'.

I have identified that converts to Mormonism show varying motivations which led them to convert from Catholicism to Mormonism. For James, Mormonism offered him a faith in which traditional values were cherished. For Maureen, she desired to move away from a historical entanglement of the Irish State and Catholicism, and would ideally like complete separation of all religion from the State. Maureen's position is not simply a rejection of Catholicism as the keeper of Irish tradition, but is also a rejection of the marginalisation of minority religions such as her own. This rejection of a ethno-religious State can be seen

as a denunciation of Catholicism as Ireland's 'sole legitimate guarantee of the authentic reference to tradition' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 160).
It is an example of the 'break in the chain' of Irish collective memory (Hervieu-Léger,2000, p. 124), as Catholicism and Irishness begin a process of separation. Yet, however differing Maureen and James' motivations for conversion to Mormonism may be, both demonstrate that Catholicism influences conversion and continues to influence understandings of faith post-conversion. Thus, it is too simplistic to describe conversion as a clean break with Catholicism. Rather, the rupture contains within it a continuing Catholic influence on understandings of religion.

In a confirmation of Cosgrove's (2013) findings I have demonstrated that there is much concealment in the management of a minority religious identity in Ireland, often to avoid stigma and stereotyping. Although Mormonism is an adaption of Irish religious tradition, its often-concealed nature results in a continuation of perceptions of religious homogeneity in Ireland, which then continues to shape the national narrative. As white Mormons in Ireland are so easily able and so willing to hide their Mormon identities, they inadvertently mask the true reality of religious diversity in Ireland. Thus, concealment of Mormon identity creates a continuation of the Irish Catholic narrative which has shaped understandings for Irishness for generations.

Those whose religious identity as Mormon is well-known, such as Maureen and John Murphy, must navigate the majority society's perception of them as 'religious'. Jason maintains that the majority society views him solely through his Mormon status, obscuring other important components of his identity.

Although Mormons are stigmatised they are nonetheless also expected to visibly perform their religion according to the (sometimes inaccurate) perceptions of the majority. This assumption by the majority; that Mormonism should involve a public enactment of faith, stands in contrast to the lived experiences of Mormons in Ireland. This research has demonstrated that instead, many Mormons attempt to conceal their faith in public life.

In the final section of this chapter I have illustrated how non-Irish Mormons in Ireland such as the Southeast Asian group in Sweetwater, mobilise Irishness to assert a form of belonging. Additionally, I have highlighted the complex ways in which Irish Mormons such as Seán engage with their Irishness and Mormon faith. I emphasise here that they perceive themselves to have breached national identity due to their religious affiliation which results in active attempts to create a new Irish identity capable of incorporating Mormonism. Therefore, I have shown that both Irish and non-Irish Mormons are engaging with concepts of Irishness to move inside boundaries of belonging to which they are generally excluded based on faith.

In the following chapter, I will explore the experience of Mormonism in Ireland from the perspective of the family. Within both Mormonism and Catholicism, family is central to faith and community. Furthermore, within both religions the transmission of tradition is mainly achieved within the family unit. Therefore, conversion from one to the other is a significant event for the family and for the continuance of the tradition of faith within it. Within Mormonism the doctrine on family is such that generational traditions and ancestry is fundamental to the Mormon experience. Church teachings on family provide a continuance of belief from past, present, to future, leading Mormon families in Ireland to have a unique understanding of their place in the world, and their connections to others.

Chapter Seven: Reproducing Religion in the Mormon Family

7.1 Introduction

The ethnographic chapters provided thus far have demonstrated how Mormons in Ireland maintain and disrupt tradition in their engagements with their congregation and with wider Irish society. This chapter moves to explore these themes within the family. The continuance of a ‘chain of belief’ (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81) transmitted through, and shaped by, the family is strong within Mormonism. This is achieved through marrying a fellow Mormon, raising children within the Church, and conducting religious family rituals which ensure the continuance of Mormon family in the afterlife. At the heart of this chapter are ideas of connectedness and community. Through a continuity of faith traditions transmitted through the family, Mormons maintain connections to each other, and to relatives both past and future. Mormon families therefore, maintain community and tradition through time.

The rationale of this chapter is to establish what is the experience of such conceptions of family and community, within the Irish context. A small, yet multinational Church means that many Mormons in Ireland struggle to marry and raise children with a fellow Irish Mormon. Mormons in Ireland often must negotiate a family life that is divided along religious lines, as ‘part-member’ families. In such an environment, it becomes apparent that Mormons in Ireland have particular challenges to overcome in their attempts to maintain a continuity of Mormon tradition on family.

Below, I will firstly outline the foundational role which doctrine plays in the formation of Mormon concepts of kinship. Mormon teachings on the afterlife and the role of family within it can be detailed and appear complex for the un-initiated. What follows is therefore designed as an explanatory section, to outline the essential Mormon worldview one must understand to adequately comprehend Mormon understandings of family. During fieldwork, I learned this worldview through a process of trial and error, making assumptions about what phrases like 'the eternal family' might mean from a Mormon perspective, and checking my assumptions with others through interviews and conversations with friends from church. Over time, I came to have a strong understanding about how Mormon doctrine on the afterlife and Mormon ideals of family here on earth, are intertwined.

7.2 Conceptualising Eternal Families: The Nature of 'Doctrinal Kinship'

Within the Plan of Salvation, all people are brothers and sisters to each other, even those 'outside the Church'. It is for this reason that in church members often refer to each other as 'Brother' or 'Sister', particularly in more formal contexts. So strong is this belief of a family connection to God and to all others, that during fieldwork I rarely heard members of the congregations use the word 'God' in church or outside of it. Instead, Mormons refer to their God as 'Heavenly Father', and to Jesus Christ as their 'brother' as this reflects their true familial relationship to them. 'He is Heavenly Father, he wants his family to be back with him. Otherwise we would just call him God' (Jerimiah, Appleby). Chapter One has noted that Douglas Davies refers to this worldview as 'doctrinal kinship' (Davies, 2010, p.175); a form of family supported by Church doctrine and which is essential for salvation, according to Mormon belief.

Members frequently remind themselves of the significance of ‘doctrinal kinship’ (Davies, 2010, p.175) as can be seen in this comment from a young French convert named Stella during a talk she gave during a Sacrament meeting in Sweetwater. She said:

> When you realise you are a child of God-do you *really* know it? Is it something we really integrate within our personality and identity? A lot of things identify us. Birth, ethnicity, nationality, hobbies, but true and steadfastness is being a child of God. It is essential that our permanent self is as a child of God.

The message Stella offered here illustrates an attitude often presented to me during my time with the two congregations. Being Heavenly Father’s spirit child is the key to who we are, and that knowledge should shape our entire selves, and go beyond any other differences between us.

Ron from Appleby is an Irish convert in his fifties whose perspectives on God and family further demonstrates Mormon kinship at work. Whilst giving a talk in Sacrament meeting one Sunday, he firstly told the congregation of the importance of maintaining active relationships with his three adult children. He tells us about when his children were small:

> Every Saturday…I would make breakfast. We used to make pancakes and it was messy. Egg, flour everywhere. We would sit and eat until we were about to burst. To this day it is still one of the best things I remember from when the kids were small. Pancake Saturday. Daddy

> Day. Even now I still am conscious to make time for my daughter and sons. If a new restaurant gets recommended to us, we will go together for instance. It gives me a comprehension of them as adults I wouldn't have otherwise.

He continues by using his good relationship with his children as a model for his own relationship with Heavenly Father:

> I do pray, don't get me wrong; when I'm driving I speak to Heavenly Father in heaven but I can't say that I've ever prayed all day and all night. Sometimes I have to work away from home. I text and phone the kids and my wife, but come Friday I just want to be at home and spend time with my family. Heavenly Father understands that sometimes our prayers are like a text message, but we have to make sure we get to spend some time together too. So, remember to keep holy the Sabbath day. It is our Daddy-Daughter/Son Day. It is our date with Dad.

Ron's words helped me to understand how Mormon family relationships move beyond the physical world, to incorporate an ongoing relationship with the spirit world which includes an active familial relationship with God as 'Heavenly Father'. Stella, Ron, and Jerimiah all indicate a personal relationship with God. Jeremiah's comment shows that he feels as though he understands what Heavenly Father is thinking; 'he wants his family to be back with him', whilst Ron's story shows how he engages in running conversations with Heavenly Father. This notion of a real fatherly figure, with whom one has a true understanding and a personal relationship, is at the core of Mormon understanding of the spiritual family, and God’s place in it.

In Stella’s same talk in Sacrament meeting in Sweetwater she continued to explain her perspective:

> I know that I am a child of God. I know we are here for development and improvement. I know that the Plan of Salvation was created for us, and we can now better understand our potential. The Church gives me power, hope, and strength. It gives me comfort-no matter what I am an eternal being. I want my future children to know that too.

Here, Stella argues that the Plan of Salvation assists her in her understanding of her eternal existence. Her reference to her future children despite being currently childless and single, demonstrates how assumed a lineage of belief is within Mormonism, even for converts who have no previous generations of Mormonism within their families to orientate themselves around. Stella does not doubt that her future generations will share the same worldview as herself, and in doing so, she places herself within a complex web of kinship connections based on faith, which stretches towards an imagined future.

Within Mormonism, achieving heterosexual marriage and children is built into Mormon doctrine as essential for earning the highest rewards in the Mormon afterlife. This is explained by Kathryn Daynes (2015) as follows:

> For Mormons, heaven comprises three degrees of glory; the highest of these, the celestial kingdom, comprises three heavens, the highest of which is exaltation. While all others will be single, those who are exalted will live with their families, while husbands and wives continue to increase their posterity. The reward of living in an eternal family is not simply a hope but rather is embedded in Mormon theology and temple ordinances Mormons believe are essential for exaltation (Daynes, 2015, p. 334).

Mormon belief emphasises that a married family who have been ‘sealed’ in a temple marriage ceremony is the core foundation for a collective understanding of what family is. Sealing is a form of ‘temple marriage’ through which Mormon couples and any children born to them, are sealed to each other for time and all eternity through this marriage. Sealing is designed to strengthen familial relationships here on earth and in death for eternity (Holman, 1996; Davies, 2003; Otterstrom, 2008; Faulconer, 2015). It is for this reason that Douglas Davies has referred to exaltation- the highest level of glory in the Mormon afterlife, as ‘family-destiny’ (2010, p. 175).

It is important to note that the Church emphasises in its manuals and in speeches from Church leadership that all types of families and single individuals are welcomed in the Church and that Heavenly Father understands that the ideal family may not be possible for everyone in this life. Teachers are advised during lessons in church to ‘be sensitive to the feelings of those who do not have ideal situations at home’ (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2009, p. 207).

Nonetheless the close association between Mormon family ideology and The Plan of Salvation, means that those who follow the preferred family path will also be those who are deemed to be adhering correctly to Heavenly Father's wishes. They are, in a way, closer to salvation. This brings with it a social status; an ability to 'tick all the boxes' (Anna, Sweetwater) and to be viewed by others as more adherent, 'a better Mormon' (Maria, Sweetwater), or a 'good Mormon' (Jason, Appleby).

Jason in Appleby is married to a woman I have called Catherine, with two children. He neatly summarises what is involved in the expectations of the ideal Mormon family, and the challenge associated with achieving it:

> A lot of the members they, when they get married, they have this eternal view of the family. It somewhat idealised, rose tinted glasses and all that, where they want to fulfil their role as set forth in the Church. And you have to kind of decide what you're going to do in your family. Your family is going to be, to set the tone for your family. Like, myself and Catherine got married, we had all these notions of getting the kids educated and sent off on missions, and then they would come home and get sealed in the temple, and then they would grow up in the Church, and it's all going to be great. And then you have a fourteen-year-old who says, 'I am not going to church'! And you don't, you haven't planned for that.

Jason lists a series of criteria above that are necessary to fulfil the preferred Mormon family, including being sealed in the temple, having children who enjoy their faith, and missionary work. His reference to how to ‘set the tone’ for your family implies his own eternal outlook. Jason therefore understands that this is just the beginning of his future eternal family.

Also, in Appleby Sue showed me how Mormon beliefs regarding eternal families shape how she raises her children and how it guides her responses in times of tragedy. With a bustling family home with four young children, Sue asked if we could hold our interview in her parents’ house nearby, so we could have a quiet place to chat without interruptions. Sitting in her parents’ living room, she told me that before she had her four children, she had lost two babies as stillbirths.

She told me that she took comfort in the idea of eternal families, and could pass this comfort onto a non-Mormon friend who later went through the same experience.

> Sue: We went through the most horrible things that can happen to you as a new parent but it was a very spiritual experience at the same time.
>
> Hazel: That’s just an incredible example of what that really means, eternally, taking comfort in the eternal. Are there ever moments where you doubt that feeling of the eternal, the forever?
>
> Sue: No. No. It might sound crazy probably…You have to deal with what shit life throws at you and for us to have gone through what we did and then go back again, and again, and have more

> [children]. Like, every time you get pregnant you open yourself up to the possibility of that, but it definitely gave us a different outlook. And a different outlook on our children and how we want to raise them. And they have a different outlook. Eva [eldest child] will tell you that she’s the only person who has two sisters in heaven, and when they count the people in our family they count them too...It’s important for them to know that that’s there, and that because me and James were sealed in the temple, that they have that family forever, the same as them. So, that probably has the most influence on how I would think.

Sue exhibits an awareness of her life that goes beyond an individual, temporal existence. For her, the eternal family is not simply a theological concept but a lived reality. It is underpinned by the actions she takes here in the temporal world such as being sealed in the temple, something she particularly mentions as central to the eternal family, as it is through these actions that spiritual family will continue and grow in the next life. Jason’s articulations of his own family life illustrate a similar understanding of ‘eternal family’, demonstrating a common worldview pertaining to family, death, and eternity. Jason and Sue’s experiences confirm that Mormon faith creates and sustains a worldview in which ‘kinship, kinship networks, and extended families that include past, present, and future generations are all part of their collective culture’ (Black, 2016, p. 286).

The following section focuses upon the everyday practices which engage Mormons with these concepts of kinship. Through genealogical research and related rituals, Mormons develop an active relationship with their ancestors in the everyday. These practices serve to reinforce their familial relationships here on earth and in the next life. This demonstrates the importance of a continuity of belief within Mormonism, and the active measures implemented by Mormons in Ireland to maintain such continuity.

7.3 Mormon Genealogy: Ancestry as Spiritual Practice

Genealogy work, facilitated by the Church's Family History database, is an important part of what Church members describe as 'family history work'*.* This is the work that is necessary to be completed before a deceased person's name can be brought to temple to be baptised by proxy in a temple ritual called 'baptism for the dead'. Through genealogy work, members identify ancestors and work to take those names to the temple to be baptised into the Church vicariously. The purpose of this is to ensure that all family, living and deceased, have the opportunity of full salvation and will be connected to each other through the faith for eternity (Davies, 2000).

The Church has been accused that people are posthumously being baptised into the religion against their will through baptisms for the dead. The Church's explanation of their intentions in this regard is as follows:

> Each individual has agency, or the right to choose. The validity of a baptism for the dead depends on the deceased person accepting it and choosing to accept and follow the Savior while residing in the spirit world. The names of deceased persons are not added to the membership records of the Church (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date a).

Nonetheless, baptisms for the dead is often perceived by non-members as an unusual and controversial practice. This serves as a clear boundary marker between Mormonism and the majority society, and between Mormonism and other religions, as the ritual is unique to Mormonism.

Members spend much time tracing family trees, recording ancestral history that might otherwise be lost, and sourcing ancestral names for baptism, which Douglas Davies has described as being ‘rites of salvation for kinsfolk’ (Davies, 2010, p. 180). Family history therefore becomes a spiritual practice in which active connections with deceased family are maintained. Davies (2003) argues that ‘the active work of genealogical research…provided opportunity enough for a sense of the other world to impinge upon this one’ (Davies, 2003, p. 103). Anna in Sweetwater explains why baptism for the dead and its associated genealogical work is so important. She says of its purpose:

> Nobody will be lost. It’s that chain. That’s why family history is so important, because it’s the idea that nobody will be left out. So, everybody will be linked. There are people in the Church who can go back to emperors and stuff in their families. It’s so that nobody will be lost, everyone will be together...I don’t have the family history bug, I don’t have that, you know, people go off to find their ancestors. Like my mother-in-law, she’s a genealogist, that’s what she does. From morning till night. That’s what she does, finding people for people. But yeah, it is that idea that nobody will be lost, the human race will all be together regardless of where they are or what they’re doing.

Despite admitting that she doesn't have the family history 'bug', genealogy work is clearly still an important part of faith and life for Anna. For her, family history provides an assurance that the 'chain' to which everyone is connected, is sustained. For Anna, each generation must be gathered through research and ritual so that they can be linked to all the generations that came before them, and who will come after them. Anna's frequent description of ancestors being 'lost' unless this work is completed for them, illustrates the importance for Mormons of ancestral remembrance. By researching and conducting rituals on their behalf, previous generations are recalled and cease to be past, but present.

Anna's description of Mormon genealogy as being a 'chain' is revealing. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 81) describes religion as a 'chain of belief' which is dependent upon a lineage of tradition. By valuing Mormon genealogy and associated rituals, Mormon families in Ireland deliberately support a familial chain of belief that disrupts conventional concepts of time. Formalising this chain through baptisms for the dead both increases the numbers of family who are spiritually connected, and enhances those connections. Mormon genealogy therefore represents a continuity of religious Mormon tradition which is maintained through the family. Additionally, converts from Catholicism to Mormonism such as Anna baptise their *Catholic* ancestors into Mormonism through the work of 'family history' and subsequent rituals of baptisms for the dead. They are rupturing an Irish Catholic continuity through time, in order to create a new Mormon continuity in its place.

Anna explained to me further about how her understanding of family offers a distinct perspective on the divisions between the living and the dead:

> The spirit world is right here. I mean that I do have a surety of. Definitely. They are right here. They are here everywhere…people don't think about it at all which really bothers me sometimes. I mean we're not just here [gestures in front of her], and the spirit world is not just here [gestures across the room], and heaven is not just here [gestures elsewhere again]. Like, it is *all* here. That's why people feel that their ancestors are watching them.

Anna's description illustrates a worldview in which the spheres of the living and the dead are not defined, and are actively engaged with one another. Anna's understandings of family and death are a good example of the argument of Douglas Davies who observes that 'baptism for the dead operates with an eye to an afterlife realm in which the deceased are conscious and aware of what is being done or not being done for them on earth' (Davies, 2003, p. 96).

During her talk on the topic of family history work in a Sacrament meeting in Sweetwater, Meredith from South America emphasised that by doing genealogy work, there will be temporal benefits for the living as well as spiritual benefits for the dead. She says of doing family history:

> If we start that work, we will get the strength to do more. Finding families is work for us here. Family history is a way to fortify our family here on

> earth. Parents can involve the kids. If we struggle with computers, we can involve the kids, making it a family thing.

From this perspective, family history work benefits deceased family, who are given an opportunity to join the one true church and therefore, their Mormon family members in eternity. However, it also benefits the living who have an opportunity to strengthen existing familial relationships through such work.

Jeremiah from Appleby echoed Meredith's perspective in a Sunday School lesson, when he emphasised the mutual dependency between the living and dead that sits at the heart of Mormon doctrine of salvation. He observed; 'in relation to ordinances for the dead, we can't be saved without them [the dead] and they can't be saved without us'. Per Mormon beliefs, only baptised Mormons can reach the highest levels of heaven, therefore Jeremiah shows his understandings of this in his observations that the dead are reliant on the living for salvation through the ritual of baptisms for the dead.

Furthermore, conducting family history work and baptisms for the dead is a key part of achieving The Plan of Salvation, and so Jerimiah's observation of how the living are dependent on the dead for their own salvation also illustrates his understanding of the complexity of the interconnections between living and dead. Jeremiah, like Meredith, understands the inter-dependency at the heart of these relationships. Like Anna, Jeremiah and Meredith do not envision the dead as separated from their own existence. In completing family history work, they bring the dead back into the temporal world and ignite a personal relationship with them. Douglas Davies (2003) identifies this perspective as incorporating a ‘dynamic interplay between the living and the dead in a theology that pervades several aspects of everyday LDS life’ (Davies, 2003, p. 96).

Fenella Cannell (2013a, 2013b, 2013c) has also explored Mormon concepts of lineage and genealogy in her ethnographic work on American Mormon kinship. Cannell (2013) argues that Mormon identity is formed through idioms of kinship and descent, highlighting particularly the Mormon interconnections between time, space, and family. In an argument reminiscent of the ideas of Hervieu-Léger (2000), she says that ‘time and space re-arrange themselves in the experience of the person’ which culminates in an ‘endlessly linked sequence of human generations’ (Cannell 2013b, p.12). This analysis is useful in demonstrating how Mormonism succeeds in maintaining tradition in modernity. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that given the conditions of modernity, continuity of this kind becomes more difficult to achieve. Yet modern Mormonism is broadly successful in maintaining core traditions which have supported a common understanding of the collective. This common understanding incorporates a sense of connection across time from past to future, and simultaneously across spiritual and temporal worlds, between the living and the dead.

7.4 Maintaining Tradition through the Temple

For Mormons, completing genealogical research and keeping family records is only part of their spiritual obligations. The names gathered in this research must then be brought to temple so that ancestors can be baptised into the Church. Baptisms for the dead and other key rituals such as ‘sealing’ take place in the temple. The temple is a sacred building where the most important aspects of

Mormon practice take place. The temple sits in juxtaposition with regular church buildings where Mormons attend church meetings and other events throughout the week. The importance of temple and its rituals provides an insight into how central family is for the Mormon worldview, and proves the essential purpose of the temple building in playing a mediating role in the development of that worldview.

Like Mormon conceptions of genealogy, the temple and its family focused rituals simultaneously incorporate more people into the wider Mormon family, yet also excludes those who do not meet various criteria necessary to enter the temple in the first place. Hildi Mitchell's work exploring British Mormons' experiences of Mormon historical sites (2001; Mitchell and Mitchell, 2008) explores this idea:

> Unlike chapels, which are used for Sunday worship and are open to all members and non-members, temples are reserved for the carrying out of sacred and secret salvation ordinances which are essential for exaltation after death, and entrance to them is restricted to members who meet strict entry requirements (Mitchell, 2001, p. 11).

As Powell (2016) has noted, the temple and its rituals serve as a unifying and conforming force for Mormonism. Yet, as Mitchell (2001) observes above, the temple and its rituals also highlight distinctions within Mormonism between what Davies refers to as 'temple Mormons' and 'chapel Mormons' (Davies, 2007, p. 65).

As a non-Mormon I am not allowed to enter the temple, and in any case, Mormons in Ireland must travel to Preston, UK, the site of their nearest temple which necessitates a long journey. For this reason, I built up a picture in my mind of the atmosphere of temple based on comments from conversations throughout the fieldwork and across the field sites. All the Mormons I spoke to about temple agreed it was a special and sacred place. They described the space as ‘peaceful’ (Anna, Sweetwater)*’,* ‘clean’ (Sue, Appleby) ‘quiet’ (Mary, Appleby), or ‘silent’ (James, Appleby). It was described to me as a space to pray (Donal Appleby), to think (Abbey, Sweetwater), and to reaffirm your faith (Anna, Sweetwater).

Anna described to me why the temple is so important:

> You know you’re getting sealed for time and all eternity, you’re doing the baptisms [for the dead], the baptismal fonts are amazing, you’ve got the twelve oxen underneath holding the actual font, it’s just magnificent. Because it’s such a huge thing to be baptised for the dead you know what I mean? So important, you can’t overstate how important it is. And it feels so lovely. And it so sacred, it’s so sacred and so precious. That’s the word, it’s so, so, precious.

Her description of the sacredness of temple reveals an awareness of the importance of time- she specifically mentions the importance of sealing as a form of marriage that lasts for time and all eternity. Similarly, she emphasises how important the baptismal work in the temple is, perhaps because the ritual itself becomes a way to defeat time- for the deceased, their baptism into the

Church will allow them to progress into the next world and for their family lives to continue. For the living, the dead are remembered, brought into the present.

Anna's description of temple and its family rituals invoke anamnesis (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 125)- a recalling of the past. Others such as Meredith from Sweetwater, reveal a similar desire to bring the past into the present. In her family history talk during Sacrament meeting, Meredith explained from the lectern her personal motivations for completing baptisms for the dead:

> When I think of genealogy I think of the privilege that I have to have access to the temple and to bring names to the temple. All of my ancestors except my mum were born in a time when the Church wasn't in [her home country], or even on earth. I remember having a conversation with my sister [also Mormon] about how come they [their ancestors] were so willing to come to earth when they knew they would have no gospel. But still they came, so they were good people. And it is a privilege to do this work for them.

Like Anna, who sees the spirit world as being watchful of the living, Meredith envisions her ancestors in their pre-mortal lives, actively choosing to come to earth. Both Meredith and Anna therefore imagine their ancestors, both before life and after life, as conscious individuals capable of agency. For Meredith and Anna, their ancestors are not distant individuals from long ago, but people whom they have richly imagined, and for whom they have a current obligation to assist.

Restrictions on who can enter temple, and what can be discussed about it, draw clear boundaries around its sacred rites. The restriction on non-members demonstrates a clear boundary, but notably, all Mormons are also not eligible to enter. Members must have an interview with their Branch President and be approved for a 'Temple Recommend' before they are allowed visit the temple. Seán in Appleby proudly pulled his Temple Recommend card from his pocket to show me, during our first meeting at a hotel he suggested near to his home. Looking much like an ID card in appearance, it is shown at the temple to secure entry and is proof that a member is 'worthy' (Seán, Appleby) to enter. To be considered worthy, a member must be adhering to the Word of Wisdom, must be contributing their tithes, be regularly attending church, and otherwise must be living the doctrine of the faith in their everyday lives.

For those considered worthy, the temple becomes an embodiment of kinship, and way to take part in faith traditions which place the individual as part of something bigger than oneself. For example, in a Priesthood Meeting in Sweetwater, the temple was the afternoon's topic of discussion, based on a lesson entitled 'The Temple: The Great Symbol of Our Membership'. On that day, there were seven men present, an average number for the Priesthood meetings in Sweetwater. As they sat in the small room with their chairs lined up neatly against the walls, Meredith's husband David from South America told the group of about his long journey to the temple to be 'sealed' to Meredith, when he was still living in South America.

David told the group that day about the day of his sealing:

> In the Eighties', the closest temple to me was San Paolo, this was a forty-eight hour journey. In the Seventies, the closest temple was in Arizona. By the time you get to temple you don't remember what you are there for. That was the first temple in South America. The Temple President was very handsome, he had perfect white hair. He looked like a perfect person to lead the temple. The kids would come in and they would say 'are you God?!' People were coming from Colombia, this is for five days [of a journey], to get there. So, people would have parties there, after the wedding, because they were not going to go home. The day of my sealing, afterwards I was asked to do baptisms [for the dead]. So, I did about 150 baptisms that day, and finished at ten o'clock at night. It was an interesting wedding night!

For David and Meredith, the long journey is worthwhile due to the nature of sealing and the temple, as both the sealing ritual and the sacred temple building represent Mormon conceptions of eternal kinship, and both ensure the continuance of a chain of belief. It is for this reason that for David and others who travelled from all over South America to visit the temple, the pilgrimage to temple ends with a party atmosphere.

Those who have travelled so far to be married to their partners for eternity are then asked to participate in additional kinship rituals of baptism for the dead. This assists in the running of the temple, but also gives members like David an opportunity to further Heavenly Father's Plan of Salvation, where baptising deceased non-Mormons into the Church is a key element of achieving salvation. Those who cannot travel to the temple to conduct baptisms for the dead themselves, can submit their families' names to the temple and have others such as David conduct the ceremony on their behalf.

By agreeing to partake in the ritual that evening, David made himself a part of the wider community of Mormons, by acting on their behalf so that their descendants could be baptised into the Church. By acting in proxy for an anonymous Church member unable to travel who themselves were going to be baptised by proxy for a family member, David is assisting multiple generations of a family whom he has never met. He is ensuring the expansion of Mormon kinship.

In acting by proxy for others in this way, temple rituals such as baptism for the dead become a form of embodied spiritual practice, as does the wearing of 'temple garments', which serve as a constant reminder of the sacredness of the temple building and what it represents. After a member is endowed in the temple for the first time, they are from then on required to wear sacred underclothing referred to by members as 'temple garments'. Powell (2016) has noted how temple garments serve a purpose in ensuring conformity *within* the community. Temple rituals such as these are therefore a demonstration of the functions of tradition for the religious group, per Hervieu-Léger (2000). She identifies that such tradition serves a purpose in identification 'ad intra (through incorporating into a believing community) and ad extra (through differentiation from those not of this lineage)' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, pp. 81–82).
Only three participants (Sisters Fisher and Ross, and Michael of Sweetwater) mentioned temple garments to me, and I did not directly question anyone about them unless they raised the topic with me first. I understood that temple

garments, like the temple itself, are sacred and personal and did not want to intrude too forcefully upon such a sensitive topic. I did manage to ascertain that the garments are much like thermal underwear in appearance, with special symbols pertaining to the temple sewn into the fabric, and that temple garments are a symbolic reminder of the temple and its family-focused rituals.

However, given that the temple and its rituals allow Mormon conceptions of eternal kinship to be realised, the garments therefore also become a lived everyday reminder of the doctrine of kinship which underpins the Mormon belief system. Temple garments are worn at all times, not just inside the temple, and therefore ensure that the experience of the temple as a fulfilment of family, is always felt through the feel of the garment fabric on the skin and through the consequent restrictions on behaviour (Mitchell and Mitchell, 2008, p. 90). For instance, Sister Ross and Sister Fisher, two young missionaries from Appleby, told me a little about how the wearing of ‘garments’ (Sister Fisher, Appleby) changes behaviour, whilst I was giving them a lift in my car from Appleby to a nearby town so that they could meet with an interested ‘investigator’.

Sister Fisher mentioned that once she had been through the temple and received her garments, she was no longer able to wear ‘short-shorts’ in summertime as the undergarments would be too long to be covered by the shorts and the Church instructs that they must not be visible. Temple garments therefore encourage more conservative dress amongst both women and men, perhaps particularly women, but more significantly, they provide a direct connection between the family rituals of temple and lived faith in everyday life. In this way, temple garments become part of the repertoire of embodied memory which Mormons utilise to reinforce their relationships with spiritual kin through time but also in the everyday.

Temple garments have been a point of mockery for those who wish to denigrate the Church's more unique practices, and for some Mormons it is a sensitive issue as they feel that their religious beliefs and practices are not respected. Michael in Sweetwater was insulted by the behaviour of one member who had not 'been through the temple' and so was not required to wear temple garments. In joking about the clothes, she gravely offended him:

> She was trying to mock our endowments- our special clothes that we wear, our garments. Who knows the reason, but she was mocking them. Because she was laughing, so I said, 'I don't find it funny what you're saying' because our clothes are special for Suzanne and myself, we put our clothes not even with the other dirty clothes, we put them separate, we don't let them mix with anything. And she got real serious after that, said 'sorry' and I said 'there is no secret about this, it is sacred. Because if you fulfil your requirements in the Church, you will have the same as what I have, you will have the same experiences. You don't have to be a special people; you just have to fulfil the requirements'.

Michael's description of just how seriously himself and his wife Suzanne look after their temple garments, by separating them from other dirty laundry, is proof of the sacred nature of the clothing and the importance of the rituals they symbolise.

In responding to the woman who laughed at him, Michael emphasised that the rituals of temple are open to all those who meet the necessary requirements to enter the temple. In this way, he downplays the uniqueness and special nature of temple rituals and those who are allowed to participate in them. Yet, simultaneously, the continuance of distinction through the wearing of special garments every day, and the Church's instruction to keep the clothing hidden from view, denotes a distinction which is not obvious but always present; those who have 'been through the temple' and those who have not.

The following section illustrates the challenges in meeting Mormon conceptions of family within the context of Catholic Ireland. Those who are the first member of the Church in their family often face a lonely path, having been brought into a faith family with distinct and important conceptions of kin which their own families have no understanding of. Achieving an eternal family by marrying and raising children within the Church therefore becomes a significant challenge for Mormons living in Ireland and indicates the challenges inherent in maintaining Mormon tradition in an Irish context.

7.5 Performing Mormon Family in Catholic Ireland

Due to the very small number of Mormons in Ireland coupled with a high number of first generation converts, many Mormons in Ireland find themselves as the only member of their family who is Mormon. Additionally, a common experience is what is referred to as 'part-member families' where some family members are Church members and others are not, such as Maureen and John Murphy and their family in Appleby. Their adult daughters are active members in the faith but their adult sons are not. I have also encountered several families where the husband or wife is a member of the Church whilst their partner is not.

These experiences lead to diverse negotiations regarding how to manage the faith of the children of these families. Given the nature of Mormon belief regarding eternal families and salvation as outlined above, these experiences mean that such families are not simply negotiating family life across multiple religions in wider environment of religious hegemony. They are also navigating their way through a faith in which a key aspect is the need to bring non-Mormon family members, both living and dead, into the Church. Achieving these ideals of Mormon family can often be difficult.

Kristeen Black (2016) argues that ‘throughout the entire history of the LDS Church, conversion to Mormonism often means being separated from friends and family’ who remain unconverted (2016, p. 99). She suggests that a response to this experience has been to ‘create and legitimize new familial ties’ through an embrace of Mormon family rituals (2016, p. 99). However, part of the legitimization of these new familial bonds means working to ensure that non-member family, both living and dead, are brought inside the Mormon ties of family. Within this context, being a ‘first member’ (Margaret, Appleby) - the first in a family to join the Church - is a daunting experience which continues to affect the member long after conversion.

Fast and Testimony takes places once a month during Sacrament meeting**.** I came to understand during the fieldwork that these testimony meetings served an important purpose as a form of conversation between members, allowing those who spoke to connect with the testimony of previous speakers. In this way, identifiable themes would often occur within and across testimonies**.** One such meeting of the Appleby congregation illustrated to me how significant it is to be a 'first member'. It was within this context that several members in the Appleby congregation shared their experiences of being the first and/or only Mormon in their respective families during the Fast and Testimony meeting.

It began with the testimony of Emilio, a married Italian man with three children. Although his wife and children are all active members, his parents, siblings, and wider family are not members of the Church. In the giving of his testimony he mentioned:

> I am the first in my family to join the Church, and because of that I have a responsibility to bring the gospel to my family. I don't know if I am good enough for that, but I will share the gospel with my friends and family.

Emilio mentioned the 'responsibility' to share the gospel with his family. His understanding of the Plan of Salvation means that he is aware of the need to ensure all his family members have an opportunity to join him in an eternal family in the afterlife, which can only be achieved by bringing his family into the Church, either through conversion in the present, or through baptism for the dead once they are deceased.

Others too, were motivated to speak about family that day. After Emilio's comments, Matthew who is from East Africa got up to speak. His wife and children are members, but his other family members in Africa are not. He told us:

> I am also the first to join this Church in my family. In this time, I have gained a lot of testimony- of my family, of this Church, of knowing that Jesus Christ loves us. I plan to go home to [his home country] next Friday. It is the first time to go home in a long time. Some of my daughters have never been there at all. We have planned it for a long time but we are going back. I am going to share my testimony with those back home.

Some weeks after his return from Africa, I had an opportunity to ask Matthew how his attempts to spread the gospel with his family members had gone. He reminded me that Mormonism lives within families:

> I encouraged the family that this is what they have to do, it is not just a Church, but it is the family. Because in Mormonism we believe we work together on the family. It's not a matter of practising the Church outside, but we bring the Church inside of our families. So, the love which we show in the Church, it starts from our family.

For Matthew, the heart of Mormonism as a faith lives within the family. For his family members to remain outside the Church therefore presents a tension between his beliefs and his experiences. Emilio's words in church that day had clearly influenced Matthew, who identified with Emilio on the basis of their similar family circumstances.

Margaret, an Irish convert from Catholicism to Mormonism in her fifties, was also inspired to speak about this issue after Emilio had finished. She directly acknowledged that Emilio’s words had inspired her to speak about this topic.

> I felt the Spirit when listening to Emilio say he was the first member in his family and so I wanted to get up [to speak]. It can be hard to see why we are here [at church], when other people aren't. But I know the Book of Mormon can change lives. It changes how you feel, think, and who you want to be.

She becomes emotional, and starts crying. She tells the group that she was the first member of her family to join the Church, only one sibling is now active, and her children are not members. I understood how isolating this experience was for Margaret when a few weeks later, in a Relief Society meeting which was discussing the importance of Christmas, the teacher of the lesson asked the group to share their experiences of Christmas. Margaret volunteered, and explained that although Christmas is an important time for devout Mormons, she feels like she can’t talk about the importance of it to her family who she feels don’t, and can’t understand.

She told the group that on Christmas Eve the previous year she was at home upstairs by herself, feeling quite sad about experiencing Christmas as the only

Mormon in the house, when her son came into the room. As before during the Fast and Testimony meeting, she becomes emotional and through tears she tells us:

> I was upset, and wasn’t in the humour to talk to anyone when he came up. He saw that I was a bit upset. Then, I couldn’t believe it, but he started playing me some Mormon hymns. He sat with me and we listened to the hymns, and he told me ‘oh I like this one’. I wondered to myself how did he even know that song, but I was so touched that he did that for me. He recognised that it was important to me and that I needed someone to share it with. I’m so glad I got to spend that time with him.

Margaret’s Christmas story emotionally affected everyone in the room; many were tearful, whilst the atmosphere was sombre and sympathetic. Those who also had part-member family or convert experiences empathised with her story. In this regard, a convert I have named Molly mentioned how good it was for her to hear that others also feel part -member families to be a lonely experience at Christmas.

However, Margaret’s story in the Relief Society meeting helped me to further understand why she felt such a strong urge to speak after hearing Emilio’s words in Fast and Testimony. Like Matthew, she understands the interrelationships between Mormonism and family. In the telling of her story about her son, she offers a glimpse of a moment when family and faith aligned in her life. For one brief moment, Margaret felt as though there was no incompatibility between her position as a mother and her position as a Mormon.

Her gratitude for that moment, and her emotion in the retelling of it, reveals just how meaningful this brief experience was for her.

There was one more person who chose to speak of their similar experiences after hearing Emilio’s words in church in Fast and Testimony. Significantly, it was the District President whom I have called Spencer, who was visiting the Appleby congregation for the day. As a key Church leader in Ireland, his affirmation of the others’ experiences by telling his own family story was an important recognition by a Church leader of this difficult part of Mormon family life in Ireland. He said:

> Hearing so many of you talk about being the first member in your families has made me think about my own first member. That is my uncle Simon in South Africa. He and my dad were part of the Catholic Church when he joined, my dad was the one who gave him a hard time about it. But Simon was patient and invited my dad to volleyball and soccer with the Church, and eventually he went to church. My parents met there and got married. My mum was getting ready to go to temple [to take part in important rituals]. My dad didn't want to go; he wasn't so into the Church then. One morning a man got in the car with my dad, and he had a gun. He said, ‘drive or I'll kill you’. At the next lights, my dad jumped out of the car and ran as the guy was shooting at him. As he was running he thought I have to go to temple with my wife, and from then on he was involved with the Church.

In reflecting upon Spencer's story of his uncle, it occurred to me that given the significance of the interconnections between death and family within Mormon kinship it is unsurprisingly that it was when Spencer's father was confronted with his own mortality that he decided to ensure his eternal family through the temple. Spencer's narrative about his family's experiences also show that like Emilio and Matthew, Spencer's uncle was actively trying to bring family members into the Church. Due to his uncle's efforts, Spencer's family, and his wife's, are now well established in the Church in both Ireland and South Africa. When I met his wife, she proudly told me that she was a fourth-generation Mormon, and that I would probably not speak to anyone else during my research with such a long lineage in the Church. Indeed, she was right.

In his role as District President, Spencer travelled to different branches each Sunday for church. As such, his attendance at Appleby was sporadic, and I saw him on just one other occasion after this Fast and Testimony meeting. This meant that I never had an opportunity to talk with Spencer about his testimony, and what might have motivated his intervention. However, given the pride shown by he and his wife regarding their families' membership of the Church, it appeared to me that Spencer's testimony in Appleby that day was designed to comfort those struggling within part-member families.

The testimonies of Emilio, Matthew, and Margaret, and Margaret's subsequent emotional telling of her Christmas story highlights the role of emotion within Mormon understandings of authenticity and meaning (Davies 2011, 2015). As Chapter One has summarised, Joseph Smith's First Vision in which he experienced powerful emotions whilst praying for wisdom from God as to the one true church, has continued to shape Mormon spirituality ever since. Chapter Five has also noted that tearfulness is a frequent experience within everyday Mormon experiences of faith. Often, when providing a testimony or telling a story, crying accompanies the narrative. Above, we can see that those who spoke of their ‘first member’ experiences used emotion as a way to express meaning, Through their embodied feelings, these Mormons publicly signalled to others in the congregation the power and the authenticity of their faith. Margaret’s telling of her experiences at Christmas as a lone Mormon family member serves the same purpose.

This observation confirms the centrality of embodied feeling for Mormon identity and meaning (Mitchell 2008, Davies 2011, 2015) but also connects to the theoretical basis of this research. By signalling the authenticity of their spirituality through emotion, these Mormons reassert the Mormon chain of memory which goes back to the First Vision of Joseph Smith in 1820. It was due to the power of great emotion that Smith understood the authenticity of his experiences that day. Modern Mormons utilise tears and heightened feelings in the same way, to confirm to themselves and others, the truth of their experiences. Thus, Mormons such as Emilio, Matthew, Spencer and Margaret who speak of ‘feeling the spirit’, ‘love’, being ‘upset’, and who cry in the telling of their testimony, are re-affirming the Mormon collective memory of meaning which has so shaped Mormon understandings of truth and meaning.

Part of achieving an eternal family means being sealed within the temple so that any children born into that relationship will be automatically sealed to their parents in the hereafter for eternity. For this reason, marrying within the Church is about more than just the reproduction of faith through the generations, but is necessary to ensure that families remain together after death. Additionally, and as Black (2016) observes, marrying within the faith has also become a cultural expectation alongside an imperative for salvation. However, the achievement of this expectation is not uniformly experienced. In Europe, Marco Meiling (2017) notes a small Church presence coupled with high numbers of 'part-member families' and converts. This he argues, means that young European Mormons struggle to marry and form a family of their own inside the Church.

Considering the specific context of Ireland, where the small presence of the Church means that in practical terms, it is often difficult to marry within the Church and begin an eternal family. In Appleby for instance, in an active congregation of seventy, there was just one young single man regularly attending Church, Mary Daly's son Andrew who is in his early twenties. Situations such as this lead young women such as Stephanie in Appleby to question how, or where, they will meet their future husband; 'I think that's for me anyway, the thing I find most difficult about being a member. It's that there are not enough men'. She tells me at the time of our interview that she is considering attending BYU; a Mormon university in the US, to do a Masters but also because:

> There's loads of single people, loads of people that are members because of the Church school [BYU]. Of course, I'd do that. I think the

> hardest thing for me is you know; you want to get married, you want to do all those things, but the options just aren't here for it [in Ireland]. So, you see, you have to just look somewhere else, or bring someone over [to Ireland].

Andrew's mother Mary told me that fulfilling the Mormon family within these circumstances was also on her son's mind:

> We talked about this, I feel that Andrew will marry in the Church. I feel most likely he will marry an English girl or an American girl…because there isn't a big pool of people.

Such choices by young Irish Mormons are felt to be a 'pragmatic' (Stephanie, Appleby) decision based on the circumstances in which they find themselves in.

These decisions will allow Stephanie and Andrew to fulfil the Mormon ideals of kinship but it will also have the unintended consequence of placing the Church in Ireland in a more vulnerable position. For example, some young Irish Mormons who make such choices may emigrate elsewhere in search of a partner, thus diminishing the position of the Church in Ireland even further. There is evidence of this occurring; Stephanie is now living in Utah, attending BYU, and has recently married an American Mormon.

In contrast, Andrew decided he wants to 'stay to build the Church in Ireland' (Mary, Appleby). As his mother speculated he might, he has recently married an English Mormon, perhaps inadvertently reinforcing existing perceptions in

Ireland amongst the majority, that Mormonism is not a faith to which Irish people belong. This perception is exacerbated by the national diversity which exists within Mormon congregations in Ireland. Sweetwater is very diverse, where Irish Mormons are a minority, however even Appleby has as many as nine different nationalities attending church each week. For example, in Appleby's Fast and Testimony described above in which four 'first-members' shared their experiences, Margaret was the only Irish member of the four. Emilio, Spencer and Matthew represent the reality of the national diversity in existence within Mormonism in Ireland. Therefore, by marrying non-Irish Mormons to fulfil Mormon ideals of family, Irish Mormons such as Stephanie and Andrew inadvertently continue a trend which aids perceptions of Mormonism in Ireland as a 'foreign' religion.

The reality of Irish Mormonism is that all these diverse experiences, Irish and non-Irish, part-member families and families with all active members, represent the true lived experience of Mormonism in modern Ireland. This diversity of experience reflects the wider society of which it belongs, which is also becoming increasingly diverse. However, there does appear to be a perception of homogeneity in terms of how Mormon culture conceives of 'family'. Therefore, despite the reality of lived Irish Mormonism, members such as Stephanie and Andrew feel themselves to be placed in a difficult position when it comes to family formation in Ireland as a Mormon. Anna's experiences of her own baptism into Mormonism further demonstrates this perspective. She articulates how conscious she was about betraying her Irish Catholic ancestors through her conversion to Mormonism:

> On my baptism day, I was crying outside the church because I thought they're are all going to turn in their graves, all the ancestors who died for Ireland and all that kind of stuff. They are all gonna think because I was turning my back, and then I thought, I'm not turning my back on being Irish, you know I can be Irish and I can be Mormon. It can be done. But it was very hard for me. That part of it was. I found that part really hard.

In Anna's mind at that time, she was leaving one family to begin another. It took her some time to reconcile her membership of the wider Mormon family with her ongoing relationship with her Irish Catholic heritage. Her narrative speaks of her trying to convince herself that such a reconciliation *'*can be done', and that her Mormonism does not represent a rejection of her Irishness.

Anna originally comes from a traditional Catholic family. They lived in a rural part of Ireland in a small town, have a strong farming heritage, are a large family, and her parents are lifelong and devout active Catholics who are immersed in their local parish. Yet, she also tells me that many family members now exhibit a passive form of Catholicism which she struggles to understand*.* Many of her siblings do not attend Mass, yet have baptised their children and have them participate in the sacrament of Communion, which is a Catholic rite of passage for children of about seven years of age. She says of this behaviour; 'that drives me demented. Sorry, but it drives me crazy'. Of Mormonism, she tells me*; '*Family is crucial, the traditional family, that is what the Church is based on. That's what I love about it to be honest'.

The frustration with her Catholic family's lack of faith and her preference for a 'traditional' family focus within faith, might explain why it is that Mormonism became so attractive for Anna. In modern Ireland, the Mormon version of family has in some ways become what the traditional Catholic family used to be, with an emphasis on traditional gender roles, conservative attitudes towards sexuality incorporating no sex outside of marriage and a rejection of same sex marriage. In this way, family can be said to be a key commonality between Irish Mormonism and traditional Irish Catholicism.

Yet, there is no doubt that the differences between the faiths also serve as a point of separation. Jason in Appleby says of Irish Mormons:

> When you think about it every person who was baptised, unless they grew up in the Church, they are pioneers. They are moral pioneers. They are doing something that no one else has done in their family.

Jason and Anna both imply there is a rupture of Irish heritage upon conversion, which is centred upon the place of family in both Irish society and the Mormon faith. For many Irish Catholics, conceptions of Irishness are carried through the generations through family, and conversion to Mormonism is felt as a rejection of Irishness. As Jason articulates, 'they are doing something that no one else has done'; Irish part-member families and first-member individuals must navigate this challenge, as they attempt to bridge the divide between Irishness and Mormonism.

7.6 Conclusion

Hervieu-Léger (2000) has noted that:

> The practice of anamnesis, of the recalling to memory of the past, is most often observed as a rite. And what characterises a religious rite in relation to all other forms of social ritualization is that the regular repetition of a ritually set pattern of word and gesture exists in order to mark the passage of time (as well as the transience of each individual life incorporated in the chain) (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p. 125).

This chapter has illustrated that Mormon genealogy and its associated temple rituals symbolically reflect notions of time and recall the foundational component of Mormon doctrine and culture, which is family. The temple and its rituals of sealing and baptisms for the dead become a way to recall the past, and to reinforce the role of each individual family member in the chain of memory.

Through an expansive conception of kinship which sees all humans as interconnected through space and time, Mormons maintain relationships with ancestors and future generations, whilst also imagining fluid boundaries between the spiritual and temporal worlds. Though these intergenerational connections are in many ways an act of imagination, Hervieu-Léger argues that claims of lineage need not be verifiable to support a sense of continuity. ‘It may be purely imaginary, so long as its recall is strong enough to allow identification to build and preserve the social bond in question’ (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 96). I have illustrated in this chapter how Mormons in Ireland construct ideas of ancestry, imagining what life might have been like for those family members during their time on earth. Family, both real and imagined, becomes a central component in the transmission and maintenance of Mormon religious identity.

I have shown in this chapter that by conducting baptisms for the dead for non-Mormon family, by inviting family members to church and encouraging their conversion, and by marrying and raising children in the Church, Mormons can fulfil the expectations of a faith-centered kinship. However, in Ireland, a strongly established Catholic Church has resulted in a society in which changes of religious affiliation are uncommon, and stigmatised. This makes the legitimisation of these new family bonds more difficult in an Irish context. For example, I have identified that young Mormons in Ireland may have to emigrate to find a partner, and Irish Mormons may marry a fellow Mormon of another nationality due to small numbers of young Irish Mormons in Ireland. Mormons in Ireland also often find themselves as the only member of the Church in their family, and experience this as a lonely and isolating. In Ireland, maintaining these threads of connectivity may present challenges which point to the importance of understanding Mormonism within the specific environment in which it lives.

Additionally, the struggles of younger generations of Irish Mormons to create a family which is both Irish and Mormon, show the practical difficulties inherent in reconciling ‘Irish’ family and ‘Mormon’ family. Stephanie and Andrew’s experiences remind us that there are significant barriers to overcome to be able to achieve the ideals of Mormon kinship within an Irish context. Their adaptions to conventional Mormon patterns of kinship; marrying a non-Mormon, emigrating in search of a Mormon partner, marrying a Mormon from abroad, all reveal how Mormon tradition can be moulded into something new to uphold that same tradition.

Irish converts from Catholicism participate in baptisms for the dead on behalf of Catholic ancestors to develop and maintain one's emerging Mormon lineage. Whilst this is constructed by participants as establishing one's own 'eternal family', as achieving salvation, and as enhancing Mormon community, it is also simultaneously a rupture of Irish Catholic tradition. By baptising deceased ancestors into Mormonism these converts are also creating disconnections from previous traditions and rupturing an Irish Catholic community maintained, much like Mormonism, through the family.

Yet, there are also continuities between Catholicism and Mormonism regarding death and family. Catholic masses in the name of deceased family members are usually held in Ireland one month and one year after the death date. The 'month's mind' and the 'year's mind' are held as a special remembrance of the deceased and family and friends are encouraged and expected to attend. Thereafter, a regular Sunday mass will be held in the name of the deceased, on the closest Sunday to the anniversary date. This remembrance of the dead within Catholicism, allows for a continuity of tradition post conversion to Mormonism. Though the rituals change, the chain of memory through family and the deceased, continues, as converts move to remember the ancestors through Baptisms for the Dead instead. On this basis, Mormons in Ireland are both maintaining *and* disrupting tradition and community through family.

The following chapter examines how Mormons in Ireland conceive of their faith as a global community. I will illustrate how Mormons in Ireland perceive their membership across the globe in terms of both commonality and difference, thereby mobilising complex understandings of their religious community to shape their own religious identities.

Chapter Eight: A Global Community?

8.1 Introduction

In the final ethnographic chapter of this thesis, I move to explore how Mormons in Ireland negotiate understandings of a global Mormon community which transcends national borders. Demonstrating both unity and dis-unity in their constructions of global Mormonism, the participants of this research reveal diverse opinions of Mormonism as a worldwide Church. I have demonstrated in Chapter Three that Mormonism maintains a continuity of tradition in a variety of ways. However, such continuity of tradition is not passively accepted by members living outside the US. In challenging what some participants call 'church culture', Mormons in Ireland question the assumptions that underlie the 'chain of belief' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81) of Mormonism. This chapter demonstrates that Mormons in Ireland create imaginings of Mormonism and its homeland of Utah which incorporate both connection and disconnection with the traditions of Mormonism.

In this chapter I use the phrase 'global Mormonism' to refer to the Church both within the US and outside of it. Specifically, I utilise it to refer to the global reach of the Church, which is now embedded in most parts of the world. Decoo (2016) has debated the use of this and similar terms arguing for example, that the phrase 'international Mormonism' is American-centric. He also suggests that 'global Mormonism' implies a universalising perspective that:

> Can be understood as not referring to peripheral diversity, but as creating an integrated, similar 'gospel culture', driven by Church Correlation's

> motto ‘reduce and simplify’, to enforce an identical church all over the world (Decoo, 2016).

He advocates instead for the use of the word ‘peripheries’ to describe Mormon regions outside of the US, yet I feel that this does not adequately address the focus of this chapter. This chapter examines the global reach of a ‘church culture’ which stems *from* the US, and is still connected in complex ways, *to* the US.

For this reason, ‘global Mormonism’ will be used here to describe a worldwide religious community who both identify and dis-identify with the traditional ‘centre’ of Utah and ‘church culture’. I acknowledge Decoo’s (2016) legitimate concerns that the phrase may imply that Mormonism is experienced identically across the globe. However, in using the phrase ‘global Mormonism’ I intend quite the opposite. I have demonstrated in Chapter Three that ‘peripheral’ regions of the global Church are shaped by the American legacy of the Church. Yet, I have also emphasised that those regions also have the capacity to influence the ‘centre’, as Rutherford (2016) and Wei-tsing Inouye (2014) have previously articulated. What emerges in each area then, is something quite unique. In this chapter I explore how these dialectical dynamics operate in an Irish context.

To examine this, the chapter firstly discusses Mormon experiences of commonality and continuity in the era of a modern and globalised Church. By examining the Church’s policy of Correlation, I demonstrate that the creation of a common global identity is a key focus for the Church, but difficult to achieve and manage at a local level. Following this, I then examine how members negotiate whiteness within the global Church, particularly in a modern era of diversity. Having shown how members engage with Correlation and whiteness as key tools of commonality, I then explore the debates within Irish Mormonism regarding the existence and significance of a common 'church culture'. Finally, I explore the construction of Utah as 'Zion' in the Mormon imagination by focusing upon the perceptions of Utah by Irish Mormons. Irish Mormons make sense of their own Irish Mormon religious identities by positioning themselves in relation to Utah and American Mormons.

The section below describes some of the ways in which transnational connections are created, maintained, and disrupted amongst the global Mormon community.

8.2 Maintaining and Disrupting Commonality in a Global Age

The Church's policy of Correlation appears to have provided the Church with a way to expand internationally into a variety of cultures whilst retaining a common Mormon identity. In this way, Correlation assists in the maintenance of tradition and belonging in the global community. Many members I spoke with told me about how nice it is to have sense of 'familiarity' when attending church abroad. For instance, Marilyn in Sweetwater is Irish, but used to live in the US. She tells me of her time attending church in California. She says 'do you know what's fascinating? It's actually the same all over. The same feeling, the same sayings, it's not like being away'. Chase, an American living near Sweetwater at the time of my fieldwork tells me that 'the core things are the same everywhere'.

He describes this as ‘welcoming’ and ‘familiar’, and shows that the standardisation of the Church is a comfort to those in an unfamiliar place.

Maureen and John Murphy of Appleby have had a similar experience. In my joint interview with Maureen and her husband, Maureen tells me that no matter what part of the world she has attended church in, she feels a connection to others:

> Maureen: I feel a sense of belonging there...it’s amazing how alike the teachings, well of course the teachings are the same, but the Sunday school programme for instance. If it’s done properly, the same lesson is being taught in Appleby, is being taught in every other place as well on the same Sunday.
>
> John: And that’s anywhere in the world.
>
> Maureen: So, I’ve gone to church in Barcelona, I’ve gone to church in Paris, and the same questions are asked and people give the same answers. They might be in a different language, and you might have a missionary translating for you, but you sit there and laugh because the same questions are asked and the same answers are given.

Maureen and John show awareness of the Church policy of Correlation, although it is never referred to explicitly; they say, ‘if it is done properly, the same lesson is being taught in Appleby is being taught in every other place' (John, Appleby). Similarly, Elder McGuire, a retired American on a year's missionary work in Ireland, mentioned to me in the Appleby foyer before church one morning that 'the Church is correlated so well', referring to the Church as a global organisation. Ordinary members therefore, are aware that this familiarity is constructed, a deliberate Church policy. Cleary, this bureaucratic organisation of the everyday religious experience is appreciated.

Correlation does seem to offer a 'sacred canopy' (Berger, 1967) in the face of uncertainty by providing a framework for similar teachings, lessons, resources, architecture, and building layout. Indeed, Rutherford (2016) uses a similar metaphor to discuss the purpose of Correlation. Describing Correlation as a tent, Rutherford (2016) says:

> In spite of its worldwide expansion, the church has maintained its insistence on uniformity in administration, emphasizing that all of Zion is one tent…The emphasis of the LDS Church has been on maintaining a centralized and unified structure even when borders were enlarged, cords stretched, and stakes planted around the globe (Rutherford, 2016, p. 38).

Correlation has therefore created a route to belonging for some Mormons no matter where they find themselves, as it blurs national or cultural differences in attitudes and behaviour by emphasising instead what Mormons share in common.

Yet, a conversation with a visitor to the Appleby branch showed me the ways in which place-based differences can persist within the Church despite Correlation. I got talking to a visitor originally from South Africa who I have called Karla. She now lives in Ireland. I enjoyed a long conversation with her after the last lesson of the day, a Relief Society meeting, had concluded. The other women left the lesson as we talked, until we were left in an empty room. Our conversation moved to a discussion of the ways in which the 'ideal' Mormon life as contained within Church manuals, may not always match up to the reality of living the faith every day.

Karla used a metaphor of a Health and Safety briefing to employees to explain the difference to me; 'the health and safety rules indicate what you are supposed to do, but everyone knows that people don't always follow them in reality'*.* She followed this up with another example, from Africa. She tells me 'in some parts [of Africa] there is a tradition of a dowry, the husband's family will pay the wife's family for the marriage'. This is not in keeping with Church practices but even practising Mormons pay this dowry upon marriage. She points out that this is part of the culture in some parts of Africa, and Mormon converts do not want to change this upon conversion to Mormonism. She tells me this as an example of the ideal versus the reality of life as a Mormon. However, I suggested to her that it also shows that the Church must sometimes have to incorporate, or at least turn a blind eye, to pre-existing cultural beliefs and practices in the areas they move into which contradict Church beliefs and practices. She agrees that this happens, particularly in Africa, but less so in Europe.

I have heard of a merging of Catholic-Mormon practices during my research, such as visiting the Catholic Church's Christmas crib, or allowing children attending a Catholic school to say their Mormon prayers at night by blessing themselves in the Catholic fashion. Interestingly, both cases involve second and third generation Mormons rather than converts. Sue, the daughter of Maureen and John Murphy, has engaged in these practices with her children. This is despite having never been raised in any other faith other than Mormonism. During a talk in Sacrament meeting Sue also told the congregation that she has 'liked' Pope Francis' Facebook page and the page of a Buddhist group so that she can receive their updates through her Facebook account. Similarly, Anna in Sweetwater tells me that if she is feeling overwhelmed, or wants a break from her busy family, she drives to a local Catholic church which she feels is particularly picturesque and peaceful, and sits there alone with her thoughts.

In Sue's case, it appears that as the broader environment is still widely influenced by Catholicism and increasingly influenced by 'new' religions and ideas such as Buddhism, she has absorbed this to some degree. She has adapted her religious behaviour to incorporate some of the religious practices of the wider society in Ireland. In Anna's case, as a convert from Catholicism and coming from a traditional Irish Catholic family, visiting a Catholic church is a comforting and familiar experience that she has carried with her into her Mormon life. My conversation with Karla shows that in other regions of the world such as Africa, a merging of Mormon practices with local customs also persist. This creates a broadly correlated Church worldwide, but one which still retains local distinctiveness.

From this perspective, there is a continuity to previous religious experiences upon conversion to Mormonism. I have previously shown in Chapter Six how Irish Catholic conversions to Mormonism represent a desire for a continued relationship with God. Karla's story regarding the continuance of dowries in parts of Africa is also representative of this continuance of tradition, whilst Sue's experiences show that her Mormon membership does not mean she is excluded from the norms of wider Irish society. Rather, she maintains those habits, alongside her Mormon beliefs and practices.

An incident from my fieldwork revealed to me how frequently universal Church guidance is disputed, adapted, or even rejected, and that the debate of how closely one should follow Church guidance can be a source of tension between members. After church one Sunday myself, an Italian woman I have called Sofia, and two Sister missionaries, were talking in the bright foyer of the Appleby church building. One of the missionaries was American, the other English. A discussion of the Church's health code, known as the Word of Wisdom, which advises against consuming 'hot drinks' took place (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date f). The Word of Wisdom's commentary on hot drinks has usually been interpreted by members as advice against the consumption of tea and coffee.

The Word of Wisdom (Doctrine and Covenants, 89, 1-21) does clearly advises against consumption of hot drinks, but does not give any further details on types of beverage, or whether or not such food stuffs should or should not be kept in the family home. However, at this stage in my fieldwork I knew that the Word of Wisdom was variously interpreted by members. Some drank decaffeinated coffee for instance, arguing that it was the caffeine which the Church advised against. In contrast, others refused to keep tea or coffee in their home, even for guests. This variable interpretation of the Word of Wisdom is common, with Falconer (2006) noting that it is common for Mormons to reject tea or coffee as they are caffeinated, but to consume Coke, a highly caffeinated drink. It is within this context of variable interpretation of Church advice, that the incident occurred.

Sofia, myself, and the sister missionaries were talking when the topic of tea and coffee arose. The missionaries both said that they don't have tea or coffee in their houses at home. Sofia said she does, for when guests come so she could offer it to them. I privately observed that she seemed quite rushed in her explanation to us, and I began to wonder if she felt that the missionaries or myself were judging her for this admission. As she explained, both the missionaries began shaking their heads and pursing their lips disapprovingly which gave me the impression that they really did not approve of this at all. Sofia seemed aware of this too. She appeared to be taking extra care to justify her practices; saying that people come to visit her from Italy and everyone drinks so much coffee in Italy that it would be impossible not to offer it to them.

For Sofia, this ‘breach’ of Church tradition is justified by national differences. Yet despite Sofia’s protestations, this didn’t appear to me to be an issue explained simply by national differences. I had heard and experienced many variations on the topic of abstaining from tea/coffee from all the nationalities I encountered throughout fieldwork. Indeed, during this conversation, the English missionary countered to Sofia that despite the traditional English love of tea, her family still do not keep it in their house.

Afterwards as I reflected upon this conversation on the long drive home from church, I wondered were the differences about the management of tea/coffee guidance more about a public expression of faith. Perhaps it is felt by some that the stricter you are with tea and coffee, the more devoted to the Church you must be. This aligned better with my own experiences; those who offered me tea and coffee in their homes or admitted to drinking decaffeinated coffee themselves, have been those whom I would consider to be less conservative and rigid in their approach to their faith. Similarly, those who ‘go out’ on a mission like the young sister missionaries based in Appleby, tend to be devout and adherent Mormons, which might explain their obvious disapproval.

Maureen and John Murphy told me of other examples where Church guidance is variously interpreted. The Church maintains that the Sabbath day is sacred and suggest it is a day for attending church, receiving the sacrament, and quiet reflection. Like the Word of Wisdom, this message is variously received. Maureen tells me:

> We do have some kind of fanatical people in our Church…I’ve heard people nowadays say, ‘oh I wouldn’t have the internet in my house, there’s too much dirt on it’ [a reference to pornography or sexual images], or ‘I don’t allow my children the television on Sunday because it’s the Sabbath day’ and that to me, is all rot... Sometimes you hear people standing up and bearing testimony and say, ‘my testimony of the

> gospel is the most important thing that I have'. And I'm down there thinking 'are they mad or what?' [John, listening to his wife speak, laughs loudly at this]. Because like, my testimony of the gospel, it's important to me but probably the most important thing, now I don't mean any disrespect to you- my husband would be the most important thing in my life, my children, my grandchildren. My friends. My testimony is one thing. But it's not the be all and end all of everything in my life.

Maureen clearly places herself in opposition to 'fanatical' members who take a strict interpretation of any guidance which might offer room for interpretation, and rationalises that a strict interpretation of Church guidance is a form of 'fundamentalism'.

The experiences of Maureen, Sofia, and Sue highlight the variability of how church doctrine and advice is interpreted. These interpretations do not appear to clearly diverge along national, ethnic, class, or gender lines, although it has been suggested to me that the Irish are more 'relaxed' (Abbey, Sweetwater) than Americans, a point that will be explored in more detail further in this chapter. Therefore, although Correlation has been broadly successful in providing the global Church a common identity to unite under, significant cases of divergence and disunity remain in the everyday experience of Mormonism. These divergences emphasise difference within the community, and remind us that adaption of tradition will inevitably occur, no matter how standardised or tightly controlled the messages are from Church Headquarters in Salt Lake City.

Below, I address the continued association between the white American middle-class experience and modern Mormonism. This section articulates that the Church's attempts at more diverse representation in the modern era are insufficient. Mormonism continues to be experienced as a white religion, raising serious questions relating to the ability of the Church to unite members worldwide under a common identity.

8.3 Challenging Whiteness in Global Mormonism

Further evidence of disunity within a standardised Church comes from the Church's rapid growth in areas of the world which have not traditionally been sites of Mormon proselytising. Growth in South America, Africa, and parts of Asia have challenged the limits of Correlation. This growth has highlighted the white American underpinnings of the faith, which is now more visible as the Church grows in regions far removed from this white American background. In Ireland too, increasingly diverse Mormon congregations challenge Mormonism's origins.

Chase, who is white American, travels regularly for work and will only stay in one country for up to five years at a time before he is required to move again for work purposes. Chase has lived in many countries including the Netherlands, and the Philippines, and has now moved to the Maldives. At the time of my fieldwork he was living in Ireland with his wife and two children. He has also attended church in many more countries as a 'visitor' if he is staying briefly for work purposes. Throughout this, Chase has remained an active member of the Church. He has experienced Church life in a variety of places which are often in non-white regions of the world and also socio-economically disadvantaged. He says of the Church’s attempts to universalise the Mormon experience:

> It’s been a struggle. I work with a lot of multinationals [multi-national corporations], if you try and take some US company and bring it over to Africa, it’s hard. So, there are some things you want to bring over from that culture that are important to what the company is; this is Apple; this is what we do, this is how we believe. And you bring it over to somewhere like China or Africa, well it’s going to clash a little bit… My brother, he was a Mission President in India so he was over in India and over in Pakistan, so the stories he tells about Christians in Pakistan being baptised; that’s not only hard, it’s dangerous, you can imagine. So how does the Church deal with all these different things? You can imagine for the first long while it was trying to create this identity. When you have people from all around the globe coming in…So I think it’s a work in progress. But you definitely would see it if you were to go back and look at the manuals [Church manuals] and look at the pictures or whatever, I mean the message is the same, but the stories that they use, or the pictures that they use- they have tried to regionalise it to some degree… But, I can tell you from a real point of view for example, being in the Philippines and teaching lessons, when every single picture image is Caucasian, that’s hard.

Chase refers above to the photos used in Church manuals, and the difficulties in how they are experienced in mainly non-white regions of the world. Before this conversation with Chase I had noticed quite a diverse range of ethnicities represented in the Church manuals stocked in Appleby and Sweetwater, which I had interpreted as a positive example of how the Church is increasingly becoming aware of the need to represent all members across the globe. Yet, through his example of teaching lessons in the Philippines using manuals with only images of white people, Chase articulates being uncomfortable with the lack of diversity.

Another white American in Ireland, Mandy, was similarly conscious of how the Church includes members of other backgrounds. Having attended another ward in Ireland prior to Sweetwater, she told me how diverse the Irish congregations are compared to her experiences in the US:

> [her 1st Irish ward] is very diverse, there is a couple of families from Nigeria, and there are people who are originally from the Ivory Coast, there are French, and there is German, and so I was really excited about that…Our ward in the States was 100% white, there was not even a Latino! I'm sorry- there was one Asian man…and his wife was white. And other than that, there was no diversity, so I loved that when we moved here. I was glad to move to Sweetwater, where there is still more diversity. It helps me enjoy church more because I feel as though okay this is a worldwide Church…And I love to hear the experiences of people who grew up in other countries and what brought them into the Church… So, for me it helps to strengthen my feelings because I feel like when you live in the western United States, you just feel like the Church is just a bunch of white people you know?

Chase's concern about the predominate 'white' focus by the Church is one which is also shared by Mandy. Part of what has made her time in Ireland enjoyable, despite the homogenous nature of the majority society, has been the diversity within the Mormon congregations she has attended. It is interesting that Mandy and Chase come from the US, a substantially more diverse society than Ireland, yet they have experienced American Mormonism as a ‘white’ religion, and Mandy in particular, criticises the homogeneity of the wards she has previously belonged to in the US. Yet in Ireland, they find the Mormon branches to be more diverse than what they have experienced in the US. This is despite the wider lack of ethnic and racial diversity in Irish society.

During a Sunday School class in Sweetwater I was intrigued to hear the white American teacher named Ted describe Church teaching manuals as featuring ‘the token Asian person’ and describe these attempts at diversity as appearing forced. Ted is originally from Utah and can trace his family back to one of the original ‘pioneers’ who made the trek to Utah. He now lives in Ireland, having moved here to be with his Irish wife Anna, from whom he has recently separated. The others in Sweetwater were aware of his ‘pioneer’ background. In mentioning Ted to me on one occasion Marilyn approvingly told me, ‘he is a [she says his family name] you know, they are one of the pioneer families from Utah’. I felt that Ted’s family background gave him a certain status in Sweetwater as unlike Utah, it would not have been common to have descendants from the founding families attending church.

In reflecting upon these commonalities and differences between Utah and Ireland as we talked in between lessons one day, Ted told me that ‘being Mormon in Utah is like being Catholic in Ireland’. In other words, there is a ubiquity to the white Irish Catholic experience in Ireland that is familiar to him due to his experiences as white American Mormon in Utah. It is within this context that Ted described the ‘token Asian person’ within Church teaching manuals as being a ‘forced’ attempt at highlighting the racial and ethnic diversity of the Church. Ted’s comment inferred that the Church was trying to insert a diverse representation of Church members into Mormonism where once there was none, and in the process made this diversity appear forced. Ted, like Chase and Mandy, seems self-conscious about diverse representation in a traditionally white church which is becoming increasingly racially diverse.

The Church is consciously attempting to move away from its predominate Utah-American focus to ensure global growth. Ted, Chase, and Mandy are aware of the Church’s increasingly multicultural focus. This new focus is a break with Church traditions which put much effort into mythologising the ‘pioneers’; those white Americans and Europeans from whom Ted is descended. This change indicates an adaption, or even a rupture of Mormon tradition. As Jason previously noted in Chapter Six, the Church now supports the idea that *all* converts to Mormonism are ‘pioneers’. This shift in the interpretation of ‘pioneer’; from white American and European founding members, to global converts of all backgrounds broadens the scope of belonging for the modern age.

In the section below, I will illustrate participants’ understandings of ‘church culture’. I particularly note that non-Irish Mormons living in Ireland are more likely than Irish Mormons to argue that Mormonism contains within it a global ‘church culture’. Their perspectives on this is discussed here.

8.4 Debating the Existence and Significance of 'Church Culture'

Like Chase, other participants who had arrived in Ireland for work or other purposes had often also lived in other countries. Chase's wife Abbey was also well travelled, David and Meredith from South America had also lived in Italy and the United States, whilst Matthew from East Africa has lived in Sweden, Denmark, and Germany before settling in Ireland. These non-Irish Mormons were broadly speaking more likely to embrace the concept of a global Mormon identity centred around a 'church culture' and less likely to focus on national identifications above religious identifications.

David and Meredith, originally from South America, have travelled extensively and are baffled by what they see as Europe's continuing divisions along national and ethnic lines. Meredith tells me she was shocked to find that a co-worker who identified as Catalan was offended when Meredith handed her a Spanish flag in work one day. Similarly, David mentions the continued divisions within Northern Irish Mormonism along traditional religious and ethnic lines:

> In Northern Ireland, you have heard probably, they normally say 'Mormon' and then people will say 'are you a Catholic Mormon or Protestant Mormon?' I know that many years ago in one of our congregations, people that was previously Protestant [*sic*], they would sit on one side of the church and people that were previously Catholic would sit on the other side of the church. So, they were all Mormons, they were all believing the same thing, but somehow, culturally speaking, so eventually these people have to be coached right? To be taught how to

> be. But it’s beyond you *have* to. Your belief cannot be subscribed to your nationality.

With this final statement, David rejects these kinds of affiliations. For him, a Mormon identity is a universal one. By choosing to view ‘church culture’ as something that should transcend national differences, David is inserting himself within a community in which he feels a clear sense of belonging.

David’s story of the continued Protestant and Catholic divisions amongst Mormon converts in Northern Ireland is revealing. As I have previously outlined in Chapter Five in relation to the differences between the two congregations of Appleby and Sweetwater, local variation in the experience of Mormonism as a lived religion is common. Every congregation brings its own history, myths, and challenges to create a unique experience. This reminds us that despite ‘church culture’ and Correlation, Mormonism will always be experienced differently according to the specific national, cultural, or local context in which it finds itself. David’s story of Northern Ireland clearly reveals that religious and cultural differences which existed before Mormon conversion, continue in the new faith. The strength of these traditions ensures that it becomes part of the Northern Irish Mormon experience. The tradition is adapted, moulded, into something new, yet the same.

Despite David’s narrative which proves the variation present in experiences of Mormonism, he and Meredith are adamant that ‘church culture’ is, or should be, the same worldwide. Meredith tells me that the Church has its own culture which exists across national boundaries. To demonstrate this idea, she tells me about the family's time spent living in the United States. She recalled the day her children asked her if it was ok to salute the US flag in school, despite not being American themselves:

> I said 'look, you are here; you have to respect that as a symbol. It's nothing bad in respecting it and in participating in it'. So, you are in their country, and the same when we moved to Italy. So, it's more like we have, the church has, a culture.

Her narrative appears to place 'church culture' in opposition to varying national cultures. She taught her children to respect the symbols of both US and Italian cultures whilst they lived there. National culture, she implies, is shifting. Yet, for her, 'church culture' stands apart.

David interrupts us to remind me that this 'church culture' is deliberately cultivated because it forms part of church doctrine; that all people are children of God and brothers and sisters to each other, regardless of their nationality:

> David: We don't have it by chance, we have it because we preach that culture. We preach it on purpose because it doesn't really matter if you are Irish or from South America, it shouldn't matter. If we believe that we are children of God you know? What the heck matters where you are from?
>
> Hazel: So, it goes back to the doctrine again?

David: Absolutely. It shouldn't in any way affect our relations. Now obviously if in your culture you kill your neighbours and you put them in barbecues, that is a culture you need to change! But other than that, nationalities are completely irrelevant. They should be.

David accepts and supports the development of a common 'church culture', based on the core principles contained within the Plan of Salvation. For him, this commonality across national boundaries is a reaffirmation of religious community.

In contrast, Maria, also from South America, strongly disputed this perspective of a universal 'church culture' during my interview with her. Having lived in South America, the US, and Ireland, she has also experienced Mormonism in a variety of countries. We talked at her apartment which she shares which her South American husband. Like David and Meredith, she moved to Ireland for work purposes; so that her husband could avail of a job opportunity. A young Mormon in her twenties, Maria is always immaculately dressed and unfailingly polite. When I arrived at her apartment, I was unsurprised to find that her home was spotlessly clean and organised, with a plate of cookies sitting on the table waiting for me. This was all in keeping with what I had imagined Maria to be, a model Mormon who would strongly identify with a common Mormon identity.

However, Maria rejected any claim to a universal 'church culture', telling me:

> I think every country, every branch, every ward is different. Yes, you will have the same classes and things but no, it is never the same. It is an adjustment every time you change. At least for me… I feel like we are taught that, so we repeat that. We repeat the 'oh everywhere is the same, we are the same'. Maybe we like to think that, so we think that wherever we go we have a place, something to hold onto. But I don't think it's true. You are just, it is different, everything is different.

Maria argues that the Church disseminates a key message from Utah; that all Mormons share a common culture and values, and that this will be experienced similarly across the globe. Her suggestion that Mormons are simply repeating what they have been told and taught is a bold statement, but it stems from her personal experiences in multiple wards and branches across three continents.

Despite the variety of views concerning a global 'church culture', there can be said to be key Mormon values which most, if not all Mormons, agree exist. One of these is the ongoing need to progress and the strive for perfection. Mormons are taught and frequently tell each other, that they must aspire for perfection. The Church's values stem from doctrinal instruction; the Plan of Salvation indicates that learning to consistently make the right choices aids in an individual's eventual salvation (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2008, p. 9). This has many positive effects for Mormons, as they try to improve themselves spiritually and temporally in preparation for the next life. Meredith tells me:

> One thing that I like about the culture of the Church is that we try to, we aim to excellence. We don't aim to bad [*sic*]. We should do that in our lives, if we are studying we should aim for more, if we are workers we should aim for excellence.

However, in that same interview with Meredith and her husband, David asked me:

> Have you ever heard about the problem of perfection in our church? Sometimes people will worry about not being perfect and everything… Sometimes people feel guilty for that because they made a mistake, to compare themselves to this perfect ideal that you should achieve in the family. Sometimes some Mormons have that problem.

David touches here on the negative effect of striving for perfection within Mormonism, which is the pressure members feel to do things correctly, all the time. The conversation continues by my observing what I see as the paradox of perfection:

> Hazel: I think it's a cruel irony actually, that the Church emphasises all the time that you don't have to be perfect yet, and yet I think because you're holding yourself to high standards, you are then disappointed when you're not doing better than you think you should be.

David: But it is your own personal problem, because nobody will say anything. It's not like we are saying 'if you are not perfect, if you not like this all the time, you are doomed'.

David insists that this problem of perfection is a 'personal problem' rather than a problem of 'Church culture', and that it is not Church members who place these pressures on others.

However, Maria once more presents a different interpretation. In my interview with her she argues that in fact Church members *do* exert pressures on others to live up to the perfection ideal. In this interview she told me of her troubled relationship with Mormonism, centred around her teenage years when she had 'gone off the rails' drinking heavily, having sex, and associating with drug dealers. She has since abandoned that lifestyle and is now active in the Church once more, but during that period her Mormon parents threw her out of the family home. She recalls this period of her life:

> When I went inactive and crazy, drinking and all this stuff, they turned their backs on me, nobody talks to me. Nobody wanted to be close to me because I have a tainted, because I was wicked…I went to the Bishop and I asked for money. I explained the situation, I told him I don't have any money, I have 200 pesos, which is about twenty euro, and he said 'I can give you that, that is all I can give you, you have your parents' home you can go back', and so maybe that's why I have that issue with the Church because everybody turned their backs on me, didn't even want to know me, like my best, best friends were like 'no'.

Maria's story confirms what David has said regarding there being a mistaken pressure to live up to what Maria calls 'a perfect ideal', but it also shows that not all members agree with David's inference that there is no judgement from other members of the Church in not living up to these standards.

Importantly, Maria's story took place whilst she was still in South America and so I asked her if she feels this is a universal trait of a global 'Church culture'- for instance, do these types of attitudes prevail in places like Ireland also? She replied:

Maria: I know of cases that they were, people were serving in a calling, and because they did something that wasn't well seen, they took them off and they never call them again for anything.

Hazel: Really? That's crazy

Maria: Yeah, yeah. It happens, every Sunday! Sometimes it happens every Sunday. It's just bad. The perception is very important, it's a very important thing for them. For us, I mean [she laughs].

'Church culture' assists in uniting Mormons across the globe in collective responsibility; for instance, there are international welfare programmes operated by the Church and funded by ordinary members to support the education and missionary efforts of poor Mormons across the globe. Similarly Church humanitarian progammes for all, not just Mormons, in times of natural disaster and war is the positive outcome of a ‘church culture’ which de-emphasises national boundaries and promotes a global community. Yet, as Maria’s narrative shows, shared values of ‘church culture’ such as aspiring for perfection, can also sustain troubling trends which appear to cross those same national boundaries. Maria confirms that the negative side of a key Mormon value such as aspiring for perfection, exists in Ireland in similar ways to South America.

Maria is an interesting person to discuss ‘church culture’ with. She rejects a perspective exemplified by David and Meredith, who believe that there *is* such a thing as a global church culture. She says ‘maybe we like to think that, so we think that wherever we go we have a place, something to hold onto. But I don’t think it’s true’. Yet, Maria also confirms the existence of a global ‘church culture’ in a variety of ways. In a discussion with me about patterns in church regarding leadership and callings, she comments ‘it’s more of a cultural thing I think. Because you will see that everywhere’, inferring that there are universally identifiable trends of behaviour within Mormonism. She also explains to me that the judgement and marginalisation she experienced as a member in South America is also something that is experienced by members in Ireland, showing awareness of how similar aspects of Church life exists in many parts of the world.

Furthermore, Maria is what I imagine in my mind as a ‘model Mormon’; she always attends church, holds an important calling for which she carefully prepares, is polite and accommodating and never causes offence, intentional or otherwise. She makes an effort with her dress and appearance, and is perfectly composed at all times. Her troubled past within Mormonism and her ongoing struggles to come to peace with how those in church treated her, contrasts enormously with these other parts of her identity. Commenting on this image, I asked her how these two sides of her could be reconciled and she told me ‘I guess I learned. I learned how to blend in’.

Examining Maria’s story, I argue that Maria is a good example of the tensions and complexities in a modern Mormon identity. She has absorbed the common stereotypes within the Church about what a good Mormon should be; ‘I learned to blend in’. Yet, her narrative also tells of troubled times for her within the Church, and of her challenges in overcoming her resentment towards the Church. Maria represents someone who has a more complex and nuanced relationship to ‘church culture’ than David and Meredith. Despite their similarities; they have all experienced Mormonism in multiple countries, are settled in Europe, originally from South America, nonetheless there are key differences in how they experience the concept of ‘church culture’. This reflects the complexity in the lived reality of a global church.

This section has focused upon the conception of a global church culture amongst those Mormons who have lived, worked, and worshipped in a variety of countries worldwide. In the next section I focus on the views of Mormons who have been born and raised in Ireland. They are often less likely to have lived in multiple countries than their fellow Mormons who arrived in Ireland more recently such as Maria, David and Meredith. Reflecting upon their own experience of Irish Mormonism by exploring American Mormonism, it appears that Irish Mormons use American Mormons as an ‘Other’; a means to identify who and what they are not.

8.5 Zion in the Mormon Imagination

After the initial trek to Utah in the earliest years of the Church, many European members emigrated to Utah from the UK, Germany, Sweden, and elsewhere. The Church now encourages members to stay in their home countries to grow the Church, encouraging its members to instead see Zion as ‘the Lord’s people who are of one heart and one mind’ (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, no date g). In this way, modern Zion is an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991, p. 13). It is no longer just a physical place, but a way of thinking.

Yet, despite the ways in which the Church encourages members to see themselves as a common people, many Mormons in Ireland appear to remain acutely aware of differences between themselves and their fellow Mormons. Particularly, I have found that Irish Mormons are aware of, and often uncomfortable with, a particular version of Mormonism which some people described to me as associated with ‘American Mormons’ (Marilyn, Sweetwater), and others as with ‘Utah Mormons’ (Mandy, Sweetwater). Therefore, in contrast to the Mormons discussed above who have wide experience of Mormonism in many countries, many of the Irish participants of this research were more ambivalent about their connections to a global religious group that transcends national boundaries.

Firstly, Irish Mormons were more likely than non-Irish Mormons to question the myths and narratives of Mormon history which assist in a common identity. For example, Seán rejected the Church tradition of commemorating the early Church's trek to Utah in an annual Pioneer Day celebration:

> They expect or encourage people to go along dressed as Pioneer and so on, now I see that as an impingement on my national identity. I respect what those people did and I think it was brilliant to march 3000 miles and be harassed and so on, and I have great respect and great sympathy…but I will not be taken in and expected to behave as an American just because it happens to be based in America. No more than I would expect to behave as Italian because the head of the Catholic Church happens to be in Rome.

Secondly, Irish Mormons were also more likely to articulate differences between 'American Mormons' (Marilyn, Sweetwater) and other forms of Mormonism, and to identify this as a barrier to belonging. Knowing that the Sweetwater branch was struggling with interpersonal disputes like those explained in Chapter Five, I asked Marilyn 'is it hard having a branch that's so international?' and she said:

> Not to me. It would be with an Irish person that hasn't travelled. Suzanne finds it a problem with some of the Americans anyway. They drive her mad, but they don't drive me mad because I lived there and I can take it. I think it's, if you come from the island of Ireland and you don't travel, I think you get a bit closed minded. I hear them in the town, and I hear them in the hairdressing salon, and they say 'them bleeding foreigners

> taking our jobs' and all this. I think they are so ignorant, they don't realise that without immigration the country is dead.

Marilyn argues that it is a lack of exposure to different countries and a fear of immigration that cause some Irish people, including Irish Mormons, to dislike other nationalities.

Yet, Mary Daly in Appleby also admits to disliking American Mormons and tells me that part of this is based on a visit to Utah. In Mary's case, and unlike Marilyn, travel and exposure to American Mormonism has not made her more accepting of cultural differences. Mary firstly tells me that her family is 'different to typical Mormons, or what I would call American Mormons', because they are more relaxed about the Church, and less socially conservative. Mary explains to me about the American Mormons she has encountered during time spent in Utah, and those who visit the Appleby branch:

> This is the difference between me and what I would see, is a lot of the missionary couples [retired married couples from the US on a year's missionary work] who come over. Bob [her husband] and I will slag each other. We wouldn't be 'hi sweetie' and it's not that we are being rude to each other or anything. You see a lot of people from the US background and they are they are just really nice, and sweet, and it's like when you go to America and it's all 'have a nice day'…You have to be having a bad day sometimes. You can't have this cheese constantly. So, there is sometimes you know it I would see it as being a difference in culture probably. I'm not saying that every Mormon is like that, and it is

> stereotypical obviously. But lots of times I don't know, I don't know that the missionaries see anything outside of the Church. I met this lovely couple who reactivated me if you like [Mary was inactive for a time]. I went to visit them [in Utah] with Bob and then they were asked to talk [in church] about their time in Ireland, and they were describing a totally different Ireland than the Ireland that I live in! They were talking about you know everybody being in the pub. They didn't talk about family, and how important family is to Irish people. And then I may have said that I had been reactivated, that I was inactive, and this man came up to me in the chapel in America, and I knew that he thought that I had actually been in the gutter you know?!

Mary clearly feels that cultural differences are a barrier to identifying with American Mormons, which is a significant difficulty considering the continued American influence within the faith generally and on ‘church culture’ specifically.

Yet, she acknowledges that just as her American friends saw a different Ireland to what she sees, her own views of them may also be subjective:

> Maybe I'm seeing a different America as well, to what they see. People see totally different things don't they? So maybe if I was to talk to somebody and say what my perception of America was when I was there, theirs would be very, very different. But that was my perception. And their perception [of Ireland], even though it upset me, was their perception.

In contrast to David’s insistence that national differences do not matter within Mormonism, Mary reflects upon the subjectivity of her position as an Irish Mormon. She sees and understands the perceived differences between Irish and American Mormonism, but also understands that these supposed differences are always dependant on a particular standpoint. Mary accepts that perhaps her perception of American Mormons stems from her position, but nonetheless, the feeling of difference remains.

Simultaneous to the Irish rejection of American Mormonism, there appears to be an Irish idealisation of Mormonism in Utah. Many Irish Mormons still move to Utah or other areas of the US heavily populated with Mormons, such as Stephanie from Appleby who is now based in Utah. Others are wistful about the plentiful social and religious activities which are possible to run in American congregations, yet unsustainable in Ireland. Maureen Murphy in Appleby tells me:

> A lot of Irish members of the Church, they move to a place where there are a lot of members of the Church, where all the church programmes are operating. Where they wouldn’t all be operating in Appleby. We would just have the nucleus of them whereas they operate on a much bigger scale in bigger places.

The Irish then, both reject *and* idealise American Mormonism. These two versions of an imagined Zion coexist simultaneously and it is possible for one person to incorporate both viewpoints, such as Suzanne from Sweetwater.

Suzanne displays much of the complexity described above regarding how Mormons in Ireland think about American Mormonism as the key representation of a global community. She tells me:

> The Americans are really different to us. There is so much difference, I was in Utah, went to visit in Utah. We always wanted to see what it was like, and at first there was a lovely spirit there, and you feel the presence of the Church there and you can't deny all that. It's just not a place that I would, I wouldn't want to live in America. I just wouldn't, Americans, not the Americans that I know put it that way. I've never been to New York, never been to Boston, I don't know those kinds of [Americans], I'm talking about Church-Americans mostly. But I think it's mostly because, they are brought up in the Church, they have a different viewpoint. They can be a bit patronising towards those that are not born in the Church and they don't allow for your point of view.

Suzanne believes that 'Church-Americans' are different not just to the Irish, but perhaps also to other Americans. She illustrates how some Irish Mormons think that Utah and those who live there, are a different and unusual place and people. Later, Suzanne tells me about those who idealise American Mormonism:

> I think people kind of looked up to them [American Mormons] and thought about the American Dream, you know the Irish still do kind of love Americans…You get a lot of Irish members of the Church wanting to be Americans. We had a friend called Vincent… and he was mad about

> America, he’s living over in Utah now. But he had the accent way before. And I used to ask, ‘why have you got an American accent? and he’d say, ‘oh I hang around with the missionaries’ and I would say, ‘well I hang around with the missionaries and I don’t have an American accent.’ They have this idealism. But when I was in Utah, and the temples there, you do feel the spirit, I’m not saying you don’t. It’s like going to Jerusalem probably. You feel the same. You also see, like, we drove into an area of Utah that was all like broken down cars, and there was Mexicans walking around with big tattoos on them, and you know then that it is clearly not all members over there, and there is a massive difference. It’s not all rose beds.

Suzanne represents the dual construction of Zion in the Irish mind. She feels that Utah is special, she speaks of ‘feeling the spirit’ there and compares it to Jerusalem to demonstrate its sacredness. For her, Utah is a very spiritual place. Yet, she also speaks of not liking the people there, and observes that not all parts of Utah encapsulate a white, respectable, middle class lifestyle which many Irish Mormons imagine Utah to be as part of their ‘mental pictures’ (Vertovec, 2004, p. 12) of the religious homeland. Both Suzanne and Mary demonstrate how complex the imagined community of Zion can be, by both identifying and dis-identifying with its people and place.

However, one incident from my fieldwork reveals how despite divergences in constructions of Mormon identity, there still remains a community based on faith and culture. When I was based in Appleby, one of the Church’s Quorum of the Twelve [based in Utah, they are twelve of the Church’s most senior leaders] visited Ireland. Elder Potter is viewed by members as a living prophet of God and so the visit was highly anticipated by Appleby members' weeks in advance, and they were delighted to hear that I would attend the event in Dublin alongside people from all over the country who were travelling to Dublin for the event.

My fieldnote record of that night reveals a community that rarely gets a chance to come together en masse and that revels in those rare opportunities. Crucially, it tells of an event that is centred around one person who is viewed as God's representative on earth and who also exemplifies American Mormonism. Living and working in the place of his birth, Salt Lake City, Utah, Elder Potter is a white, middle class American with an illustrious familial legacy in the Church which stretches back to prophet and founder Joseph Smith. Yet, whilst firmly representing a stereotypical version of Mormonism which many Irish Mormons reject, he retains the ability to unite Mormons in Ireland of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.

Below I have reproduced my field notes to describe the event which took place in the Dublin Stake centre. The Stake centre functions as an administrative centre for the Church in Ireland, but the building itself also generally houses a large congregation by Irish standards; of about 150 active Mormons. My notes recall:

> When I arrived at the event it is very busy with lots of cars waiting to get in. There are cars parked all over the grassed areas and crammed in

together. There are hundreds of people here, and it’s very noisy with everyone talking. It feels that there is an atmosphere of a reunion here, everywhere people are shouting hello, hi, shaking hands, hugging, and talking in groups. I feel a bit overwhelmed to see so many Mormons all together as I am so used to the small groups in Appleby. I look for Appleby people and can't see any, but then at the very back I see Jason and Catherine, and I go and sit with them. As I look at the pamphlet for the event that we have been given, I can see that it uses American English spellings; ‘savior’, ‘center’ etc., and I wonder who was responsible for creating it.

It occurs to me that I am underdressed. Everyone else seems to be dressed up in some way. I see Diane further up the room, and I notice she has her hair down and appears to be wearing more makeup than usual. Jason is wearing braces with his shirt and tie, and most of the men are in three-piece suits. As I'm chatting with Jason and Catherine, Elder Potter arrives and takes a seat. There is a murmur through the crowd at this, and Catherine says very excitedly 'oh there he is!' There are some speakers before Elder Potter gets up to talk; the wife of the European Area President says, ‘I can feel the excitement, anticipation, and reverence’ that is here for this event. She says she saw people lifting up their children so they could get a glimpse of Elder Potter, and about them being so excited to be here.

The European Area President gets up to speak directly before Elder Potter. He tells a story about planning Elder Potter's schedule for his visit here ensuring to leave him some free time, but that Elder Potter filled up all his free time by adding in other appointments. He says it is 'a signal and a symbol not to settle'. He says that he has been talking to people here who told him of travelling [to the UK] for the temple visit this weekend. He says he heard stories of people who have travelled for fifteen hours for a fifteen-minute visit to temple. He pauses, and repeats that slowly, and then starts crying. He says, 'that's a great symbol too'. I can feel goose bumps on my arms, and I have a sense that everyone is taken with the emotion of this, though I can’t really say why, it’s an atmosphere in the room. He says that he prays that we will receive blessings out of all proportion for that fifteen minutes.

Elder Potter finally comes to the podium. Catherine puts her hand on her heart, and she is taking big breaths, she seems very overwhelmed. He says, 'God bless us to be active, vibrant, and excited members'. He starts to say, 'here in Belfast' but catches himself as he gets as far as Belf... and turns it into 'here in Belfast, Dublin, here in Ireland'. I know he made the mistake because I heard his hesitation, and I had that feeling of dread in my stomach when I felt he was about to say the wrong place. This causes me to think about the focus on Northern Ireland by the Church in its early years, and I’m wondering if this might be an example that the oversight of the Republic of Ireland has lingered. Afterwards, the Dublin Stake President gives the closing prayer. He says, 'this is the most important meeting that is taking place in Ireland' and 'an Apostle of

> the Lord is in our midst'.
>
> I walk out with Teresa from Appleby that I've bumped into. We have to go into the long narrow corridor and there are hundreds of people there. It is difficult to make our way through the crowd. When we are near the end of the corridor she meets a man she knows who says that he hugged Elder Potter but that he has left the building now. Teresa turns to look at me and her face is devastated. She looks so upset that she missed him and I feel awful for her. Before we leave, we meet Diane with some others, she says that she got to shake Elder Potter's hand. She seems delighted, so smiley and happy. I ask, 'what did you say to him?' and she says she asked him if they could have a temple in Ireland. The others laugh and exclaim 'no you did not!!' and she says she did, laughing. We ask, 'what did he say?' and she says, 'he said he'd think about it'.

The sense of pilgrimage and reunion which infiltrates my account reminds us of how the Church leadership centred in Utah, have the ability to emotionally move and motivate members around the globe. The large crowds, long distances people travelled from all over the country, and the effort which people took with their appearance shows us that this was a special event.

Quite revealing is Diane's gleeful admittance that given what may be her only chance to speak to one of God's prophets on earth, she asked him to provide a temple for Ireland. The temple serves as a significant symbol for the dispersed faithful across the globe, and the granting of a temple perhaps interpreted as a reward for loyal and faithful perseverance in the face of much opposition and marginalisation. Additionally, despite the joyous reception of the American prophet from Utah who is a clear reminder of both the global nature of the Church and its continued American influence, ultimately what matters to Diane is a local issue. Her request of a temple for Ireland reveals that for Mormons in Ireland, local experiences shape their understandings of Mormonism in the global age.

8.6 Conclusion

There can be no doubt of the significance of the US, and Utah particularly, in the minds of Mormons across the globe. What I believe can be disputed, is a simplistic narrative that Utah and the 'church culture' which came from it is received entirely enthusiastically worldwide. I have argued in this chapter that Utah and 'church culture' are defining components of global Mormon identities, but that they are often used to define who a global, modern Mormon is *not,* as much as they are used to define who they *are*. This complexity in how members across the globe understand Mormonism is a contrast to the efforts of the Church to maintain historical traditions in the face of changing Church membership.

The Church's policy of Correlation ensured a common church experience across the globe and serves a practical and symbolic purpose in continuously re-creating a common identity. The Elder Potter visit to Ireland and similar events achieve a similar function. Connected to this idea, Hervieu-Léger argues that religious institutions operate a 'complex strategy' to 'maintain their visibility in a cultural and symbolic climate, where their message is under threat of dilution' (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p. 174). This strategy, she suggests, incorporates a 'marrying' of 'the emotivity of belonging with a reasoned appeal to ethico-cultural heritage' (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.175).

Both Correlation and visits from Church leaders such as the Elder Potter visit, can be said to be part of these 'institutional top-down attempts to revive consciousness of a chain of belief' (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.175) as the Church expands globally and becomes ever more diverse. If these are deliberate revivals of the 'chain of belief' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 81) by the Church, then this implies that the chain may be weakening in the modern age of a diverse global Church. Maintaining a collective memory of Mormonism in this context will be difficult, forcing the Church to engage in more measures such as these which are actively designed to reassert Mormon belonging on the basis of shared religious heritage and traditions.

Despite these measures, I have shown in this chapter that a global Mormon identity is regularly disputed, negotiated, or even rejected by members. This is evidenced particularly by Irish members who hold a complex relationship to American Mormonism, but is also evidenced by the divergences of opinion regarding the existence of a 'church culture'. This internal 'division and dissent' (Werbner, 2004, p. 896) symbolises a global Mormonism in which disunity and dis-identification are as much part of the experience as commonality and co-responsibility. For example, although Irish Mormons are influenced by Utah and American Mormonism, this may not always be in the way the Church might hope. American Mormonism is utilised by Irish Mormons to define what they are not, and to in the process create something new; a form of Mormonism which is distinctly Irish.

Specifically, Irish Mormons construct themselves as more relaxed in their demeanour and more liberal in their beliefs than American Mormons, thereby creating a version of Irish Mormonism which disrupts ‘church culture’ in some respects. Mormons in Ireland are creating adaptions to Mormonism which better suit their lived experiences. On this basis, there is much complexity in the experience of global Mormonism and ‘church culture’. As the Church consciously attempts to constitute a global identity, Mormons in Ireland attempt to disrupt it.

Informed by these and other ideas, in the following chapter I offer a concluding discussion of the themes of tradition, community, and Irishness which have emerged during this research. I reflect upon the theoretical underpinnings of the research which have centred upon the experience of a tradition and change in the experience and place of religion in contemporary Ireland. The following chapter will also highlight the original contributions this research has made to the field of the sociology of religion and to our understanding of religion in Ireland.

Chapter Nine: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore how the Mormon community in modern Ireland experiences their status as a minority religion. I aimed to establish how Mormons in Ireland live their religious community and identities, and how minority faith and identity are maintained and reproduced in a society like Ireland, where one dominant religion continues to shape the religious landscape. In other words, I intended to explore what it means to be Mormon in Ireland.

In this research, I provide an ethnographic account of a religious minority in a modern European country, providing an original contribution to knowledge to the sociology of religion. Influenced by the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) who have disputed the secularisation thesis in Europe, this research addresses a core concern within the sociology of religion; the nature and place of religion in modernity. I build upon the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie (2000) in this thesis to suggest that even in countries which have modernised rapidly such as Ireland, religion continues to exert a powerful influence and is primary in shaping the worldviews of many.

In this research I confirm that the memory of religion does not disappear, nor become unimportant in modern societies. Rather that memory adapts, to create new religious experiences which are simultaneously informed by the old. My work offers new insights for the sociology of religion on how tradition, continuity, and change manifest themselves in modern religion. By examining these ideas through the unique case study of Mormons in modern Ireland, I demonstrate how a collective memory of religion can be challenged, disrupted, and re-shaped.

My research emphasises that such adaptions of tradition are in evidence at two levels. Firstly, through Mormons' engagement with Irish society; a society still heavily informed by Irish Catholic tradition. Secondly, through Irish Mormons engagement with their faith, and understanding of their religious community. At both levels, this thesis has shown the difficulties inherent in maintaining religious tradition and the remarkable resilience and adaptability of such tradition. I demonstrate that through complex understandings and negotiations of ideas of Irishness and community, Mormons in Ireland simultaneously challenge and continue religious tradition.

As has been emphasised throughout this thesis, themes of tradition, community, and Irishness are critical for this study which explores life as a minority religion in a society in which one dominant religion continues a strong influence. For this reason, I have structured this chapter around these three themes, discussing in greater detail how each of these is central to the Mormon experience in Ireland as a minority religion. These sections bring to the fore the underpinning theory which has shaped the ethnographic chapters, and explain in greater detail the contribution to research outlined above.

9.2 Tradition Maintained and Disrupted

In this research, I have shown how religious and cultural tradition remains salient and powerful from the perspectives of the Irish Catholic majority society, and from within Mormonism itself. Hervieu-Léger (2000) suggests that modernity prompts a need to refer to tradition as a response to the fragmentation of modern life, whilst Davie (2000, p. 81) argues that religious tradition can continue in modernity, it having adapted to changed societal circumstances. My research broadly supports these positions.

In relation to a Mormon negotiation of an Irish Catholic tradition, my research finds that conversion to Mormonism does not imply an outright rejection of the traditions of the majority society. Rather, the continued emphasis on family, community, tradition, and Jesus Christ, held in common between Catholicism and Mormonism, allows for a continuity of previous tradition to emerge within the experience of a new faith for converts. This confirms that conversion to another faith does not always lead to an abandonment of the tradition that has informed previous religious experience and is in keeping with existing literature which examines how Mormon converts fare outside of the Mormon culture region. For instance, Rutherford (2016) has identified in India that previous customs identified with Hinduism are continued after conversion to Mormonism, albeit with differing justifications for the practice.

My research shows that for some converts such as Margaret in Sweetwater, conversion to Mormonism can be lonely and difficult to manage within the family as a lone convert. This confirms research elsewhere in Europe (Decoo, 1996, 2013b, 2015, van Beek, 2005, 2009) which identifies that European converts struggle with the responses of family members post conversion and that the culture and structures of the majority society in Europe often make the Mormon experience more difficult. Margaret's experiences reflect the reality that conversion to Mormonism is a break with previous tradition, both within and outside of the Irish family. In this way, Mormon conversion is a threat to the Irish social body and converts often experience some form of isolation post conversion.

Yet, conversion to Mormonism also involves a continuity from what has gone before. The experience is invariably filtered through a lens of Irish Catholicism. Although the reasons for conversion vary, some such as James in Sweetwater are seeking a return to more conservative traditions which they feel have been lost as Ireland modernises. Others, like Maureen in Sweetwater are seeking to reject those same traditions. However, most converts from Catholicism in this research still use Irish Catholicism to make sense of their religious experience.

There is then, a continuity of the influence of Catholicism which continues to shape understandings of religion post conversion. This is a confirmation of previous research which has shown this process at work with other converts from Catholicism in Ireland (Sakaranaho, 2003; Ganiel, 2016a, 2016b). Sakaranaho's 2003 research argued that the public expression of faith within both Catholicism and Islam, the role of family, and of Jesus Christ, all create a form of continuity rather than a simple break with previous traditions. This research establishes that this also holds true for Mormon converts from Catholicism in Ireland.

The continued influence of Irish Catholicism on other religions in Ireland therefore cannot be underestimated as Irish Catholicism remains a potent force in modern religious experience in Ireland, even outside of Catholicism itself. On that basis I have shown in this research that it is short-sighted to judge the decline of Catholicism in Ireland only through traditional indicators of religiosity such as attendance at Catholic services or numbers self-identifying as Catholic. There also needs to be a greater investigation of the ways in which Catholicism continues to affect the wider religious landscape in Ireland, by exploring the place of Catholicism within other religious experiences.

I demonstrate in this research how Mormons in Ireland articulate life in a country in which Catholicism is experienced by the majority as a cultural marker of Irishness with little religious meaning, where many do not attend church or adhere to church teachings. Active Mormons such as Anna in Sweetwater and James in Appleby find such behaviour to be frustrating. I have also shown how Mormons in Ireland like Maureen and John in Appleby, are regularly reduced to just their faith by the majority. Their religious beliefs are constructed by others as the most significant part of their identities, no matter how much this is disputed by the individual. In contrast, these Mormons often see their faith as being just one aspect of a complex identity. Mormons in Ireland therefore become representative for the majority society; not just of Mormonism, but of religious tradition generally. Although Mormons belong to a different faith than the majority, they are still maintaining the presence of religion in Irish society. Additionally, they are often expected to do so by the majority, who police Mormon behaviour according to what they think is appropriate.

On this basis, I have concluded that evidence of secularisation in Ireland is mixed. Supporting the secularisation thesis, evidence provided in Chapter Two shows that numbers identifying as Catholic and attending Mass have been consistently dropping for many years. It is also clear that the Catholic church has lost a good deal of authority, no longer influencing the Irish political system to the degree it once did, and increasingly represented as just one voice of morality in a society which is becoming more religiously diverse. This has resulted in a significant gap between the teachings of the Catholic church and the beliefs and behaviour of Irish people.

However, disrupting the secularisation narrative is evidence presented in Chapter Two which illustrates that declines in attendance and self-identification are from an unusually high level of identification and participation. Numbers identifying as Catholic remain high, and Catholicism is still influential in shaping Irish peoples' sense of self. The ethnographic chapters of my research confirm that Catholicism remains influential for individuals even after conversion to another faith, and has the capacity to shape minority religious experience in Ireland.

Similarly, the persistent presence of Mormonism itself also offers proof that religion continues to have a role in Ireland. The numbers reporting as Mormon have remained relatively stable whilst numbers of Catholics have dropped, and my fieldwork has shown to me a small but vibrant and committed Mormon community in Ireland, whose faith is central to their understanding of themselves and the world around them. They are part of a changing religious landscape in Ireland, in which religious minorities are growing rapidly. Therefore, this research confirms the work of Hervieu-Léger (2000) and Davie

(2000), both of whom have argued that modernity does not necessarily directly lead to secularisation, but does lead to a changed relationship with religion.

This raises the question of what that changed relationship might look like in Ireland. Based on the Mormon experiences recounted here, it appears that a more privatised form of religious faith might be becoming more common. My research demonstrates high levels of concealment of religious identity, and a reluctance to discuss faith in public contexts amongst the participants. This indicates that Ireland’s traditionally public form of faith, which infiltrated almost all aspects of Irish public life, might be coming to a close. Whilst the privatisation of faith is often cited as an indicator of a secularisation process (Wilson, 1966) this research illustrates that a private faith can still be influential in public life. I have shown that it still retains the power to shape family formation, marriage, and educational choices for instance. It also remains influential in shaping how people see themselves in the world, and therefore, their interactions with the world.

The previous points have highlighted the complex role of tradition in the Mormon community’s engagement with majority Irish society. However, within Mormonism itself, tradition is also engaged with in interesting ways. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that the content of a tradition is less important than what that tradition represents. She observes that in modernity, greater individualisation means that it is more likely that individuals will take a different meaning from the same tradition, but this does not mean that tradition becomes less significant.

Supporting this argument, the findings of this research show that despite tightly controlled Church organisation, a significant variability of Church traditions exists at a congregational and individual level, but nonetheless the lineage of belief within Mormonism is strong. From a perspective informed by Hervieu-Léger's (2000), the variability and adaption of Mormon tradition found throughout this research is proof of the persistence and adaptability of tradition in modernity. Adaption of Mormon traditions in countries far from the Mormon heartland of Utah show that despite the struggles associated with global Mormonism, the faith is also capable of remarkable adaptability and resilience as it embeds itself into a variety of societies in which other faiths are already established. This adaptability is evidenced by examples from this research which show that Mormons in Ireland have accommodated the dominant opinions on social issues in Ireland, into their own experience of Mormonism. Although the Church denounces same sex marriage, I found during fieldwork that many Mormons voted in favour of legalising Irish same sex marriage, aligning themselves with the majority who voted in favour.

Similarly, the diversity found in this research regarding the experience of, and opinion on, gendered hierarchies within Mormonism disrupts a dominant Church narrative on gender which results in unequal treatment between men and women in the Church. Church doctrine and organisation supports a gendered experience of Mormonism and this has been confirmed in the experience of many women in this research, including Mandy in Sweetwater. However, I demonstrated in Chapter Five that paths towards respect and inclusion can be created and maintained locally which result in a more inclusive experience of gender within the Church.

I found that despite structures in Church organisation which prevent Stephanie's full equality as leader within the Appleby branch, she feels equal to other male leaders and maintains that the role of the Branch President in facilitating an atmosphere of equality is vital in fostering those feelings. This is perhaps in keeping with the general position of women in Ireland more generally and like same sex marriage, is proof that Mormons in Ireland are adapting religious tradition to better fit the emergence of a more secular Catholic society which they are a part of.

This research therefore reveals that many strands of the dominant narrative about Mormonism such as the characterisation of Mormon adherence to strict gender roles which subjugate Mormon women, and the stereotype of Mormon opposition to same sex relationships, may be too simplistic to be truly representative of the lived experience of Mormonism across the globe at a local level. I argue therefore, that there needs to be greater attention paid to the varied ways in which the traditional version of Mormonism exists alongside multiple others, creating diversity in the Mormon experience.

9.3 A Community of Continuity and Change

Community for Mormons in Ireland is both constructed and imagined. I have found that community is meaningful for Mormons at three levels. Firstly, at the level of the family, secondly within the congregation, and finally at the level of a national and/or global community of Mormons. At all three levels, community is both imagined and experienced in terms of continuity and change.

At the level of family, I have found that Douglas Davies' (2010, p. 175) concept of 'doctrinal kinship' is in evidence within Mormon families in Ireland. Participants such as David, Anna, and Sue show understanding of the importance of family rituals such as sealing and baptisms for the dead for creating community. These rituals support and maintain a familial community of Mormons, which is capable of incorporating non-Mormons into this faith community. This community which exists simultaneously in past, present, and future, is in existence in both temporal and spiritual worlds.

In this respect, 'doctrinal kinship' (Davies 2010, p.175) is a clear example of Hervieu-Léger's (2000, p. 81) concept of religion as 'chain of belief' which is dependent upon a lineage of tradition. By valuing ancestry and genealogy, Mormon families in Ireland consciously support a familial 'chain of belief' (Hervieu-Léger 2000, p.81) that breaks conventional notions of time. As Anna in Sweetwater articulates, formalising these connections through rituals such as baptisms for the dead both increases the numbers of family who are spiritually connected, and enhances those connections. Children are encouraged to assist in the genealogical work of 'family history', thereby teaching the next generation of the importance of this work and the ritual it supports. Similarly, encouraging young people to be sealed in the temple ensures the continuance of strong Mormon families by ensuring young people are motivated to marry a fellow Mormon. By being sealed in the temple, a husband and wife's spiritual ties to each other and to any children born to them are also secured. 'Doctrinal kinship' (Davies, 2010, p. 175) therefore assists in the continuity of religious tradition which is maintained through the family.

Despite Church encouragement to marry within the family, small numbers of young Mormons in Ireland means that achieving this objective proves challenging in an Irish context. This has been referred to in other European contexts as ‘the marriage challenge’ (Decoo, 1996, p. 106), and the breadth of this problem for Mormons in Europe has been further confirmed in my Irish study. I have identified in this research that young Mormons are likely to emigrate in search of a spouse, or to marry a fellow Mormon from outside of Ireland. These practices represent a changed way of forming the Mormon family, which sits in contrast to the ideal Utah Mormon family, which is often formed through marrying a fellow member in the local area. These Irish adaptions to the ideal Mormon family are directly related to the circumstances of the Church in Ireland as a small religion.

However, I argue that this pragmatic way of ensuring the continuance of Mormon family has the unintended consequence of diluting the numbers of ‘Irish’ Mormon families in Ireland. Those who emigrate in search of a Mormon partner decrease the numbers of Mormons in the country. Those who remain but marry a Mormon of another nationality; often UK or US, bring a non-Irish influence into their family which might perpetuate the majority’s stereotype of Mormonism as a ‘foreign’ religion. This trend also might serve to undermine any perceived commonalities between Catholicism and Mormonism which can be helpful in the recruitment of Irish converts.

Examining community at the level of global Mormonism, my study illustrates that Mormons in Ireland who are not Irish-born such as David and Meredith in Sweetwater are particularly likely to identify and support a global ‘church culture' which crosses national boundaries. Supported by the Church policy of Correlation, 'church culture' is a route to belonging for these Mormons. I suggest that given the double marginalisation which these Mormons experience in struggling to belong based on either Irishness or Catholicism, identifying with a global 'church culture' allows these Mormons to create and maintain a global community in which they feel a sense of belonging.

However, by examining 'church culture' within the context of Irish Mormonism and at a congregational level, we can see that this concept of a global community is disputed, negotiated, and even rejected. Within congregations, local experiences often shape the atmosphere of the congregation to a greater degree than the correlated version of church life which the congregations are obliged to implement. Additionally, Mormon sports teams, discos, crafts groups, book clubs, and other common social outlets which are ubiquitous in the Mormon heartland of Utah, are either rare or non-existent in Ireland. Therefore, core functions of Mormon congregations such as a full and active social calendar to support a 'church culture', are modified or abandoned at a congregational level in Ireland.

By exploring how 'church culture' engages with Irish Mormonism, I have found in this research that Irish-born Mormons are particularly likely to reject, or dispute aspects of a global Mormon community. Although American Mormonism and its home of Utah exerts considerable influence on Irish Mormonism, it is not merely viewed as something to envy, or to aspire to. I have found that Irish-born Mormons such as Seán, Suzanne and Mary often subvert or reject the traditional 'American' version of Mormonism which has shaped 'church culture'.

Suzanne and Mary’s narratives on American Mormonism in Chapter Eight indicate that Irish Mormons use American Mormonism as an ‘Other’; a way to identify who they are, by identifying who they are not. They describe American Mormonism as ‘serious’, and as ‘cheesy’, describing Irish Mormonism as being more laidback and authentic in its outlook and behaviours. Therefore, in rejecting aspects of American Mormonism, Irish Mormons create their own version of Mormonism which takes account of their local experiences in the Church and which has adapted to the majority Irish society in which they find themselves.

Simultaneously, American Mormonism influences the Mormon worldview and affects patterns of behaviour in Ireland. The Mormon expectation of early marriage and childrearing leads Mormons in Ireland to have particular conceptions of marriage and family which often causes them to marry and become parents earlier than the national average in Ireland. Whilst people in Ireland are now marrying at approximately thirty-four years of age (Central Statistics Office, 2017c) I have found that members of the Church in Ireland are likely to be marrying approximately seven to ten years earlier than this. Whilst marrying in the mid-twenties may be considered ‘old’ in parts of Utah, the narratives of Stephanie and Andrew in Chapter Seven illustrate that Mormons in Ireland are constrained in their marriage behaviour by the small numbers of prospective partners in Ireland. Additionally, Irish Mormons are shaped by the wider society in Ireland, where marriage is being delayed.

Nonetheless, marriage remains a key priority for Mormons in Ireland whose patterns of attitude and behaviour around marriage is undoubtedly shaped by ‘church culture’. For example, Stephanie told me how important it was for her to marry within the Church, and of her efforts to study at BYU to achieve this. After my fieldwork Stephanie *did* move to the US to study at BYU, and is now married to a fellow Mormon in the US. The active effort and planning which Stephanie invested in ensuring her own ‘eternal family’ demonstrates that American Mormonism and ‘church culture’ is influential for Mormons in Ireland in shaping their understandings and experiences of family.

It should be noted that this complex relationship with American Mormonism and ‘church culture’, functions as a dialectical process; American Mormonism influences the attitudes and behaviour of Irish Mormonism whilst Irish Mormonism in turn reshapes what ‘church culture’ looks and feels like across the globe. Seán’s narrative in Chapter Six emphasised his struggles to engage with what he sees as an American focus in the Church, and his desire to create an Irish version of Mormonism. His efforts to have Ireland’s differences from the UK recognised, and his providing prayers in church through Irish rather than English illustrate his active efforts to re-shape Mormonism to reflect a sense of Irishness.

I suggest therefore, that the local adaption and interpretation of Mormon habits and customs challenges dominant constructions of *both* Mormonism and Irish religion. Mormons in Ireland are renegotiating what it means to be Mormon in the global Church. This confirms the work of Rutherford (2016) and Wei-tsing Inouye (2014) who observe that local Mormonisms can, and perhaps should, notably differ from the Mormonism which emerges from Utah and is proselytised around the globe. This previous evidence coupled with my research indicates that the Church should act with care in the future, with regards to how the standardisation of Church experience is perceived as an Americanisation of the same outside of the US. In the era of a global church, continued growth may be dependent on the Church's ability to support local adaptions whilst maintaining a doctrinal core.

Whilst this renegotiation of Mormonism is underway in Ireland, it leads to a simultaneous development of an alternative experience of religion in Ireland, one which is both outside of the Catholic tradition and yet influenced by it. This research finds that converts, but also Mormons born into the Church, have an ongoing relationship with Catholicism through small and large practices such as visiting Catholic churches, Mormon children attending Catholic schools, lighting candles, using social media, and other means. These syncretic practices show that Mormons in Ireland are reimagining both Mormonism *and* Irish religion, through their everyday experience of life as a religious minority in Ireland.

9.4 Claiming Irishness

I have shown in this research that Mormons in Ireland have diverse experiences of Irishness. Both Irish-born Mormons and other Mormons who are living in Ireland engage in concealment strategies which are either deliberately designed to, or have the effect of, hiding their religious identities from those in the majority society. I suggest that this concealment of Mormon identity has the unintended consequence of creating a continuance of the dominant Irish Catholic narrative. By obscuring their identities, Mormons in Ireland are inadvertently concealing the breadth of religious diversity which exists in Ireland. Therefore, the presence of Irish Mormonism is an indication of the level of change which has occurred within the religious landscape in Ireland, yet simultaneously, their concealing strategies continues to perpetuate the Irish Catholic tradition.

The experiences of Matthew in Appleby have shown that experiences of Irishness differ between white Irish-born Mormons and those Mormons in Ireland who are not white and who were not born in Ireland. This is due to the ability of white Irish-born Mormons to ‘pass’ as Irish Catholic in wider society in a way that Matthew finds more difficult due to the strong relationships between categories of whiteness, Irishness, and Catholicism in Ireland. Irish-born Mormons also often have greater familiarity with Irish Catholic traditions and customs still present in the majority society, compared to those Mormons who have arrived in the country as adults more recently.

Importantly, Irish-born Mormons feel themselves to have been rejected by the majority for their religious beliefs, due to the continuity of national and religious identification of the Irish with Catholicism. For example, this research has identified that an equation of ‘Irish’ with ‘Catholic’ is still central in Irish society. This is supported by state institutions such as schools and the army and results in Irish-born Mormons such as Séan feeling marginalised and stigmatised within their own country.

However, I have also provided evidence to show that white Irish-born Mormons are sometimes not considered different enough from the majority to deserve any accommodation of their religious differences. As Davie (2000, 2014) has observed, managing religious pluralism in modern Europe is complex. This research shows that white Irish Mormons such as Suzanne in Sweetwater feel themselves to be perceived by the majority as ‘less than’ Irish due to their religion. Yet, they also feel themselves to be unable to have their religious differences respected, in contrast to other religious minorities who are ethnically and racially distinct from the majority. For example, in Chapter Six Jason’s explanation of his son’s experiences in school demonstrates that white Irish-born Mormons are often caught between being different enough to be viewed as having betrayed a sense of Irishness, but not so different to be deserving of accommodation of those differences by the State.

Matthew’s experiences as a black African Mormon living in Ireland, demonstrates multiple marginalisation. He is unable to identify with any of the three main markers of Irishness; being born in the country, being white, and being Catholic. To navigate this reality, Matthew utilises a strategy of emphasising his Christianity to create a path to belonging in Ireland. White participants such as David and Meredith from South America are not racialised as ‘different’ as Matthew is. Yet, their strategy of de-emphasising the importance national identification allows them to downplay their own differences from the majority. On this basis, my research identifies that these Mormons must carefully navigate a majority society in which they are perceived as different in multiple ways.

I have found that embracing a form of Irishness can be a pathway to belonging and integration within the congregation, and within the wider society. This is true for both Irish-born Mormons and Mormons of another nationality who are living in Ireland. The St. Patrick’s Day branch party in Sweetwater illustrates that in diverse congregations whose members may struggle to find points of commonality with each other aside from their faith, Irishness serves as a unifying anchor which brings commonality and stability to the group. Likewise, the narratives of husband and wife Suzanne and Michael in Sweetwater show that within wider society, a celebration of Irishness assists in diminishing the stereotypes of Mormonism as a foreign religion from the majority.

Based on these insights I conclude that continued strong national and religious identification with Irish Catholicism leads to significant marginalisation and stigmatisation of religious minorities in Ireland. Catholicism continues to be a key cultural marker of Irishness which identifies those who are not Catholic as ‘less than’ Irish. The ubiquity of the Irish Catholic narrative means that alternative experiences of religion in Ireland are pushed to the margins, forced to engage in concealment of a key part of their identities. This confirms previous work by Cosgrove (2013) who has suggested that stigma and stereotyping are a key part of the religious minority experience in Ireland. Given the marginalisation of Mormon experience as demonstrated in my research, we must consider whose religious identities are legitimised in Ireland, by whom, and why. The stories of the participants of this research raise important questions of how religion, race and ethnicity work with, and against each other in complex ways in Ireland. Given Ireland’s continued growth of religious and ethnic diversity, these questions will become even more relevant for the future.

Furthermore, this research is also a confirmation of the work of scholars such as Van Beek (1996, 2009) and Decoo (1981, 1996, 2013b, 2015, 2016) who have argued that the Church’s marginal success in modern Europe partly pertains to the wider religious landscapes in which it sits, where individual European countries have long standing and entrenched pre-existing relationships with religion that are difficult to transform. On the basis of that previous evidence and my research, I argue that the Church will struggle to gain a strong foothold in Ireland in the future whilst the wider societal context of strong national and religious identification remains relevant. Below, I reflect upon my experiences in this research and what these can tell us about modern Ireland

9.5 Reflections on the Research

As I conclude this research I have cause to reflect upon the process, and my conclusions. Born at the end of 1980, I grew up in an Ireland which was changing rapidly, both economically and socially. By the time I entered university, Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' period had begun bringing with it high levels of immigration which accelerated these changes. I was a 'Celtic Tiger cub'; one of many in a generation entering adulthood in a 'new' Ireland. Yet, my generation was still old enough to remember 'before', the 'old' Ireland. As I began this research in 2014, I was exploring a country almost unrecognisable to that of my childhood.

My awareness of Ireland's transformation fuelled my interest in this project. I knew how *I* had experienced these changes, and I understood my own position as an Irish born, white, middle class, atheist woman living in this society. But what of others? What did I know of them? It was these questions which propelled me towards Mormonism in Ireland and into the chapels, homes, and lives of the variety of people who make up this research. They welcomed me openly, and were pleased to show me what they felt I needed to know about being Mormon in Ireland.

They understood, as I do now, that Mormons in Ireland *are* Ireland. They are part of Ireland's increasingly diverse population and cannot be simply and neatly categorised. Some, like Maureen and John in Appleby, were quietly attending Sacrament Meeting in the 1980s of my childhood, in someone's home in a housing estate due to the lack of a church building. Others, like Matthew, are recent arrivals to both Ireland and Mormonism and find themselves part of Ireland's transformation. All of the participants of this research demonstrated to me the importance of community, and the complex ways in which tradition is used to support and to challenge it. They opened my eyes to the diversity of Irish experience that was sitting right in front of me, and for that I am truly grateful.

Appendices

Appendix A: Gate-Keeper Consent and Information Sheet

Title of Research Project

Being Mormon in Ireland: An Ethnographic Study of Two Latter-day Saint Communities in Ireland

Details of Project

You have been approached in recognition of your role as a leader within the Latter-day Saint community. This consent and information sheet is designed to inform you of my research plans and to gain your initial consent to conduct research within your congregation. I am a PhD student in Sociology undertaking research into Latter-day Saint congregations in Ireland. I am doing my research through the University of Exeter UK, although I live and work in Ireland. My research is funded by my employer, Appleby Institute of Technology.

This research intends to find out about the lives of Mormons living in Ireland. In particular, this study is interested in how the Mormon community experience their religion, and how they feel about being part of a minority religious group in Ireland.

There are two parts to my research:

1: To observe and participate in church services and other community events such as meetings, special events, and social gatherings. I hope to do this with your congregation for 6 months, from March 2016 to September 2016. During this part of the research I will interact with church members, take part in church services, special events and meetings, and observe what happens there. I will take notes using a notebook.

2: During this 6-month period I will also interview approximately 15 members of your congregation. Anyone who agrees to interview will be asked to sign their own personal Interview Consent and Information Sheet, which is designed to inform them of their role in the research and that they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time.

Your congregation has a right to have their privacy respected now and in the future. For this reason, a false name will be created for your congregation which will be used in the final thesis and future publications. This will ensure that once research is complete, your congregation will not be exposed to any unwanted attention that might occur as a result of this research.

All information collected is only to be used for research purposes. The data will form a part of my final thesis for my PhD, and will form part of papers that I present to academic conferences. It will also be used in academic publications such as journal articles. These publications will be based on themes that emerge from the analysis of the interview data as well as data collected by the observation of events, meetings and church services. The information I receive will not be used in any manner that would allow the identification of any individual in your congregation.

At the end of the research I will arrange a presentation of the key research findings to the research participants so that they can discuss their experience of participating in the research and discuss its key findings. All participants are free to choose whether or not to engage in the feedback process.

The Public Affairs Officer for the Church in Ireland, Eric Bowyer, is aware that I am conducting this research and has indicated his approval. This study has also been considered by the Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter and has been given a favourable review.

Contact Details

For further information about the research, please contact:

Hazel O' Brien, Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology, University of Exeter, Devon UK, Ph: 051-845539, ho252@exeter.ac.uk.

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr. Katharine Tyler, Research Supervisor, Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology, University of Exeter, Devon UK, Ph: 00 44 (0) 1392 725552, ktyler@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

All written notes will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law). All data will be kept in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act and with the Irish Data Protection Acts. The data will be kept on secure University of Exeter servers and will not be stored on any laptop or personal computer. Neither will the data be saved on any USB key or data storage device apart from the University servers.

Anonymity

Data will be held and used on an anonymous basis with no mention of true names. A pseudonym, a false name, will be used to refer to individual Church members. A pseudonym will be used to refer to your specific congregation and to places that may be mentioned in the course of the research. The research will state however, that this is a study of two congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ireland.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.
I agree and understand that:

- This researcher has my permission to participate in and observe church services and other church events such meetings or social gatherings in order to complete the research described above.
- That these permissions can be revoked by me at any time
- That a false name will be used for our congregation so as to protect the privacy of the community
- That false names will be used for individual church members

TICK HERE: ☐ **DATE**…………………………....

Note: Your contact details here are kept separately from any interview data you might provide in the future.

Name of Gatekeeper:...

Role of Gatekeeper:………………………………………………...

Signature: ....

Email/phone:...

Signature of researcher……………………………………………….

2 copies to be signed by both gatekeeper and researcher, one kept by each.

Appendix B: Interview Information Sheet and Consent Form

Title of Research Project

Being Mormon in Ireland: An Ethnographic Study of Two Latter-day Saint Communities in Ireland

Details of Project

I am a PhD student in Sociology undertaking research into Latter-day Saint congregations in Ireland. I am doing my research through the University of Exeter, UK, although I live and work in Ireland. My research is funded by my employer, Appleby Institute of Technology. This research intends to find out about the lives of Mormons living in Ireland. In particular, this study is interested in how Mormons experience their religion as a community, and how they feel about being part of a minority group in Ireland.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to provide an interview at a time and place that is convenient to you. During your interview, you will be asked about your experiences and opinions on the areas of interest mentioned above. Each interview will be approximately an hour in length, although it may be shorter or longer if you wish. The interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed by myself. No one else will have access to this recording or the transcript. The interviews will be transcribed word for word.

During the interview, you will have a lot of control regarding how topics are addressed and what is discussed. You may find that you are uncomfortable discussing a certain topic and should this occur you are welcome to take a break, move to another topic of discussion, or stop the interview altogether.

The information collected is only to be used for research purposes. Direct quotations from the interviews will be included in the final thesis, academic conference papers, journal articles, or book chapters. These publications will be based on themes that emerge from the analysis of the interview data as well as data collected by the observation of events, meetings and church services. The information you provide will not be used in a manner that would allow the identification of your responses.

At the end of the research I will arrange a presentation of the key research findings to you and other research participants so that you can discuss the experience of participating in the research, and discuss its key findings. All participants are free to choose whether or not to engage in the feedback process.

The Public Affairs Officer for the Church in Ireland, Eric Bowyer, is aware that I am conducting this research and has indicated his approval. This study has been considered by the Ethics Committee at the University of Exeter and has been given a favourable review.

If you agree to participate, you are still free to leave the research at any time and your participation is always completely voluntary. You do not need to provide a reason for withdrawing from the research.

Contact Details

For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact: Hazel O' Brien, Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology, University of Exeter, Devon UK, Ph: 051-845539, ho252@exeter.ac.uk.

If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:

Dr. Katharine Tyler, Research Supervisor, Department of Sociology, Philosophy and Anthropology, University of Exeter, Devon UK, Ph: 00 44 (0) 1392 725552, ktyler@exeter.ac.uk

Confidentiality

Interview recordings and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed access to them (except as may be required by the law. Your data will be held in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act and the Irish Data Protection Acts. Your interview recording will be held for ten years on an anonymous basis, and will then be destroyed. During the research your data will be kept on secure University of Exeter servers and will not be stored on any laptop or personal computer. Neither will the data be saved on any USB key or data storage device apart from the University servers. This research is funded by my employer, Appleby Institute of Technology, but they will not have access to the data or any personal information about you.

Anonymity

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name. Your interview transcript will be held by me indefinitely and securely on my work computer. I will be the only person who has access to the transcript, and your contact details will not be stored with it so there will be no way for someone to identify the transcript as yours.

Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis. A pseudonym, or false name, will be used to refer to you and to refer to the congregation that you are a part of. Pseudonyms will also be used for any places that may be mentioned in the course of the research. The research will state however, that this is a study of two congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Ireland

Your contact details will be saved separately to your interview data.

Consent

I have been fully informed about the aims and purposes of the project.
I understand that:

- There is no compulsion for me to participate in this research project. If I do choose to participate, I may withdraw at any stage and my data will be removed from the research

- I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any information about me

- Any information which I give will be used solely for the purposes of this research project, which may include publications or academic conference or seminar presentations;

- All information I give will be treated as confidential;

- The researcher will make every effort to preserve my anonymity.

TICK HERE: ☐ **DATE**…………………………....

Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data

Name of interviewee:..

Signature: ....

Email/phone:...

Signature of researcher………………………………………………….

Two copies to be signed by both interviewee and researcher, one kept by each

Appendix C: Noticeboard Flyer to Request Interviewees

Request for Volunteers for Hazel O' Brien's Research

Hello everyone! As I mentioned in church when I first arrived, as part of my research I am hoping to interview approximately 15 adults in the Branch about their experience of being a LDS member. This is the only research of its kind that has ever been conducted with the Latter-day Saints in Ireland so you have an opportunity to play an important role in creating better understanding of the Church. If you are interested in finding out more or if you would like to volunteer for an interview please call, text or email using the contact details below. I'm also in Church most Sundays so we can always speak then. Thank you so much for being so welcoming to me thus far.

Title of Research Project

Being Mormon in Ireland: An Ethnographic Study of Two Latter-day Saint Communities in Ireland (This title is provisional and open to change)

Details of Project

I am a PhD student in Sociology undertaking research into LDS congregations in Ireland. This research intends to find out about the lives of Mormons living in Ireland. In particular, this study is interested in how the LDS experience their religion as a community, and how they feel about being part of a minority group in Ireland.

I am hoping to conduct anonymous recorded interviews, which will be about an hour in length although they can be shorter or longer if you like. The interviews can take place at a time and place that is convenient to you.

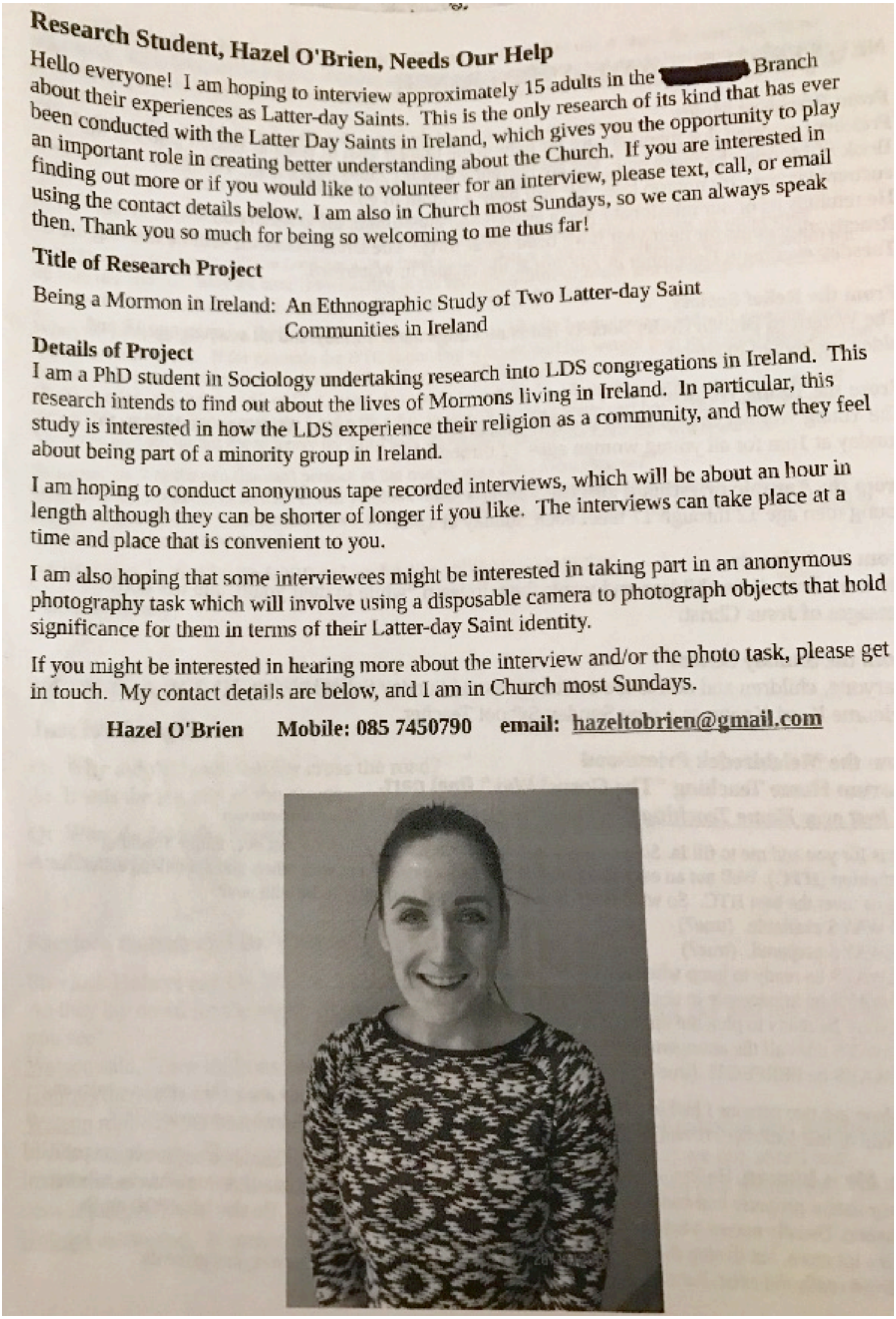
If you are interested in hearing more about the interviews please get in touch. My contacts details are below, and I am in Church most Sundays.

Hazel O' Brien

Ph: 085 7450790

E: ho252@exeter.co.uk

Appendix D: Newsletter Article



Research Student, Hazel O'Brien, Needs Our Help

Hello everyone! I am hoping to interview approximately 15 adults in the [redacted] Branch about their experiences as Latter-day Saints. This is the only research of its kind that has ever been conducted with the Latter Day Saints in Ireland, which gives you the opportunity to play an important role in creating better understanding about the Church. If you are interested in finding out more or if you would like to volunteer for an interview, please text, call, or email using the contact details below. I am also in Church most Sundays, so we can always speak then. Thank you so much for being so welcoming to me thus far!

Title of Research Project

Being a Mormon in Ireland: An Ethnographic Study of Two Latter-day Saint Communities in Ireland

Details of Project

I am a PhD student in Sociology undertaking research into LDS congregations in Ireland. This research intends to find out about the lives of Mormons living in Ireland. In particular, this study is interested in how the LDS experience their religion as a community, and how they feel about being part of a minority group in Ireland.

I am hoping to conduct anonymous tape recorded interviews, which will be about an hour in length although they can be shorter of longer if you like. The interviews can take place at a time and place that is convenient to you.

I am also hoping that some interviewees might be interested in taking part in an anonymous photography task which will involve using a disposable camera to photograph objects that hold significance for them in terms of their Latter-day Saint identity.

If you might be interested in hearing more about the interview and/or the photo task, please get in touch. My contact details are below, and I am in Church most Sundays.

Hazel O'Brien **Mobile: 085 7450790** **email: hazeltobrien@gmail.com**

Appendix E: Interview Guide

Participant's Background

Designed to settle the participant into the interview, and relax them by discussing familiar basic facts about themselves such as where they were born, where they live, what work they do, how many children do they have.

Key themes here may be family background, education, social class, employment, immigration, or ethnicity.

Participant's early involvement in Mormonism

Designed to ease the participant into a discussion of their life as a Mormon by establishing if they are a convert, how long their family has adhered to Mormonism, or what other religions they may have previously belonged to.

Themes of conversion, or familial affiliation to the religion may be key for discussion here.

Participant's involvement with the congregation under study

Designed to begin discussions on community life as a Mormon, their role within the community, their sense of belonging, and their opinion on the issues within the community.

Themes of community involvement, belonging, and church rituals and beliefs may be key for discussion here.

Participants experience of Mormonism within the family

Designed to gain information on how their religion affects their family life, including raising children, marriage, gender roles, and work. This theme is placed within the centre of the interview schedule when the participant is more relaxed and more familiar with the format of the interview as it may touch on some of the more personal aspects of the participant's life.

Themes such as beliefs, values, and kinship may be key for discussion here.

Participant's experiences of being a Mormon within wider Irish society

Designed to move the participant into a discussion of how they experience being a religious minority in Ireland. This is important to establish their engagement with the majority culture, and particular issues that might arise from this.

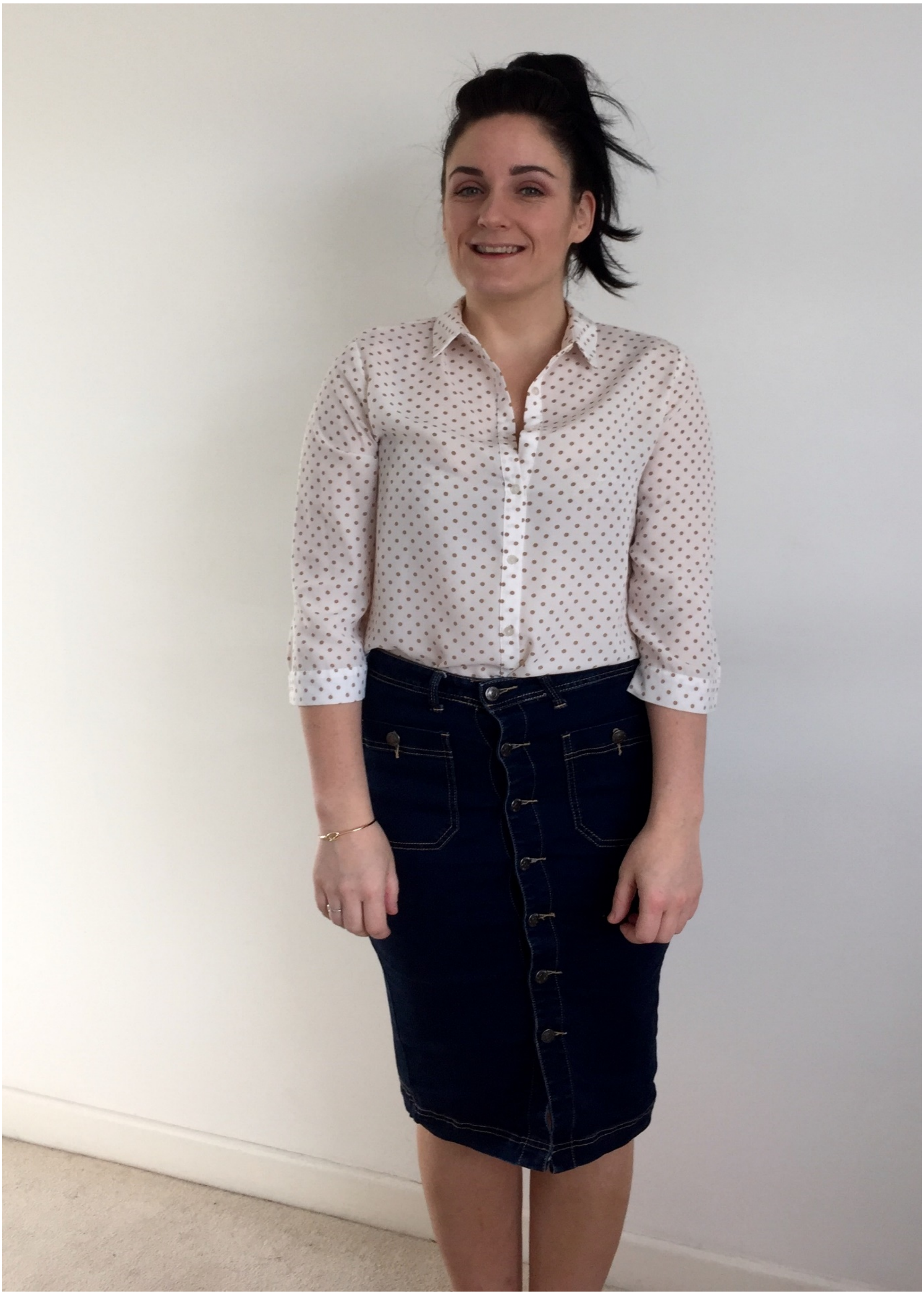
Themes of living as a minority, or the response of society towards Mormonism may be key here.

Participant's beliefs regarding the nature of Irish society and the place of religious belief within it

Designed to get the participant to speak about their views on the majority culture generally, how compatible they feel their values are with the majority culture, and how they experience social change within the wider society.

Themes of religious change or the decline of the Catholic Church may be key here, as may issues arising from modernisation and social change.

Appendix F: Photo in Church Attire



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